

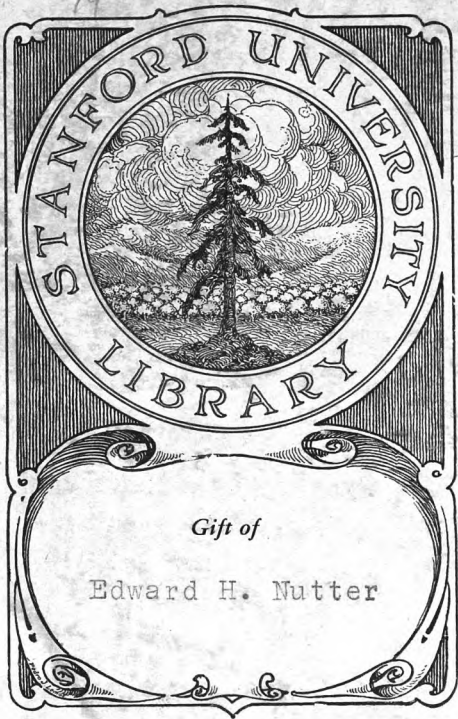
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COMMENTARY

ON THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

BY

THE REV. W. BRUCE.
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P R E F A C E.

THIS Work has been written with the intention of supplying the members of the New Church with a Commentary on the largest and most comprehensive of the Gospels, suitable for private and family reading. It is therefore almost purely explanatory and practical in its character, all questions that have no direct tendency to edification being as far as possible avoided.

The author is indebted for some of his materials to the unpublished sermons of the late Rev. S. Noble. For the use of these manuscripts of his revered friend and colleague, his thanks are due to the Society of which Mr. Noble was so long the distinguished minister. To these manuscripts he owes, besides one or two smaller items, the explanation of almost the whole of chapters v. and vi., the greater part of chapter xviii., verses 14-16 of chapter xxiv., and the parable of the talents, in chapter xxv.

That the Work, such as it is, may, by the Divine blessing, contribute to the spiritual improvement of those for whose use it is designed, is the Author's earnest prayer.

LONDON, *December, 1866.*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the most directly, if not also the most deeply, interesting and instructive portion of the Divine Word. It records the greatest of all earthly events—the manifestation of God in the flesh. It unfolds the mystery of redemption, and shows us the way in which we must be saved. It brings to light the immortality of the soul, and the nature of the future life. It shows us our nearness to and connection with the eternal world, and the influences which act upon us both from the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. It exhibits before us humanity in its widest possible contrasts, in its greatest moral beauty in the person of the Saviour, and in its greatest moral deformity in the persons of those he came to seek and to save. It supplies us with the purest lessons of spiritual wisdom and the highest example of practical goodness in the teaching and life of our blessed Lord; in whose sufferings and death we have the most perfect pattern of patient endurance and forgiving love, and in whose resurrection and ascension we have the highest hope of spiritual life and eternal glory.

The word of the Old Testament is not silent on these all-important subjects. Predictions of the Lord's coming are numerous, and some of them are unmistakably plain and singularly graphic. Still, like every future event, his advent was seen as through a glass darkly. So were all the subjects of the kingdom he came on earth to establish. It is only when the light of the New Testament is shed back upon the predictions and doctrines of the Old, that they stand out in their proper distinctness, and that their high import is clearly and fully understood.

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, thus combined, contain the knowledge of that great salvation which the Lord, in his infinite mercy, has wrought out for, and now freely offers to all his people. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a life according to his commandments, are the sum and substance of the Christian

religion, the essential means and conditions of salvation; and these are set before us in the very letter with so much plainness that he may run that readeth.

But within the literal there is a spiritual sense, which exalts all the truths of the Word, and intensifies all the means of salvation. God has stored up in his Word, as he has in his Works, inexhaustible treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and has only, when the time has come, to open the seals of his Sacred Volume, which is written within and on the back side, and to unrol it before the nations, that they may "come and see" the wonders which have lain hid in its recesses, from the time of its revelation, till men were prepared, by a higher development of their faculties, to perceive and acknowledge them.

During the past ages of the church the Word has been understood in its literal sense only. The existence of a spiritual sense has always indeed been acknowledged in the church, although little success has attended the numerous attempts that have been made to unfold it. It was important that a belief in the existence of an inner sense in the Scriptures should be preserved, though the time for its manifestation was not yet come. The literal sense was adapted to the genius and adequate to the wants of the church of the Lord's first advent; the spiritual sense is revealed for the use of the church of his second advent. His first coming was in feebleness and obscurity; his second coming is with power and great glory. As it is from the literal sense of the Word that we acquire a knowledge of the Lord's coming in the flesh, it is from the spiritual sense that we acquire a knowledge of his coming in the spirit. The time of the Lord's second coming—a coming not in person but in power—having now arrived, the spiritual sense of the Word, which reveals it, is now made known, and may be understood, because the event and the revelation are the correlatives of each other.

The use of this inner sense of the Holy Word consists chiefly in its unfolding two great subjects—the glorification of the Lord's humanity, and the regeneration of man. These two works are related to each other as cause and effect. The Lord's glorification is the origin and pattern of man's regeneration. It is because the Lord was glorified that man can be regenerated. By glorification the Lord became a Saviour; by regeneration we become saved. Glorification and regeneration are the same in their nature; they differ only in degree. By glorification the Lord made his humanity Divine; by regeneration he makes man spiritual. These two works,

which are the beginning and the end of the Incarnation, are the leading subjects of the inner sense of the Holy Word. The inmost or celestial sense treats of the Lord's glorification, the internal or spiritual sense treats of man's regeneration. As the subject of regeneration has the nearest, because an immediate personal interest for us, and comes more within the scope of our apprehension, it will chiefly engage our attention, and will most conduce to our edification.

There is one other subject treated of in the inner sense of the Word—the church or religious dispensation, whose states both of advancement and retrogression form the subject of “the internal historical” or “proximate” sense, which is nearest to the sense of the letter.

In explaining the Word it may be useful at times to consider it as it refers to the Lord, or to man, or to the church, leaving the reader to trace out its other applications, which he may readily do, since there is a correspondence between them.

One word of caution for those who are not acquainted with the spiritual interpretation of the Word. It may be supposed that the spiritual sense supersedes the literal sense. This is by no means the case. There are some parts of the Word that are not to be literally understood. With the exception of these, the literal sense is at least, as much believed in and revered by us as if no spiritual sense existed. All doctrine is to be drawn from the literal sense of the Word; and all spiritual truth rests upon it as its necessary foundation.

It is only necessary to add, that as the Holy Word, in which the fulness of wisdom dwells, is sufficient for the supply of all our spiritual wants, we have only to go to it earnestly and in a teachable spirit, looking to Him who is the Light itself for illumination, to derive from its sacred pages whatever is most suitable to our spiritual states, and most conducive to our eternal welfare.

CHAPTER I.

THE Old Testament begins with “the generations of the heavens and the earth,” and the New Testament begins with “the generation” of him by whom the heavens and the earth were created. In the Incarnation the Creator took upon himself by birth that nature which had originally derived its birth from him. He by whom man was made was himself made man. God assumed man's nature to effect what

man was designed but had failed to accomplish. As the world came from God, it was designed to return to him again, and to return through man, for whose sake it was created, and in whose spiritual and eternal happiness alone the purpose of its creation would be realized. God could have no other end in view in creating the world—the universe itself—than to form from the human race a heaven of immortal beings, to whom he might impart a measure of his own infinite blessedness, and in whose ever-increasing numbers and perfection he might behold a not unworthy image of his own immensity and glory. The fall of man threatened the frustration of this beneficent end. The catastrophe could only be averted and the breach repaired by God becoming man, and in the humanity he assumed restoring what man had lost in himself. In the Lord's humanity at the ascension creation returned to him from whom it originally came. The link in the chain of connection between the Creator and his creature was more than supplied by man's Restorer. By his Divine Humanity God has connected his creation in this and all other worlds with himself; and by a new and living way, which he has consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, man has for ever access to him, and he to man.

The Incarnation was thus the beginning of a new creation. Jesus is therefore called the Beginning of the creation of God; the First-born of every creature. He is the beginning of that new and spiritual creation which is to consist of those who become "new creatures;" he is the first-begotten and the head of that new generation which is to consist of those who are "born again" of him. The Lord has become the second Adam, the Father of a new and endless race of regenerate beings. In him what was God's imperfect image has become man's perfect Exemplar.

It is, in fact, this spiritual creation which the Genesis of the Word describes—a creation which made primeval man a spiritual image and likeness of his Maker. This image of the Divine properly constitutes humanity, for we are truly human only so far as we are images of God as to his moral perfections. It was this image that was lost by the fall, and which the Creator came to restore by the Incarnation,—that transcendently glorious event which forms the theme of the Gospel of peace, the beginning of which announces the birth of the Saviour,—the glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

1-17. *The book of the generation of Jesus Christ* comprehends in it much more than an enumeration of his natural progenitors; and its

purpose is much higher than to establish the historical fact that he was *the son of David, the son of Abraham*. It is not our purpose to enter into a consideration of its literal sense, nor to attempt to clear up its historical difficulties. These will be found treated, in many instances with care and ability, in commentaries devoted to the elucidation of the literal sense, of which we may particularize *The Critical English Testament*. We have no doubt of the truth and consistency of the sacred writers, and are convinced that a defective knowledge of the times and circumstances in which the genealogies of Matthew and Luke were produced, is the sole cause of their apparent discrepancies and inconsistencies. Some of these we shall have occasion to allude to in treating of their spiritual signification.

The Lord's genealogy has far higher claims on our attention than as a record of his natural descent. It is an inspired revelation for conveying to us divine and holy truths relating to the great mystery of the Lord's incarnation and glorification, and, in a secondary sense, to our own regeneration. In heaven, where the natural sense of the Word does not exist, but where the Word is written in purely spiritual language, and is understood in a purely spiritual sense, every name in this table must be substituted by a purely spiritual truth, conveying to the minds of angels a distinct and luminous idea. In the natural world, where our views of divine and spiritual things are necessarily much more general, and therefore much more obscure, we must rest satisfied with a few leading ideas on such subjects as the present, where a long array of names is presented before us.

In the spiritual sense of Scripture natural signify spiritual births, and natural mean spiritual generations. Between the natural and the spiritual there is an exact analogy. There is a common perception of this. We all ascribe conception and birth to the mind as well as to the body. Affections and thoughts are as truly the offspring of the will and understanding as sons and daughters are of human pairs; and there are successive generations of the one as well as of the other. These are the births and generations to which the internal sense of the Word relates. The Lord's genealogy treats of the successive conception and birth in him of divine affections and thoughts, or, what is the same, of divine goods and truths. It was by the successive birth of the Divine in the human that the human became at length divine. This glorification of the Lord may be illustrated by the regeneration of man, in which it may be seen as in its image. The regeneration of man begins at his birth, and continues to the end of life, and, indeed, goes on to eternity. The Lord's

glorification commenced at his birth, and was only completed at his resurrection and ascension. Let us endeavour to trace the greater in the less.

The earlier period of human life is employed by the Lord in effecting in the mind a spiritual work preparatory to regeneration, and without which actual regeneration in adult age would be impossible—as impossible as a virtuous and intelligent manhood would be without the educational stages of infancy, childhood, and youth. This work consists in implanting the germs of principles and forming the rudiments of states that are to constitute the new life in the regenerate soul. These are spiritually meant in the Word by the remnant which is saved, and through which there is salvation (Isa. x. 20; i. 9). As a remnant of holy persons must be left in every expiring church, to form the nucleus of a new one (Rom. ix. 27; xi. 5); so must a remnant of holy principles be preserved in the mind of every child of fallen man, to form the initiament of the new or regenerate state, which is the church or kingdom of the Lord in him. “Remains are truths and goods stored up by the Lord in man’s interiors; by which he is prepared and initiated to receive the influx of good and truth from the Lord, and thus to become regenerated.” That man may acquire these remains, he is “from first infancy to first boyhood introduced by the Lord into heaven, and indeed amongst the celestial angels, by whom he is kept in a state of innocence; when the age of boyhood commences, he by degrees puts off the state of innocence, but still is kept in a state of mutual charity towards his like, a state which continues in some instances to youth: he is then amongst spiritual angels. But as he has not yet acquired truths, the good things of innocence and charity which he had received in those two states have not yet been qualified, for truth gives quality to good, and good gives essence to truth, on which account he is from this age imbued with truths by instruction, and especially by his own thoughts and consequent confirmations.” He is then amongst angels of the ultimate heaven. Thus “good things of a threefold kind are signified by remains,—the good things of infancy, the good things of ignorance, and the good things of intelligence. The good things of infancy are insinuated into man from his first nativity to the age in which he begins to be instructed and to know something; the good things of ignorance are what are insinuated when he begins to be instructed and to know something; the good things of intelligence are what are insinuated when he is capable of reflecting on what is good and true. The good of infancy is insinuated from

infancy to the tenth year; the good of ignorance from the tenth to the twentieth year; from this year man begins to become rational, and to have the faculty of reflecting on good and truth, and to procure for himself the good of intelligence."

As the human being descends through all the heavens, he thereby acquires the faculty of "ascending up where he was before," to become an inhabitant of that particular heaven for which he prepares himself by actual regeneration. He thereby also acquires the germs of those principles and the rudiments of those states which constitute the kingdom of the Lord in the human soul. While amongst the celestial angels he acquires the germ of the celestial principle, which is love to the Lord; while amongst the spiritual angels he acquires the germ of the spiritual principle, which is love to the neighbour; and while amongst the angels of the ultimate heaven he acquires the germ of the natural principle, which is use, as an intelligent manifestation of love and charity.

The germination of the seeds thus sown in the mind forms the commencement of regeneration, their growth its progress, and their fructification its completion. As seeds may lie for a long period in the bosom of the earth without their vitality being destroyed; so may the seeds of heavenly principles remain long undeveloped in the mind, yet preserved by divine goodness for future use. And as seeds sown in the earth begin to germinate whenever they come under the influence of the vernal sun, so do the seeds of the kingdom, whenever they come under the influence of the Sun of Righteousness, which is the case when man, like the earth in spring, turns himself to the source of his life and the author of his salvation, to receive into his heart the rays of divine love and light. Divine mercy and grace have left nothing undone which may provide for this blessed consummation. They have from the first moment of the soul's existence been engaged in making all things ready, that man may, when he arrives at adult age, enter into the heavenly marriage.

As in all things it behoved Jesus to be made like unto his brethren—as the end for which the Lord was manifested in the flesh, required that he should be glorified by the same process as that by which man is regenerated—he had, from infancy, to pass through all the states of preparation common to his rational creatures. He had to be initiated into all human states and to make all human acquisitions; and only differed from others in having acquired and made them in greater fulness and perfection. "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Even in

this we see the "goods of a threefold kind" acquired, as remains, by him as by others. The remains which he acquired were, however, pure goods and truths from the Word, and were in themselves divine,—divine-celestial, divine-spiritual, and divine-natural.

To describe this representatively, the Lord's progenitors are divided into three groups of fourteen generations each. *All the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.* The generations from Abraham are celestial remains, those from David are spiritual remains, and those from the carrying away into Babylon are natural remains. These are divided into three groups of fourteen generations each, to signify that the remains which they represented are most holy; for seven is a number which signifies what is holy, and fourteen, which is twice seven, signifies what is most holy. The Evangelist says *all* the generations of each of the three groups are fourteen generations; yet it is well known that several persons are omitted from this list, and in it David is numbered twice. Some commentators are of opinion that the compression of the Lord's progenitors into three times fourteen generations is only a contrivance of Matthew's for the sake of assisting the memory! What then becomes of his inspiration, and of the divinity of the book? Is it not rather an evidence—and a very striking one—that the mere literal form of the Scriptures is determined by a higher law than literal accuracy, and that the literal sense is sometimes made to yield to it, for the purpose of embodying and expressing a spiritual truth? Although it is not literally true that *all* the generations in each series were fourteen, it is spiritually true that all the remains, of every class, stored up in the mind of Jesus, were most holy and most perfect; and three times fourteen were required to express this important truth.

It is to be observed that in the first series of this genealogy the actual and the formal numbers are the same, from Abraham to David being actually fourteen generations; in the other two series they are different. This no doubt points to a corresponding fact in regard to the regenerate. Only in celestial things, and in the celestial man, is there an exact correspondence between the essential and the formal, or between the internal and the external. This was true even of the Lord himself before he was fully glorified, and especially during that period and in that state to which the genealogy of Matthew relates. He acquired not only real, but also apparent truths; but these, as

such, could not be appropriated as remains, and were therefore passed by, as some persons were omitted in the genealogy. What was holy was extracted from the entire series, as the three times fourteen were taken out of the whole of the Lord's progenitors. The genuine truths contained in the apparent truths were, however preserved, and were brought forth in the process of glorification, as persons omitted by Matthew re-appear in the genealogy of Luke.

It was on account of the divine work of acquiring remains that Jesus did not enter on his public ministry till he was thirty years of age. For "by thirty is signified a full state of remains; and since man cannot be regenerated, that is, admitted into spiritual combats, by which regeneration is effected, until he has received remains to the full, it was ordained that the Levite should not perform work in the sanctuary until he had completed thirty years. From these considerations it is also evident why the Lord did not manifest himself until he was thirty years of age, for he was then in the fulness of remains; but the remains which the Lord had he procured to himself, and they were divine, by which he united the human essence to the divine, and made it divine."

Such is the momentous truth contained in the Lord's genealogy. That it was intended to teach some higher truth than that which is assigned to it in the letter, may appear from the fact that it does not really prove Jesus to be the descendant of those whose names are given as his progenitors, since the genealogy is not traced in the line of Mary, whose son, according to the flesh, he was, but in the line of Joseph, whose son he was not. But there is a spiritual reason for his genealogy being traced in the line of the husband of Mary. Genealogies were traced in the male line, because the male represents the intellect and the truth which belongs to it, while the female represents the will and the good which it contains. And all spiritual distinctions, and therefore all spiritual generations, owe their existence to the intellect and to truth. Good in itself is one and the same; truths are many and various. Discriminations and distinctions, degrees and series, thus individualities and generations, in one word, all multiplications, are effected by truth. It is the intellectual principle of the church that produces them. Joseph, the husband of Mary, represented that principle; and therefore, though he was not actually the father of Jesus, the genealogy of the Lord is traced through his line, to express spiritually what was true of the principle he represented.

There is one particular expression which occurs in this genealogy

that is deserving of attention, as bearing on the present subject. It is not said of the persons of the genealogy that they were born, but that they were begotten. Their birth of course is understood; but the language of inspiration is in itself significative, and the literal meaning is often important, as forming the basis of the spiritual sense. Now the implanting of remains in the mind is rather a begetting than a birth, rather an insemination than a growth and fructification. Strictly speaking and spiritually understood, birth is the bringing of the principles previously received in the mind into the outward life. It is only then that they truly exist; for no spiritual principle has actual and permanent existence till it is "born into the world" in the actions of a holy life. The remains that are laid up in the mind are therefore goods and truths "begotten" and "conceived," to be afterwards "brought forth" by actual regeneration.

It may not be irrelevant or uninteresting to notice here, and briefly consider in its relation to that of Matthew, the genealogy of the Lord as given by Luke. These differ on three main points. Matthew traces the Lord's genealogy downward, while Luke traces it upward; Matthew traces it down only from Abraham to Jesus, while Luke traces it up from Jesus to Adam, and even to God: the genealogies differ from each other.

As to the first point. The glorification of the Lord, like the regeneration of man, had both a downward and an upward progression. From infancy to manhood the progression with every one is downward. As we have seen, there is first the celestial state, then the spiritual, and lastly the natural—that is, celestial remains are implanted and the rudiment of the celestial state is formed first, and the others follow in succession. But when, in manhood, actual regeneration commences, the progression is upward, from natural to spiritual, from spiritual to celestial. By actual regeneration the previously existing rudimentary states are developed in the inverse order to that in which they were formed. This twofold order is described in the two genealogies. The genealogy of Matthew describes the downward progression from the higher to the lower: that of Luke describes the upward progression from the lower to the higher, and even to the highest. This last is especially applicable to the Lord, to whose glorification the genealogies eminently refer.

As to the second point. Matthew begins his descending series of the Lord's progenitors with Abraham; but Luke ends his ascending series with Adam, and finally with God. There is a profound truth in this. Remains, so far at least as they come to human conscious-

ness, are implanted in the natural mind, though in its inmost part—"in the interiors of the interior natural principle." The implanting and laying up of remains in the natural or ultimate degree of the mind is treated of in the genealogy of Matthew.

There are reasons for this. One reason is, that the natural mind is the seat of hereditary evil, by which it is entirely possessed; and unless the remains of goodness and truth were stored up in fulness here, reformation would be impossible. Another reason is, that the natural mind is the ultimate and the common basis of the two higher degrees, the spiritual and the celestial; and it is only as the lowest degree of the mind is regenerated that the higher degrees can be opened and perfected. In order that it may be such an ultimate and basis, the natural mind itself consists of three degrees; and this is according to the law of order, that all successive degrees exist simultaneously in the lowest degree. As the natural mind consists of three degrees, so do the remains of goodness and truth, of which it is receptive. Every good and truth that comes from God to man descends through all the heavens, and consequently through all the corresponding degrees of the human mind; and in the natural mind all the successive degrees of good and truth exist simultaneously, as in the Word all the higher degrees of revealed truth are contained in and rest on its literal sense.

Now the natural mind, or degree of the mind, was represented by that dispensation of the church which commenced with Abraham. For, viewing all the dispensations of the church which have existed in this world as different manifestations of the one universal church, the most ancient was celestial, the ancient was spiritual, and the Israelitish was natural; and this dispensation commenced with the call of Abraham. But in the genealogy this dispensation is itself divided into three periods, which we have called celestial, spiritual, and natural, because the natural mind, being the ultimate and common basis of the higher degrees, consists itself of three degrees.

In the early period of life, during which remains are being stored up in the natural mind, the higher degrees of the spiritual mind are yet unopened and undeveloped. And as these higher degrees correspond to the ancient and most ancient dispensations of the church, the genealogy of Matthew, which describes the storing up of remains in the natural mind, begins with Abraham. But as in the upward and inward progress of actual regeneration, not only the natural but the spiritual and celestial degrees of the mind are opened and perfected, the genealogy of Luke, which describes this upward progression, goes

up not only to Abraham, but to Noah and to Adam, and finally to God, as the origin of all. In relation to the Lord, this is most significant; for the Lord's humanity was made not only spiritual and celestial, but divine. He came from God, and went to God. He ascended up where he was before, far above all heavens, into the light that no man can approach unto. In a word, the Lord took man's nature upon him by birth of a human mother, and made that humanity divine.

The third point relating to the genealogies is, that they differ from each other. We have already alluded to the fact that some names are omitted in Matthew which are given in Luke. That which we here speak of is a difference of another kind. From David to Joseph, the two evangelists trace the Lord's genealogy in two different lines; and one calls Joseph the son of Jacob, while the other calls him the son of Heli. This difference is accounted for in this way:—By the Mosaic law, when a husband died without issue, his nearest kinsman was required to marry his widow, to raise up seed to his "brother." If, for instance, the mother of Joseph was in this way twice married, the first husband would be his legal father, and the second his actual father; and the name of the legal father might be given in one genealogy, and the name of the actual father in the other. This difference might therefore alter the entire line from David downwards.

Even this part of the Mosaic law was fulfilled, or ultimated, in the case of the Lord himself. He had a legal and an actual father. His legal father was Joseph, his actual father was God. His genealogy is also traced in the line of his legal father, which is entirely consistent with the Jewish practice, and was no doubt required for the sake of the literal sense of the word, as the basis of a spiritual meaning.

The spiritual sense is that which chiefly concerns us; and the different lines in which the genealogies of the Lord are partly traced, when understood spiritually, as descriptive of regeneration and glorification, teach us that the downward differs from the upward progression. In the progress of the new life the regenerate man returns not by the way which he went. This, at least, is the case in the more external part of his spiritual progress. His first obedience is from truth, his second is from good; his first is from doctrine, his second is from love. There is in the regenerate life an inversion of state; but while the second state, like the second progression, is the inverse of the first, its character is different. The circle of regeneration returns into itself; but it returns neither by precisely the same line, nor to precisely the same point. True as this is of man, it was still more

true of the Lord. Although he was glorified as man is regenerated, his glorification infinitely transcended the highest degree of regeneration to which any and every finite being can attain. Between his states of humiliation and his states of glorification there was also a much greater difference than between the corresponding states of man; and in states of humiliation we include every state which is preparatory, for every such state is comparatively one of servitude or pupilage, and looks to a higher as its end. The Lord, as a son, learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Made of a woman under the law, in his first states he obeyed the law as one under subjection to it; but in his second and ascending states he acted by the law, and not from it, except from it as the law of eternal righteousness and order, which, as the Word, he in himself was, and which he became as to the humanity he assumed and glorified, for the redemption and salvation of the human race. This greatest of all events, the manifestation of God in the flesh, by birth of a human mother, comes now to be considered.

18, 19. *Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise, &c.* If when Moses approached the burning bush he was admonished by the Lord out of the midst of it to put off his shoes from off his feet, for the place whereon he stood was holy ground, so does the voice of God call on us to remove every carnal feeling and unworthy thought when we approach the subject of the miraculous conception; for here, indeed, we stand on holiest ground. We may well go aside, and must indeed go aside, out of the ordinary course of nature, to see this great sight, the antitype of the burning bush,—how Divine Love, in its ardour for the salvation of man, could be manifested in frail human nature without consuming it, and out of the midst of that lowly tabernacle could proclaim redemption to a captive race. This great event should be contemplated with the profoundest reverence. By none other could redemption be effected, but by One who was the offspring of a divine Father and of a human mother. So the evangelist is careful to record the divine paternity of the child Jesus. And not only was the incarnation of Jehovah necessary for redemption, but faith in Jesus as Jehovah is necessary for salvation. The Lord works his salvation in us through our faith in him as the divine-human Saviour.

By the leadings of Divine Providence Mary had been espoused to Joseph. Whatever may have been the immediate purpose of this providential arrangement, there were no doubt spiritual reasons both for the betrothal of Mary to Joseph and for Joseph being legally

recognized as the father of Jesus, as well as for the Lord's descent being traced through his line, which all admit it is in one of the genealogies at least.

Mary, the "highly favoured among women," represented the church. Joseph shared with her in this representation. Considered as husband and wife, Mary represented the church as to good, and Joseph the church as to truth. They were not, however, married, but espoused. And espousals or betrothings represent the conjunction of good and truth in the internal man, whilst marriage represents their conjunction in the external man also. But there was something peculiar in the connection of Mary and Joseph in relation to Jesus. They stood not in the ordinary connection of husband and wife, so far as respected him. It was *before they came together* that *Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost*. The relation of Joseph to Mary, in reference to the child Jesus, was like that of the dispensation to the church. By the church we mean the spiritual principles that constitute vital religion in the soul; and by the dispensation we mean the ecclesiastical form which these principles assume externally in the world. The church is one; dispensations are various. The one indivisible church has been embodied in several dispensations, differing widely from each other. There have existed in this world the Adamic, the Noetic, the Israelitish, and the Christian dispensations. Each of these was the outward visible form of the one invisible church, and was so far *a church* as *the church* was within it. While dispensations pass away, the church remains. Were the church to expire with the dispensation, there would be an end of religion, and universal ruin would ensue. Divine mercy provides that some remnant of the church shall be saved; and from this a new beginning is made. This remnant of the vital element of religion is the church—the "woman" to whom the promise was originally given, that her seed should bruise the serpent's head. This living principle, preserved in and descending through all the ages, was represented by the Virgin, the second Eve, whose seed was to bruise the serpent's head. In relation to this vital principle, which constitutes the church, and of which the Virgin Mary was the symbol, Joseph represented the outward dispensation with which it was connected. Hitherto the church had been representative; now it was to be actual. Hitherto the church had only been a virgin, a bride; now she was to become also a wife. Mary, as the bride of Joseph, represented that condition of the church. No true and completed marriage

could exist between the Lord and the Church, nor between good and truth in the human mind, until the Lord had effected the marriage of divine good and truth in his humanity, and thence the union of the Divine and the human in his own person. Since the time of the Incarnation the church is both the Bride and Wife of the Lamb. In Joseph's espousals with Mary, and his guardianship of her and of her infant son, we see a beautiful type of the connection of the old dispensation with the new church, while her doctrine is yet in its infancy. We therefore hear little of Joseph after the early life of Jesus. He passes away from the scene unnoticed. And as if to show that the old dispensation had completed its appointed use in succouring the young church with her "man-child," and that the time had come when the church should be placed under another and higher guardianship, the Lord on the cross assigned Mary to the care of the beloved Apostle John, "and from that hour that disciple took her to his own house." John was not, indeed, to be unto Mary as a husband, but as a son. For when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother." Beautiful is this display of tenderness, in the hour of his agony, by the Lord towards his mother, Mary! But while it affords a great example, it has a high and holy significance. John represented the good of charity—that grace by which the Christian church is to be characterized. When the Lord consigned Mary to the care of John, he instructed all succeeding ages, through a symbolical act, that where the good of charity is, there is his living church. And although Mary was consigned to the care of John as a mother to her son, John thus representing the Lord rather than Joseph, yet he supplied the place of both, since he afforded Mary that home and protection which she had enjoyed as the wife of Joseph and as the mother of Jesus. We need not say how lovingly and tenderly the beloved disciple must have fulfilled the sacred charge he had received from his dying Saviour, and how beautiful a type his household must have presented of the church, when she has found her dwelling-place in love to the Lord, as manifested in charity to man.

This is the internal historical sense. We now come to the strictly spiritual meaning. We have already spoken of the conception as a divine and holy event, having for its object the redemption of the world. We now speak of it as it is realized in the experience of

those to whom the Lord comes as a Saviour. Jesus, as the supreme good and truth, is still conceived in the heart of every regenerate one; and this is the beginning of the new life. And the same law presides over the less as over the greater. Every living spiritual principle that is begotten in the soul has a divine Father and a human mother: it has its soul from God as a Father, and its body from the church as a mother. The soul of life, which is love, comes from God; the body of truth, by which that soul is clothed, is derived from the church. And this body, which the church provides as a covering for the heaven-derived soul, is at first, like the Lord's maternal humanity, frail and imperfect, and subject to trial, suffering, and death. The Saviour begotten and born in us still goes through the trials and temptations of the personal Christ, and must die in us, and in us rise again, before regeneration is completed. And that in the Lord which was tempted and which suffered is that which is tempted and which suffers in us. Truth was that in the Lord which was tempted; not truth in its divine state, but truth finited by reception in finite minds, as in Jesus divinity was clothed with finite and imperfect humanity. This was the SON OF MAN, the name always given to the Lord in the gospels when his temptations and sufferings are spoken of. Good in him was above all temptation: and this was the Holy Thing, the SON OF GOD, or that in him which he inherited from the Father. So with us. The truth which we derive from the church as our spiritual mother, as we at first comprehend it, is external and imperfect, and therefore open to assault, and even subject to death, and must die to make way for the rising into life of that which has been conceived in us by our Father in heaven. In this individual and practical sense, the woman—the virgin—is love in the heart, and her seed—her son—is faith; and it is faith derived from love that crushes in us the dominion of evil, which is the head of the serpent.

19. But the living principle begotten in the heart is not at first acknowledged by the understanding, nor is it intellectually accepted till after doubt and temptation. These are the trials of Joseph. Mary's conception was Joseph's temptation. When he became aware that his betrothed was with child, he resolved to put her away; and the only favour he intended to show to his supposed unfaithful bride was to do it privily. How wonderful are the ways of the Most High! She who carried in her womb the future Messiah, the Holy Thing, the Saviour of the world, is exposed to the suspicion, even by her betrothed husband, of being an adulteress, and is in danger of being sent forth into the world with the brand upon her forehead of

the deepest infamy that can fall to the lot of woman! But such are the ways of God's dealing with his children. Whom he loves he rebukes and chastens. His truth begotten in them exposes them to chastisement. It brings into manifestation their deep hereditary corruptions, from which suspicion springs, and conflict is the only means by which they can be overcome.

20. But he who permits the trial opens a door of escape. *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.* Human wisdom may suggest that this message might have been sent, and this assurance given, before the dark suspicion had clouded the mind of the just and seemingly injured Joseph, and saved him all the perplexity and mental agony he endured. But here we have another instance of God's way of dealing with his creatures. He sees not as man sees, and therefore acts not always as man would act. He knows the times and the seasons when suffering should be permitted and when relief should come. He suffers us to be tempted, because he knows the necessity and use of temptation; but he suffers us not to be tempted above that we are able to bear, and with the trial he provides a way of escape. The door—not of hope, but of assurance—was opened to Joseph, and will be opened in the heaviest trials to every "just man."

The assurance came to him in sleep—was embodied in a dream; and that dream was inspired by an angel, who appeared to him in it, and conveyed to him a message of peace from the God of consolation. That which comes in a dream is spiritually that which enters the mind, not in the clear light of direct perception, but in the dim twilight of indirect apprehension—in an obscure state. The angel salutes him as a son of David. David represented the Lord as to divine truth, and a son of David is one who is born of the Lord's truth—that is, one who is born of the good of truth, by doing what truth teaches him to do. And this did Joseph. The angel tells him to fear not to take unto him Mary his wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. This is just what the understanding, from its natural side, when the world acts upon it, rebels against; but when the Lord enters the mind by an internal way, through heaven, and acts upon it, then, from its spiritual side, it sees and acknowledges that which the Spirit of God produces in the heart.

21. The angel further instructs Joseph that Mary, who had

thus conceived, *shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* Conception is the reception of a principle in the mind, and birth is the bringing forth of that principle into the life. When brought forth into the life it first exists actually. When Mary brought forth her first-born son, Joseph was to name him. The function of the understanding is to know and acknowledge, and also to give a quality to that which belongs to the will—and all this is implied in giving a name. Adam gave names to all creatures, spiritually to teach us that man in his primeval state knew, as man in a regenerate state knows, the quality of all his own affections. The church gives the Lord his name when she sees and acknowledges him in his true character, and embodies the truth as it is in Jesus, not only in true doctrine, but in a holy life. Yet the name, as well as the instructions on whom he was to bestow it, came from heaven. That name was JESUS—the highest, the holiest, the most beloved name that angels can pronounce or men can utter. And the reason for calling the child by this name, as it was proclaimed in heaven, is worthy of being echoed upon earth—“for he shall save his people from their sins.” The name expresses the purpose and the work on the part of God, and the deliverance to be experienced on the part of man. Sin is the curse, the root of all disorder and misery both in this world and in the next. What deliverance can compare with this? Deliverance from sin, not merely from the guilt or the punishment of sin, but from sin itself, is that which is promised. And, indeed, what else could be promised? How is it possible that guilt and suffering can be severed from sin? The supposed possibility arises from the notion that sin is from ourselves, and its punishment is from God, and that if God will but remit the punishment, the sinner will be safe. But God is not the author of punishment. The punishment of sin is in the sin itself, and flows from it as an effect from its cause, as bitter waters from a bitter fountain. There is no salvation, therefore, but salvation from sin. If the remission of punishment had been all that was required, there would have been no need for the Lord to have come into the world, for he is infinite in mercy, and desires the happiness of all his creatures, even of those who are in hell. Nor is there any obstacle arising from his attribute of justice. The theological scheme of God finding out a way of reconciling his mercy and his justice, by laying the guilt and the punishment of sin on Jesus as a substitute for sinners,

is merely an ingenious device of school logic for solving a difficulty of man's own creating. The divine attributes of mercy and justice can never be at variance. And if they were, they never could be reconciled by any such artificial means as that which human wisdom has proposed. How can God satisfy his justice by that which is in itself unjust? But supposing the demands of justice were set aside, infinite mercy could not save sinners from misery without saving them from sin. This salvation was the purpose of God's coming into the world, and the incarnation was the only means by which he could effect it.

The angel limits this salvation to the people of the Lord. In one sense, all people are included in this promise, in accordance with the words of the angels to the shepherds, who proclaimed tidings of great joy which should be to *all* people. But the Lord's *people*, in a restricted, or in the internal sense, are the spiritual, as distinguished from the celestial, who are meant by *nations*. And the Lord came to save the spiritual, or those who had fallen from the celestial state, in which man was created. We become the Lord's saved *people* when we receive him as the Truth and Good of *spiritual* life; or, he is Jesus, our Saviour, and we are his people, saved from our sins, when we receive his love in his truth. For Jesus is the Lord's name as Love itself, as Christ is his name as the Truth itself; and his people are those who receive his love by his truth. Truth itself does not save, but the reception of the Lord's love in his truth saves. In brief, those who are in the knowledge of his truth are his people, and when these receive his love they are saved from their sins.

22, 23. We are told that *all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us*. This famous prophecy received its accomplishment in the Lord's being born of a virgin mother. There is nothing said in the prophecy of the virgin being overshadowed by the power of the Highest, but the divine agency is implied in the fact of a virgin conceiving and giving birth to a son. The fact itself is all-important. Without it there could have been no redemption. A mere man could not have redeemed the world. And it is to be considered that Jesus, even as to his humanity, was, by conception, entirely different from any other man. He was not different, as some suppose, by being without hereditary evil, but by inheriting a divine principle from the Divinity, by whom

the humanity was begotten. It was by virtue of the humanity being, as to the internal man, derived from God, and being divine, that God could be actually and personally manifested in the person of Jesus Christ, and be truly and savingly therein Emmanuel, God with us.

By assuming our nature God came near to us, and so became our Redeemer and Saviour. This nearness is not of space, for in this respect God's presence is ever the same. By incarnation God came savingly near to us as fallen human beings, near to our thoughts and affections. This is not identical with the Lord's sensible presence, as in the days of his flesh. His nearness to us was increased, instead of being diminished, by his resurrection and ascension. For by his glorification the Lord became more, instead of less, human; and the more perfectly human his humanity became, the more intimately present was he, and is he, with his creatures. In his divine humanity he is, intimately and savingly, God with us. Jesus was not actually named Emmanuel, but in Scripture names were given to express the character of those who bore them; and therefore, when prophecy says that Jesus was to be called Emmanuel, it means that he was to be Emmanuel, or God with us. It is a matter of no consequence to us that Jesus was not called by this name; but it is a matter of the greatest consequence to us, and to all men, that he was what the name expresses. The peculiar importance and blessedness of the incarnation consists in it making Jehovah GOD WITH US—not simply God on our side, as some interpret the name, but God present with us in his divine humanity. The name may be understood to express both these meanings.

Literally fulfilled as this prophecy was in the birth of the Lord, it is capable of being spiritually accomplished in every one of us. The virgin is the emblem of the pure affection, in the minds of the faithful, through which the Lord's divine truth can descend and be manifested as their Emmanuel. Love in the heart is that by which the truth is conceived and brought forth. But what in our individual experience are the promise and the fulfilment? Knowledge is promise, life is fulfilment; the states formed in us in early life are prophetic of states to be accomplished in us by regeneration. Hope is promise; possession is fulfilment. In us, indeed, the promise may fail. Many who give early promise of a virtuous and religious manhood never fulfil it. Failure is the result of our own faithlessness. The Lord cannot fail. If we trust in him, and work together with him, he will bring it to pass.

24. *Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord*

had bidden him, &c. Sleep is a natural state, waking is a spiritual state; sleep is a state of the external man, waking is a state of the internal man. The reason of this signification of sleep is, that when the external man is active, the internal, which is the real man, is as if asleep. When eagerly engaged in the business or pleasures of the world, sensuous affections and thoughts are awake, but the spiritual are asleep. These alternations of state are necessary and useful. Even in our state of spiritual sleep the angel of the Lord is with us, telling us what we should do; and we fulfil his commands if, when we are raised from sleep, we do as the instructing angel bids us. The expression, to rise from sleep, is significative; for to pass from an external to an internal, or from a natural to a spiritual state, is to experience an actual elevation of the thoughts and affections above the things of time and sense, and thus to become awake to the concerns of eternity and the requirements of the spiritual life. Being raised from sleep, *Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him;* dismissing his suspicions, he took unto him Mary his wife. In states of temptation, such as Joseph had experienced, truth is as if separate from good; but when the temptation is ended, truth, which has been tempted, and tempted to suspect and reject good, takes that good to itself as its true partner in the heavenly marriage, but enters not into full conjunction with it till the first-born comes into the world. It is important to consider what, in relation to the Lord, is meant by the first-born. In Jesus as the first-born was realized all that had been represented by the first-born in the representative church of the Israelites. A peculiar sanctity and importance attached to the first-born, both of man and animals, and even to the first-fruits of the earth. Every first-born son was to be holy unto the Lord, every beast that opened the womb was to be sacrificed to him, and the first-fruits were to be presented to him. All these represented the Lord as the first-born. But this cannot be merely in reference to Jesus as the son of Mary; for he is called the first, as well as the only, begotten of God: "I will make him my first-born (or begotten), higher than the kings of the earth;" and he is "the first-begotten from the dead." We have already indicated that Jesus was the first-born of every creature, as being the first of every creature spiritually born, and the first-fruits of the resurrection from the death which the fall had brought upon the human race. It is similar with him as the first-born son of Mary and of God. In the supreme sense the first-born among the Israelites represented the Lord as to divine love, or essential goodness; the Lord was therefore the first-born in the divine sense

when his humanity was fully glorified, and made divine goodness itself. In respect to man, his first-born in the regeneration is the principle of goodness, which, indeed, is first both in the order of time and of rank. "With infants the Lord first infuses the good of innocence, by virtue of which man is man." Innocence is the first-born quality in man; the Lord was the first-born, as innocence itself. The innocence of infancy, which is the first, is also the last; for by regeneration man returns into the innocence of his infancy, perfected by knowledge and experience, by which the innocence of ignorance becomes the innocence of wisdom. The good of innocence is therefore twice born; and this was the case with the Lord as well as with man. He was the first-born of Mary by nativity, and the first-born of God by glorification; in him innocence was the first and the last.

25. The historical fact respecting Joseph and Mary, that he *knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son*, contains the spiritual truth, that complete union of the will and understanding is effected, not by the conception, but by the birth of the living principle. They are united in their fruits. Charity and faith are united in good works. Their union is indeed necessary to produce them; but only in good works, and especially in that work meant by the first born is their union complete and permanent.

The infant Saviour born into the world, Joseph *called his name Jesus*. Luke, in relating this circumstance, adds, "which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

The record of an act previously commanded or announced is intended to express effect, and in this all previous ends and efforts are comprehended. Hence, in the naming of the holy child, God and the church in heaven and the church on earth were acting in unison; as the purpose of the Lord's becoming what the name Jesus implied, the Saviour, was to bring all things in heaven and earth into harmonious action with himself.

The Lord's advent into the world, which we have now considered, is one of the loftiest and holiest themes that can engage the attention of man. The birth into the world of one who is to repair the ruin brought upon mankind by the fall, must be regarded as an event of unspeakable importance and transcendent glory. The promise of the Most High, repeated by the prophets in a thousand forms, heightened by the brightest imagery and most glowing descriptions, and the hopes of the faithful cherished through a thousand generations, are at last to be realized. The seed of the woman, who is to bruise the head of the serpent, is now born into the world.

The peculiar condition of the infant Saviour is marvellous in itself, and wonderfully adapted to the purpose for which the Lord is manifested. Man had fallen, and his sins had separated between him and his God. The separation of man from the Supreme Good and Truth had produced darkness, disorder, and misery in the world. In the Saviour, begotten of a Divine Father and born of a human mother, the divine and human natures, so long and so completely estranged, are again brought together, and in him they are to be reconciled and united into one, by the divine becoming human and the human divine. The union of the divine and the human in the person of the Lord is the grand central truth of christianity. The reconciliation of man to God is the purpose of the incarnation, and the aim of Christianity. The reconciliation of the human to the divine is first to be effected in the person of Christ, and this constitutes the great work of At-one-ment. This work of atonement, first accomplished in the person of the Saviour, is the means by which *we* receive the atonement, and become reconciled to God; for the reconciliation, effected once for all in the person of the Lord himself, may now be effected in us. But this great work of reconciliation or atonement is yet before the infant Saviour. In the first-born son of Mary the union of the divine and human exists only potentially, or in its germ. They are now, indeed, one person, but they have not yet become one essence. Jesus is even now God and man, but he has yet to become God-man. He is divine and human, but he has to become divine-human. He is the first-born of Mary, but he has yet to become the first-born of God. In one word, his humanity, now natural and finite, has to be glorified, and made divine and infinite. The painful process by which this glorification is to be effected is yet to come. The infant, so feeble, is to become a man of war; so peaceful, is to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The wilderness, and Gethsemane, and the cross are still before him. He is to be tempted in all points as we are, yet, unlike us in our temptations, he is to be without sin; he is to pour out his soul unto death, that he may overcome him that has the power of death, and make death the gate of life, not only to himself, but to all who will follow him in the regeneration. Born in human weakness of a frail human mother, he is yet to be declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead. Such is the child born, such is his great work, and such its glorious end. To reconcile us unto himself is the beneficent purpose of his incarnation, the end of his labours, his

sufferings, his triumphs. He was born into the world that he might be born in us; he was tempted that he might succour us in our temptations; he died that we might become dead indeed unto sin; he rose that we might rise from the dead, become new creatures, and walk with him in newness of life; and he ascended into heaven that he might elevate us to the mansions he has prepared for us, that where he is, there we may be also. Well may we hail his coming in the words of the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

CHAPTER II.

1. *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.* The birth of the Lord in Bethlehem was accidental, yet providential; it took place where it was neither intended nor expected, but where prophecy had fixed it. "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2). But the Lord's birth took place in Bethlehem, not merely to fulfil a divine prediction, but to teach a spiritual truth. In Scripture place signifies state; for the reason that in the spiritual world place is determined by state; so that heaven is a place of happiness because it is the abode of those who are in a state of happiness. To present this truth representatively upon earth, Canaan was chosen as a type of heaven, and every spot in the holy land became the symbol of some particular state or principle that enters into the general state.

This signification of Bethlehem appears from the first circumstance recorded in connection with it. As Jacob journeyed from Bethel to Mamre, to go to his father Isaac, he passed through Ephratah, where Rachel gave birth to Benjamin. This journey signified progression from a less to a more perfect state, Ephratah representing an intermediate state, through which it is necessary to pass from one to the other. In particular, it signified the progression of the external man, who is Jacob, towards union with the internal man, who is Isaac; and Benjamin, who was born in the way, represented the principle which serves as a uniting medium between them. Bethlehem and Benjamin have, therefore, the same general signification. The representative character of Benjamin was exemplified at a later period in his being the medium through whom Joseph and

his brethren were reconciled to each other, or rather, through whom the loving and forgiving Joseph reconciled and united his unmerciful brethren to himself. Bethlehem was also the birth-place of David, of whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, and who was a type of the Lord in his regal character, as the Ruler who was to bring all things into harmonious subordination to himself. David therefore uttered the prediction, "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob. Lo, we heard of it at *Ephratah*: we found it in the fields of the wood" (Ps. cxxxii. 4-7). The signification of Bethlehem is further indicated by its situation. It was in the land of Judah, but on the border where it was connected with the land of Benjamin; and as Judah and Benjamin, when they formed the kingdom of Judah, represented the internal and external of the celestial church, and of the celestial man, Bethlehem signified the uniting medium between them. As a uniting medium, Bethlehem represented, in an exalted sense, the written Word, as the medium for uniting God and man. And here we see the significance of its name—the house of bread—the Word being the store-house of the bread of heaven, which feeds the soul.

Everything, therefore, conspired to make Bethlehem the appropriate birth-place of the Saviour, with whom all that was historical was also representative. Jesus was born in Bethlehem to represent that he was the Word made flesh, the Mediator between God and man; the true Bread that came down from heaven, to give life unto the world. The human nature which the Divine assumed and glorified in the world is the very form of God, the medium through which he reconciles his rebellious children to himself, the fountain from which he imparts to them of his love, which is life.

Understood in reference to the Lord, there is a deep significance in the name of his birth-place being changed from Ephratah to Bethlehem, and in the name of Rachel's son, born there, being changed from Benoni to Benjamin. Bethlehem (the house of bread) is spiritually distinguished from Ephratah (fruitful) in this, that bread is more expressive of the divine good as it is in the Lord's humanity, adequate to the wants and accommodated to the reception of fallen man. The change of name in the case of Benjamin, as a type of the Lord, is not less significant. The name Benoni (son of my sorrow), given him by his mother, is expressive of the state of humiliation incident to the Lord as the son of Mary, for it was in

respect to the maternal humanity that he was the man of sorrows; while the name Benjamin (son of my right hand), given him by his father, is expressive of the Lord's state of exaltation, which belongs to him as the Son of God, or to the divine humanity, which exaltation is expressed in the gospel by the Son sitting at the right hand of the Father.

While Bethlehem represented the Lord's humanity as the great medium of communion and conjunction between God and man, it signified in a more particular sense that which served as a medium for uniting the divine and the human in the person of the Lord himself. The Lord inherited by birth the principle and power by which that union was effected. In this respect he differed from all other men.

"All men whatsoever are born natural, with the ability to become spiritual or celestial, but the Lord alone was born spiritual-celestial. From his birth he had a propensity to good and a desire for truth, every other man being naturally inclined to evil and falsity." The reason of this is obvious; every man derives his ruling love from his father, and this in fallen humanity is nothing but evil. But the Lord had not a human but a divine Father; and therefore he had those inclinations in favour of good and truth of which all others are naturally destitute. The Lord alone was thus the true Bethlehemite.

While the Lord was born in the town of Bethlehem, he was born *in the days of Herod the king*. He who was born King of the Jews was born in the days of one who disputed his claim to that title, and endeavoured by the most diabolical means to prevent his making his way to the throne. How fitting an agent was this cruel and unscrupulous king of the power of hell, whose dominion was threatened by the coming of the Lord! How natural a symbol of the powers of the church and the world, that had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement! (Isa. xxviii. 15.)

The *days* of the wicked Herod represented the *states* of the Jews at the time the Lord was born. The Lord had come to restore the government of truth and righteousness in the earth, and it is evident how much the world stood in need of his interference. He had come as a Lamb in the midst of wolves, as innocence in the midst of the foulest corruption, and it is not surprising that his infancy was one of danger and his life one of persecution.

In those days there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem. The visit of these Orientals is a very interesting feature in the history of our Lord's birth into the world. It shows that a knowledge of ancient prophecy respecting the coming of the Messiah had been

preserved in regions distant from the land of Israel. We need not suppose that these wise ones among the nations had derived all their knowledge of the Lord's coming from the Jews, or the Jewish Scriptures. It may, in part, have descended to them from a more ancient and widely diffused revelation, from which portions of our present Word have been derived, some of the principles and facts of which were embodied in the mythologies of the nations of antiquity, and traces of which are still found in almost every corner of the earth. In the time of that ancient Word, a clearer knowledge of divine truth and of spiritual things prevailed. Men knew the true nature of inspiration, and saw in revelation spiritual truth clothed in natural images as their corresponding and expressive forms. It was some remnant of this knowledge that enabled the wise men to recognize in the newborn star a sign of the birth of the promised Saviour. They knew a star to be a symbol of the knowledge of truth, and eminently of him who is the truth itself. The star, we may infer, was a spiritual object, and their spiritual sight was opened to behold it. It was a star that shone out in the heaven of angels, not in the heaven of men. None on earth, so far as appears from the gospel, beheld it but the magi, whose spiritual discernment enabled them to interpret its meaning.

The wise men among the Gentiles, and the shepherds among the Jews, were the only ones who received any outward intimation of the Saviour's birth, and were the only ones who came to salute the Lord at his coming. The wise men represented those out of the church who possess spiritual intelligence, the shepherds, those within the church who are principled in spiritual charity. The means by which they were directed to the infant Saviour correspond to their different characters and circumstances. The shepherds were directed by the audible voice of the angels, the wise men by the silent language of the star; the one by hearing, the other by sight. Both announcements came to them by night, for the day of the church had closed, and the whole world lay in darkness. There is another difference. The angels directed the shepherds to Bethlehem; the star, if it guided the magi at all, led them to Jerusalem. Those within the church receive direct information respecting the Lord, and can go directly to him; those who are without must first be led into the church, to be initiated into its doctrines, before they can come to the Lord and worship him, not in spirit only, but in truth. The wise men had come from the East, which has a high signification. The East, in the highest sense, is an emblem of the Lord, and of love to

him; but, as here, of the Lord in his rising, when religious light first dawns in the heart. And to come from the East to Jerusalem is spiritually to advance from the first general perception of divine truth to its distinct and certain knowledge, thence to proceed to the practical attainment of the greatest and highest of all truths—that the Lord is our Saviour.

Were it not that some higher signification is involved in this circumstance, we can hardly suppose but that the star would have led the magi at first, as it did at last, to Bethlehem. According to all human appearance another advantage would have resulted from their being led directly to the Lord's birth-place. The jealousy and wrath of Herod would not have been excited, and the innocents of Bethlehem would have been spared. But here again we must acknowledge the hand of an over-ruling providence; and here again we may see revelation proving its own spirituality.

2. Come to Jerusalem, the magi inquired, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews?* They did not ask if the Saviour was born; of this they were convinced; they only inquired where he was to be found. This is the first time that the Lord is spoken of in the gospels as a king. The Lord, we have seen, is a king as Divine Truth, which is his regal principle; for by this he rules in his kingdom. But the question of the magi, *Where?* is an important one even to us. What with them was a question of place, with us is a question of state. This is the moral meaning of *where* in Scripture. When God called to Adam, and said, *Where art thou?* it was to demand of fallen man where, morally, his disobedience had placed him. More hopeful is the question respecting him who was born to restore the kingdom of righteousness. It is a question that every one has to ask for himself. As the kingdom of God is within us, so is its king, who must be born within us, that the throne of his dominion may be established in our hearts. If our desire to know where the Lord is born be, that we may *come and worship him*, we may learn where he is to be found. But there are discouraging effects which this inquiry produces, and its object cannot be attained without tribulation. This knowledge we obtain by the doctrines of the Word, as the magi did through the priests in Jerusalem.

3. When Herod heard of the coming of the magi, and of their object, *he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.* In this we see the beginning of the hostility of the Jewish nation to the Lord. The jealousy of Herod was excited, and his wrath was provoked by the remote probability, perhaps the bare possibility, of a rival claimant

to his throne. Whether we regard Herod as a sample or a symbol of the people he reigned over, his feelings, like his conduct, are highly significant. They exhibit, we cannot say an awakened conscience, but a sense of guilt, and that indescribable fear which often arises from a too certain but yet hidden cause. But we do not need to look back to the events of eighteen centuries ago to study this problem. We have the ground of this fear in our own hearts, and can trace it in our own experience. In the little world within there is, if we are converted, not only a Bethlehem, but a Jerusalem, and not only the magi and the shepherds, but a Herod and a compliant hierarchy. In our own selfhood there are all the evils and falsities that have ever been exhibited by the worst of men; and if they have not come out in our conduct, they slumber in our hearts, though we may be little aware of their existence till they are aroused by something opposed to their ends and inimical to their rule. But it is for our good that they are excited; and in this fact we may see the wisdom of Providence in guiding the wise men to Jerusalem, which troubled Herod and all connected with him. Indeed, we see in this, as in many other instances in the Word, that the mere presence of good arouses evil, as in the world and in the church, so in the human heart. It is expedient that it should. How else could evil be cast out? It is not enough that we receive good; the good must overcome and disinherit the evil, for without this, good itself would be disinherited, or, what is still worse, corrupted. In this trouble of Herod and all Jerusalem, we have therefore a representation of the trouble our own corrupt selfhood experiences when the day star that ushers in the sun of righteousness has risen in our hearts, and we desire to see the fulness of its glory. The disturbance and excitement both of the evils of the will and of the falses of the understanding is here meant; for evil in the will is meant by Herod, and falses in the understanding by Jerusalem, the people of the city being understood.

4. Herod complied with the wish of the wise men. *He gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, and demanded of them where Christ should be born.* God makes the wrath of man to praise him. Evil men for selfish ends can perform good uses; of which Herod is an example.

The natural man for natural ends employs sacred agencies and means to compass his evil ends. The chief priests and scribes of the people are the interpreters of the Word, and abstractly the interpretation itself, by which its doctrines are known, especially those relating

to the Lord, which the righteous use to promote his glory, and the wicked to advance their own. The wise men call Jesus the King of the Jews, but Herod calls him Christ. This name, "Anointed," is expressive of the Lord as the Truth anointed with the "holy oil" of the Divine love; but when used by the evil, as by Herod, it expresses in their minds the Lord's truth separate from his love, and thus opposed to it.

5. In answer to Herod's demand where Christ should be born, the priests *say unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea.* We have already seen the meaning of Bethlehem in reference to the Lord himself, who was born there; but it is symbolical of the Lord's birth-place as respects the regenerate. Whether we speak of the birth within us of Jesus, as the object of faith, or the birth of the faith of which Jesus is the object, it amounts to the same; for the Lord dwells in us by faith; nay, in the very truths which we believe, for these are from himself. Bethlehem within us is faith derived from charity, or, what is the same, truth derived from good. The faith which is not of charity, the truth which is not of good, is not yet actual and living. Faith is new born when it first begins to live from charity. This is Bethlehem, where Jesus is born within us as the Saviour of our souls. The Lord has a still more interior habitation within us, to which the star, if it has risen in our hearts, will finally conduct us.

6. The priests cited the prophet, by whom the Lord's birth had been foretold. *And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.* The explanation of this verse has been anticipated, and need not be repeated. But there is a difference between the prediction as it occurs in the prophet and as given by the evangelist, which, as one of several similar divarications, it may not be without interest or instruction to notice. It may be presumed that the difference in such cases is that which exists between a truth in its first reception, and in its complete development. In the present case, in the prophet Bethlehem is said to be little among the thousands of Judah; here it is said to be not the least among its princes. Commentators have remarked that there is no real discrepancy in these two statements, since a place may be little and yet not the least. But it is a poor compliment to an inspired book to be able to say that two different statements are not contradictory: we should be able to see that the difference is instructive, and this, we think, may be seen to be the case in the present instance.

(1.) In the prophet the place of the Lord's birth is called Beth-

lehem-Ephratah; in the gospel it is called Bethlehem in the land of Juda. Bethlehem and Ephratah are two different names of the same place; they therefore signify the same principle: but Ephratah, as already remarked, signifies the principle in an earlier and less perfect state. In the gospel Ephratah is left out; and instead of Bethlehem-Ephratah we have Bethlehem in Juda. Bethlehem, instead of being joined to a less, is joined to a more perfect name, and therefore describes a more perfect and elevated state. (2.) In the prophet, Bethlehem is said to be one among the thousands of Judah; in the gospel it is said to be one among the princes (or rulers) of Juda. Rulers present the idea of superior principles that govern; thousands, that of inferior principles that are governed. Here again we have a more exalted idea in the gospel than in the prophet. (3.) In the prophet, Bethlehem is called little; in the gospel it is said to be not the least. Little expresses the positive idea of what is small; not the least expresses the comparative idea of what is greater than some others. Altogether, then, the gospel version of the passage seems to exalt the sense of that given in the prophet, as if to express the fact that Jesus had magnified the prophets as well as the law. The prophet adds, that as governor the Lord should *rule his people Israel*. To rule means also, here as elsewhere, to feed. The Lord's government, of the faithful at least, who are *his people Israel*, is not only *over* them but *in* them. His love and truth rule in their affections and thoughts, which they also feed. He rules as a shepherd, who at once pastures and protects his flock.

7. When Herod had ascertained where Christ should be born, *he privily called the wise men, and inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared*. Place and time both signify state; but place signifies state in relation to good, and time, state in relation to truth. The inquiry of Herod, whose secret object—meant by his privily calling the wise men—was the destruction of the infant Saviour, implies that the ungodly desire the extinction both of the Lord's goodness and truth. Although as regards the Lord himself this is beyond their power, though not beyond their desires, they seek to destroy these principles in themselves and others. And the better to effect this, they endeavour to trace the knowledge of divine things to its beginning, as Herod wished to know when the star first appeared.

8. When the king sent the magi to Bethlehem, he said, *Go, and search diligently for the young child, and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also*. He

desired to learn from them where in Bethlehem the infant king was to be found. Particulars which illustrate general truths are communicable only to the good: they are hid from the worldly wise and prudent, who, if they possessed them, would use them to destroy everything good and true, root and branch. By Divine Providence, that which Herod above all things desired to know was hid from him. The magi were led to the spot where the Saviour was, without any of that diligent search which Herod had so earnestly enjoined.

9. *When they heard the king they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.* The re-appearance of the star at the moment when its encouragement and direction were needed shows that it was not a natural but a supernatural object, sent to conduct them to the very spot where the infant Saviour was.

This star in the heavens symbolizes knowledge respecting the Lord. Its second appearance is an instructive circumstance, considered in relation to its first. The first knowledge is general, the second is particular. Particular illustrates general knowledge, and guides to the object which we desire and are in search of. The star, when it first appeared, indicated the birth of the Saviour; at its second appearing it conducted them to where the young child was. When the day star first arises in our hearts, its presence is a kind of general dictate; but when it appears to us after instruction, it is an open vision and manifest revelation.

10. No wonder that the magi, *when they saw the star, rejoiced with exceeding great joy.* The internal perception of truth—especially the greatest of all truths, that which relates to the Lord as their Saviour—is a source of the highest and purest joy to the hearts of those who have earnestly desired life, and are eager to pursue the path which leads to it.

11. *And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother.* In speaking (v. 5) of Bethlehem as spiritually meaning the faith of charity, we mentioned that the Lord had a still more interior habitation than that in the regenerate mind. That more interior habitation is charity itself, which is within faith as its soul or vital principle. The faith which is from charity being signified by Bethlehem, the charity which is in faith is signified by the house. Faith is as a city, and charity is as a house within it. The Lord dwells with us in our faith, but our charity is his habitation. It is ever here where the star of heavenly knowledge stands, and tells us to enter. Nor is this part of the narrative without an instructive

lesson to us. We too must come into the house. The journey of the wise men is a history of our spiritual progress, and the last step not less significant than the rest. We must not only advance from knowledge to faith, but from faith to charity; and we must enter into and be in charity itself, before we can be in the actual presence of the Lord, and worship him as our King and Saviour. Let us see in what his true worship consists.

When the wise men had entered into the house, and saw the young child, *they fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.* Before we explain, let us pause to contemplate those pious heathens, from whose conduct we may learn wisdom.

Out of the church, which possessed the oracles of God, and with nothing but the dim light of tradition to guide them, they had yet a sufficient knowledge of, and a strong enough faith in, the promise of the Lord's coming, to give them a perfect reliance on its accomplishment, and to enable them to look forward to it as an event in which they had a deep and personal interest. Their knowledge of the correspondence between natural and spiritual things enabled them at once to recognize in the celestial messenger an announcement of the event for which they were eagerly looking. When the joyful tidings came, with what readiness did they set out in their long and arduous journey, carrying with them the most costly gifts as an offering to the infant King! And when they found him, not in a splendid palace, surrounded with regal pomp, but in an obscure dwelling, cradled in his mother's arms, they had no misgivings or repugnances, but prostrated themselves in profound homage before him, and presented him their precious gifts, the symbols of a far more precious adoration. How much may we learn from their example! Do they not teach us to love the Lord for his own sake, independent of external considerations? May their conduct not justly lead us to inquire how far our devotion to the Saviour is influenced by the popularity of his cause, the pomp of his service, the dignity and wealth that his name confers? Nations now own his sway, and kings bow down before him. How deserving of honour, how worthy of imitation, those who worshipped him when he had neither name nor power! True, our eye is not attracted by a star, nor our ear by a choir of angels; but we have the constant testimony of still more eminent witnesses in the written Word of God, and only require to look and listen, to find ourselves in the presence of messengers proclaiming the same glad tidings, and inviting us to render the same homage to our King and Saviour.

But let us attend to the purely spiritual wisdom which the incidents teach us. We spiritually fall down before Jesus when we abase our self-hood: we worship him when we exalt his love and truth in our hearts: we open our treasures when we open our hearts, in which we have received and in which we have treasured up the riches of the Divine mercy and grace; and we present unto our Saviour gifts when, in humble and grateful acknowledgment, we return to him, as their Donor, the blessings which in his bounty he has bestowed upon us. The gifts offered by the magi were gold, frankincense, and myrrh—the offerings of love, faith, and obedience. These are the spiritual treasures which the truly wise in all lands seek after and prize, and which they offer to the Lord in worship—not only in the worship of their lips or in the service of the temple, but in the love of their hearts and the service of their lives. The man who employs the talents which Divine Providence has bestowed upon him, to promote the glory of God in the happiness of men, offers gifts more precious in the Divine estimation than the incense of oral praise.

12. The wise men no doubt intended to return and give Herod information respecting the young child; but *being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.* God frequently revealed his will to men in dreams: no doubt for one reason, that in sleep they were more passively recipient of heavenly monitions. Hence dreams signify revelations given in an obscure state. The magi were warned not to return to Herod. This would have represented the immersing of what is holy in what is profane, which would have been the destruction of innocence, as it would have enabled Herod to destroy Jesus. The magi therefore *departed into their own country another way.* This returning by another way is mentioned in another part of the Word. The prophet sent to denounce the altar which had been idolatrously erected by Jeroboam in Bethel, was commanded not to return by the same way that he came (1 Ki. xiii. 9). This teaches us an interesting and important lesson relating to the regenerate life.

In Scripture a way is the symbol of truth and faith; for truth leads to good and faith to charity. Now, there is a truth that leads to good and a truth that is derived from good—a faith which leads to charity and a faith which is derived from charity; but the one is essentially different from the other. We have first of all to learn the truth; and the truth teaches us what good is, and how to attain it. This truth, therefore, looks and leads to good as something out of and above itself. But when we have acquired the good which truth had taught

us to esteem and strive after, the good enters into the truth, and acts out its beneficent and useful purposes by means of it. Truth is first the pioneer, and then the minister of goodness; so is faith of charity. The way by which we return is another way than that by which we go up. We go up by the way of instruction, and sorrow, and conflict; we return by the way of intelligence, and joy, and triumph. We have seen the king in his beauty; we have worshipped at his footstool; we have presented our gifts; and we depart to our own country by a new way which the Lord himself has commanded.

13. The warning of the wise men in a dream not to return to Herod, was not the only means Divine Providence employed to prevent the evil which the wicked king meditated. *When they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.* The flight into Egypt is one of the many memorable incidents in the Lord's life which have fixed themselves in the imagination as well as in the heart of Christendom, and the ideal of which Christian poetry and art have done their utmost to embody in images of tenderness and forms of beauty. It is, moreover, an incident which possesses internal evidence of some higher purpose than that which it bears on its front. For why this flight into Egypt to save the holy child from the wrath of an earthly potentate? He who in manhood could have procured for his protection more than twelve legions of angels, which is nothing less than omnipotence, could have been surrounded with such a sphere of protection that the power neither of earth nor of hell could injure him. The flight into Egypt has a spiritual meaning, and one of great interest and importance. The historical event, so prominently set before us in the Old Testament, of Israel going down into Egypt and sojourning there affords the key-note to the meaning of the Lord's flight into that land of Israel's nurture as well as of his deliverance. Israel's deliverance from Egypt is generally admitted to have been typical of the Christian's deliverance from the bondage of sin; but seldom is his journey thither thought of as having any reference to Christian experience. Yet the one is as significant as the other. According to that great system of correspondence which mapped out the ancient world, so far as it found a place in sacred history, of which Canaan was the centre and the surrounding countries the circumference, Egypt represented, as it cultivated, science,—not only natural, but spiritual science,—understanding by it the knowledge which comes from without, especially such as is suited to the faculties of a child, or to the mind in the early states

of the religious life. Our Lord was carried down to Egypt when a child, to represent his initiation into external knowledge, not merely the knowledge of external things. As the Lord came into the world to save man by first perfecting man's nature in himself, he assumed human nature as it is in other men, that he might pass through all human experience. Like every other man, he was born in ignorance, and had to acquire knowledge in the ordinary way.

It may seem that if the Lord was God manifest in the flesh, he could have no need of human instruction, but must have had all knowledge and wisdom directly imparted to him by the Divinity that dwelt within. We know from the gospel history that this was not the case. The fact, as it was, is consistent with the nature, and was necessary for the purpose, of the Incarnation. The divine was in the human, in the person of Christ, as the soul is in the body in the person of man. The soul does not inspire the body—or rather the external man, which includes the body—with knowledge, but only gives him the faculty of acquiring it. Nor does the soul manifest its powers in and through the body, till the body, or rather the external man, is prepared, by growth “in wisdom and in stature,” to become a suitable instrument for its use. Reason and liberty are faculties of the soul; but without knowledge, rationality would not be able to judge nor liberty to choose. Knowledge is the body of which reason is the soul; and reason can no more act without knowledge than the soul can act without the body—a natural body in the natural world, a spiritual body in the spiritual. As in all respects the Lord was truly man, so was he in all that may be called learning.

He was therefore carried down into Egypt, that his outward history might represent the progress of his inward life. The conduct of this sacred journey was confided to the faithful Joseph, who was again instructed *in a dream, to arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.* Arising, spiritually, is elevation of mind—rising above the things of time and sense; and fleeing is the eager pursuit of the object that is set before us. In this instance it is also fleeing from danger, which the Omniscient saw and his wisdom provided against. The child and his mother are the Lord and the church, whose security is to be provided for. But, in the particular sense, the young child is the Lord as essential innocence, and Mary his mother, who is also his nurse, is the affection by which that innocence is nourished, and from which science or knowledge is acquired. When they were sent down to Egypt, they were to remain there till the angel brought Joseph word. For as this instruction in the scientifics of the Church was of

divine appointment, so it was to be continued till the Divine Wisdom saw its completion. In fine, this ruling by the angel of all the particulars connected with the journey was designed to instruct us that the process itself, from beginning to end, was wholly under the Divine direction and guidance. A reason is given for the flight—*for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him*. To bruise the serpent's head, he required to have the wisdom of the serpent as well as the harmlessness of the dove, and the strength of the lion as well as the innocence of the lamb. As, then, the Lord when a child was carried down into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod, so he was initiated into the science of heavenly things as a defence against *all* his diabolical enemies. Innocence is not a sufficient protection against ingenious wickedness; cunning must be met by wisdom, and wisdom must begin from knowledge.

14. Joseph, in obedience to the heavenly vision, *arose, and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt*. This was done by night, to represent both the spiritual night of the church and the mental darkness from which Jesus commenced the journey of his momentous life, that he might advance by degrees from the innocence of ignorance to the innocence of wisdom.

15. *And was there until the death of Herod*. The death is here mentioned by anticipation. The death of Herod represents, not simply the end of the representation which that king sustained, but the death or removal of the particular evil of which Herod was the type. The prophecy which was fulfilled by the Lord's return from Egypt is also mentioned by anticipation; but as it is not repeated, we may here consider it. Like several other prophetic declarations relating to the Lord, this had had a previous fulfilment. It was fulfilled in the deliverance of Israel. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt" (Hos. xi. 1). But Israel and his deliverance were typical, and therefore prophetic; for types are the shadows of coming events. In the supreme or inmost sense of the Holy Word, all historical persons and events were representative of the Lord and of his glorification. Both in his going down into Egypt and in his coming up, Israel represented the Lord and his redeeming work. As the Israelites came up out of Egypt enriched with all its spoils, Jesus enriched his mind with all the wealth of knowledge; and as the Israelites gave their gold and silver to furnish and adorn the tabernacle, the Lord sanctified all knowledge of goodness and truth, by using it to enrich and adorn the temple of his humanity, as the habitation of his eternal Divinity.

16. But while the young child was in Egypt, concealed and secure from the wrath of Herod, a scene was enacted by that remorseless tyrant which has for ever coupled his name with one of the most atrocious deeds that darken the page of history. This was the massacre at Bethlehem. But this inhuman act, though historical, is also representative. *Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth.* The evil are never so gratified as when they can make wisdom or goodness subservient to their own diabolical ends, and are never so wroth as when they elude their grasp, and disappoint them of their prey. Wrath in Scripture is expressive of the greatest contrariety of state, and, in relation to the wicked, of the deepest malignity against those whom they believe to mock them. So of Herod. *He sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and all the coasts thereof.* Infants are the emblems of innocence; but those mentioned here were infant boys, and represented spiritual truths in which there was innocence. The slaughter of the innocents by Herod was a sign that when the Lord came into the world there was not any spiritual truth remaining. Bethlehem, we have seen, signified the Word; and to slay all the children in it and in its coasts, is to destroy all the truths of the Word, both internal and external, so far as the knowledge and power of the evil extend; but that knowledge can only be acquired by them from others who are in a state of good, is intimated by its being said, *according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.* The children slain being from two years old and under, means, in the language of inspiration, all the truths of the Word which were in any conjunction with good, of which union the number two is a symbol. Thus in the Jewish church every pure truth was destroyed, and nothing remained to it but the dead, because perverted, letter.

17, 18. The evangelist declares this slaughter to have been a fulfilment of what was written in Jeremiah (xxx. 15). This reference of the event to that particular passage is very instructive. It shows that even the historical parts of the Old Testament are prophetic, or what is the same thing, typical. The passage in the prophet relates to the carrying away of the children of Judah and Benjamin into Babylon; and Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, is represented as bewailing her sons when carried away captive. Ramah, too, was a city of Benjamin, being one of those originally given to the Benjamites (Josh. xviii. 25) when the land was divided among the tribes. It was to this place also that Jeremiah was "taken, being bound in chains

among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah into Babylon" (Jer. xl. 1). It is exceedingly appropriate and affecting, historically, to make Rachel weep for the fate of her unhappy descendants, and to make the voice of her lamentation come from Ramah. But if the narrative is beautiful historically, much more so is it spiritually. Of the two wives of Jacob, Rachel represented the spiritual, and Leah the natural affection of truth; and Ramah, a city of Benjamin, represented spiritual truth from a celestial origin. The captivity of Babylon, with the destruction of the temple, and of Jerusalem (2 Kings xxv. 9, 10), typified the consummation of the Jewish church, which took place at the time our Lord came into the world. It is on this account that Matthew applies circumstances connected with the captivity to an event connected with the Lord's incarnation. Well, therefore, might Rachel weep; for the spiritual affection of truth was indeed bereaved of her children: for the offspring of that affection are the truths of innocence, which the infants slain in Bethlehem represented. In whatever mind any remains of such an affection survived, there would be lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning.

But amidst that destruction a seed was preserved, from which there should spring a higher and more enduring race. He whose death was intended escaped the hand of the destroyer. Several instances occur in the Word of one escaping from what was intended as a complete slaughter, as in Judges ix., 2 Kings xi. In all such instances, and especially in the case of our Lord, a consolatory truth is contained. In all human destruction the Divine Providence conceals and preserves a remnant for salvation. The infant Saviour was preserved as the seed and the beginning of all perfection. In him was the comforting exhortation and promise addressed to Rachel to be realized: "Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for they shall come again from the land of the enemy."

19, 20. The king did not long survive the massacre of the infants. *But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life.* Herod's death represented the end of the particular state, or of the predominance of the particular principle, which he represented. Not that it was altogether extinguished; for, as we shall see, the same evil rises up in another form. But the particular state, with the activity of the principle he represented, was ended; and with it therefore came a

change of state in Jesus himself, implied by his going up to the land of Israel.

This land, as distinguished from the land of Egypt, was a type of the church itself, instruction in its truths being represented by the Lord's going up and residing there. The reason for this removal was, *because they are dead which sought the young child's life*. Herod's desire to destroy the infant Messiah must have been instigated by, as it represented, an effort of the lowest hell, which is diametrically opposed to innocences, and by which the Lord was infested and tempted in his childhood; and as, even then, no temptation could prevail against him, but ended in the defeat of the tempting power, this was indicated by the death of Herod; and the Lord's progress in glorification, as a result of his conquest, was represented by Joseph again arising, and going with him into the land of Israel.

22. When Joseph went up out of Egypt into the land of Israel, it was his intention to proceed at once to Judea. But here a second Herod awaited and deterred him. *When he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither*. He was relieved by divine aid from a state of doubt and perplexity. *Being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee*. In this turning aside into Galilee, which, naturally considered, owes its origin to a natural cause, there is an important spiritual sense. At this period the "land of Israel" was divided into three regions—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee—which represented the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural principles of the church. It is easy to see in this a similarity to the temple. The temple consisted of the inmost, or holy of holies, the middle, or holy place, and the court. The inmost of the temple was analogous to Judea, the middle to Samaria, and the court to Galilee. There is a still further similarity. The court of the temple was divided into two, called the inner and outer court, the outer being also called the court of the Gentiles. So was Galilee divided into two, called Upper and Lower Galilee, Upper Galilee being called Galilee of the Gentiles. These divisions are not without a meaning in reference to New Testament history. We find, for instance, that the Lord chose his disciples chiefly from among the fishermen of Lower Galilee; but he performed his first miracle in Upper Galilee. He took his disciples from Lower Galilee, because, being from among the more external and simple men of the Jewish dispensation, they formed the proper rudiment of the new church, and were suitable instruments for preaching the gospel; but he performed his first miracle at a marriage in Cana of Gentile Galilee,

to represent that he was about to raise up his church among the gentiles. But the land of Israel, and the temple also, represented heaven as well as the church, and the regenerate mind as the epitome of both. The whole heaven consists of three lesser heavens,—the highest, or celestial, the middle, or spiritual, and the lowest, or natural; and as the lowest heaven is the ultimate of the two others, it consists of angels of two distinct characters, called celestial-natural and spiritual-natural. While the universal heaven is distinguished into three heavens, it is also distinguished into two kingdoms. The celestial angels of the highest heaven, with the celestial-natural in the lowest heaven, form the celestial kingdom; and the spiritual angels of the middle heaven, with the spiritual-natural angels of the lowest heaven, form the spiritual kingdom. This twofold distinction of heaven did not exist actually until the time of the incarnation. The distinction of heaven into two kingdoms had been typified by the division of the kingdom of Israel, commenced with Saul, into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, in the reign of Rehoboam; and this division of the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms originated the division of the land of Canaan, as we find it spoken of in the New Testament. Both these changes, therefore, were providential. The kingdom, originally one, was rent into two; and the land, originally one, was divided into three; and even the lowest of these into two, to make them in this, as in all other respects, the patterns of things in the heavens. The reason why the Saviour, on his return from Egypt, was carried, not into Judea, but “into the parts of Galilee,” will now be evident. Even he, in the progress of his glorification, had to pass through a lower state before he could enter into a higher, and lastly into the highest. The Lord did everything according to order. Though he advanced in every kind of human progress more rapidly than any other man, yet he advanced in the same order as another man—so inconceivable was his love, so great his condescension! Willing, for our sakes, to be instructed in the goods and truths of the church, as revealed in the Word, he despised not to begin at the lowest. Well may we learn from his example to be willing to take the lowest place, that we may ascend through every orderly stage to the highest of whichever degree we can attain to.

23. We have a further evidence of there being a divine purpose in directing Joseph to Galilee, in his being providentially led to the city of Nazareth. *He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.* That this prophecy refers to the Nazariteship, is, indeed,

disallowed by most and by very eminent critics. There are reasons, however, which seem to sanction, if not to require, that the city Nazareth should have been intended by the evangelist, or the Spirit under which he wrote, to be identified with the institution of the Nazariteship. He tells us that Jesus dwelt there that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. Now, there is no such prediction in the prophets, nor does the name of the city, nor consequently the term expressive of citizenship, occur at all in the Old Testament. It has, indeed, been conjectured, that as the name of the city can be traced to a root signifying "the despised one," the evangelist had only the intention of alluding generally to the prophecies relating to his humiliation, as "he was despised and rejected of men." But it seems more reasonable to suppose that the reference is to the parts of the Old Testament which relate to the Nazariteship. These are not, indeed, in the prophets, properly so called; but we know that the name of prophet is not limited to those who wrote the prophetic books. Nor are the passages themselves prophetic, much less have they the specific shape which the prophecy assumes in the gospel. But, as we have had occasion to remark, the historical parts of the Word are prophetic, because representative. It is hardly necessary to allude to the objection that the Lord never assumed any of the characters of a Jewish Nazarite. He did not assume the hairy garment of the prophet, nor the robe of the king, nor the ephod of the priest; and yet he was the One who filled all these offices; but he filled them spiritually. Might not he be also the spiritual, who is the true Nazarite, though he assumed nothing of the outward form, which was only typical of the character. The passages to which the inspired evangelist seems to allude are those which relate to Samson and Samuel. When the angel appeared to the wife of Manoah, he said to her, "Thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb" (Judg. xiii. 5). Hannah does not, indeed, vow to call her son a Nazarite; but her vow involves his Nazariteship: "I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head" (1 Sam. i. 11). The term Nazarite means separation; and all the days the Nazarite separated himself to the Lord he was to abstain from all the produce of the vine, from the kernel even to the husk; he was to come at no dead body, and not to defile himself even for his father or mother, and should let the locks of the hair of his head grow, (Num. vi.) But even supposing that the Lord was to be called a Nazarene, not because he was to be a Nazarite,

but because he was to be called after the city of that name, he was yet a Nazarite, and, indeed, the Nazarite of whom all others were types. Therefore, on this ground alone, we may consider what the Nazariteship represented. We cannot suppose that his dwelling there was merely to fulfil a prophecy, or that the prophecy and its fulfilment were for no other purpose than to prove him to be the Messiah. More consistent, surely, is it with the dignity and spirituality of the subject to consider these circumstances as designed to teach us something of the history of the Lord's inner life, as the perfect pattern of our own. Something of this may be learnt from his going to Nazareth, that he might be called a Nazarene. Although this city may have had no historical connection with the Nazariteship, the Lord's dwelling there, and being called by its name, would seem as if intended to be equivalent to his being a Nazarite. The Lord was a Nazarite from his mother's womb: he was holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners; he was lent, given, devoted to the Lord. In him was spiritually fulfilled all that was naturally practised by the Nazarite. The Nazarite represented a celestial man, and the Lord as *the* celestial Man. The celestial man is one who acts from love; and the principle from which the Lord acted in his work of redemption was the love of the human race. It was because the vine was symbolical of the spiritual principle, that the Nazarite was so strictly prohibited from partaking of its fruit. But the Nazarite represented the celestial man while he is undergoing temptation and practising self-denial. He represented the Lord, therefore, in his days of temptation and humiliation. And in this sense, how true and expressive is the prophecy, "He shall be called a Nazarene!" But it was during this time, and by these means, that his redeeming power was manifested in his conflicts with the powers of darkness. "In his love and in his pity he redeemed them." Yet it was Love by means of Wisdom, or Good by means of Truth, that conquered. And not only so; it was love by means of truth of the lowest order, or in its ultimate form, that overcame. It was not merely the Word, but the Word made flesh, that had the power of redeeming from the dominion of hell. Truth of the lowest degree, such as that contained in the letter of the Word—humanity in its ultimate form, such as that which the Lord assumed, were represented by the hair of Samson, in which his great power lay. And that even infinite love and truth could have no power against hell and evil, without that ultimate which it assumed in the world, we are taught representatively in the fact of Samson becoming powerless against his enemies when his locks were shaven. Yet there was a period when the

Nazarite was allowed to shave his head, and lay aside all the other ceremonies to the observance of which he was bound by his vow. And this was when the term of his vow was ended, and his Nazariteship ceased. Then he cut off his hair, and burned it in the fire which was under the peace offering, and returned to the ordinary condition of life. And so did our Lord, when he had conquered human redemption, put off the humanity he took from the mother, and put on a humanity from the Father, and returned where he was before. He was a Nazarite from his mother's womb; but when he was born of God, by the resurrection from the dead, then his Nazariteship ceased. Yet he did not become as he was before. Although he put off the humanity from the mother, he did not cease to be human, even in the ultimate degree; for although he put off materiality, he glorified his humanity even to that degree which materiality had occupied. Therefore was the Nazarite's hair, when cut off, not vilely cast away, but burned in the fire of the altar, so that while its grossness was consumed, its virtues, or the virtues acquired by it, were preserved, and consecrated to God, and entered by the refining fire of love into the offering that was the sign of the restoration of peace between man and his God.

While this exalted meaning of the Lord's being a Nazarite is to be understood, it is not necessary to exclude from it the idea of his humiliation. His Nazariteship was a time of humiliation as well as of power. For the Lord's state was in this respect like ours, that his weakness was his strength. The more the human was humbled under a sense of its own nothingness, the more the divine was exalted in it and was its power. Therefore our Lord declared, "Of myself I can do nothing: the Father that dwelleth within me he doeth the works." Could any greater humiliation be expressed, even by a mere man? But he not only expressed himself like a man, but his acknowledgment expressed an immeasurably profounder humiliation than any mere man ever felt. He was in very deed, in his own sight, "a worm, and no man." His humility was humility itself; ours, comparatively, is but the shadow and the name. In this, as in all other things, he was our Exemplar. His humiliation was as much lower than ours as his exaltation is higher. He was the true Nazarene, as well as the true Nazarite. We speak now of a Nazarene as he was estimated in the days of our Lord, when the best things had acquired the worst character. Then, even the Lord himself, the pattern of all excellence, was despised. The long years during which the Saviour lived in retirement, unknown to the world, and of which no record exists, with the single exception of that which tells us he went up when twelve years

old, and sat in the midst of the doctors in Jerusalem, these were the years of his Nazariteship, separated from the world unto God. We are not, indeed, to suppose that these years were lost, or were spent in activity having no immediate bearing on the great work he came to perform. When we know that his work was essentially of so spiritual and sublime a nature as to be beyond the sight of human eye—that his life was essentially an inward life, and his works essentially inward works—temptations and victories, changes of state that angels could but dimly perceive—we may well conceive that Nazareth was the scene of some of those stupendous operations that were but faintly shadowed by those of the Nazarite whom the Lord raised up as a deliverer of Israel.

CHAPTER III.

THE preaching of John the Baptist is an epoch in the history of Christianity, if it may not be regarded as its actual commencement. Thirty years had now passed since the shepherds were directed and the wise men were guided to the town of Bethlehem, where the infant Saviour lay. Now a voice is heard in the wilderness, calling men to repentance, as the means of preparing the way of the Lord, who is about to come forth as the Great Teacher and Exemplar of the Law, and to finish the work which the Father had given him, or his own divine Love had prompted him, to do.

1. *In those days.* There is no connection of time between the incident with which the previous chapter ends and that with which this begins. But times are, spiritually, states; and the states indicated by the days in which John appeared are those of the Jewish church, afterwards described by the place where John preached.

John the Baptist filled a most important office, personally and representatively, as the Forerunner of the Lord. The last of the prophets concludes his prophecy by saying, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." John was this Elijah; and he prepared the people for the appearing of the Lord among them, by administering to them the baptism of repentance. Unless this had been done, the Lord's presence would actually have smitten the whole Jewish people, nay, the whole human race, with a curse. Not that the people were

made personally pure by baptism, though repentance had no doubt its effect. Baptism acted representatively. The Jewish was a representative church, and was connected with heaven by the correspondence, not of their lives, but of their worship. It was to supply that link of connection, which had been broken, that the Baptist came to baptize them with water unto repentance. By this means the Lord could come amongst men without destroying them. This we shall see more clearly by considering the representative character of John and the signification of baptism. The Lord came into the world as the Word. He was the Word made flesh, or the Eternal Wisdom clothed in human nature. John was a representative of the written Word. He came to prepare the way of Jesus, to represent that the revealed Word is the means by which men are prepared for receiving the Lord as the Eternal Word itself, of whom the written Word is a revelation. John is called the Baptist, because baptism was a rite symbolical of spiritual purification, which, like repentance, prepares men for the Lord's coming into their hearts. The days in which John came are the states of the church at the time of the Lord's advent; and the character of these is representatively described by the wilderness of Judea. The church was in a wilderness state. This image conveys no indistinct idea to the mind of the condition in which the Jewish church then was. But what is it that produces and constitutes this state, so often spoken of under this figure in Scripture? The church is a wilderness when there is a defect or a want of goodness and truth, of charity and faith. The union of charity and faith is the origin of all beauty and fruitfulness. When that union is imperfect, spiritual life languishes; when it is dissolved, life ceases: and with life everything of the church and heaven decays or expires. The wilderness in which John appeared being that of Judea, implies that barrenness and desolation had invaded the very centre of the church, and was wasting its inner life. In this waste wilderness the voice of the divine messenger was heard preaching to the children of men. And in every general or individual state of desolation the voice of the Eternal Truth may be heard; for God never leaves himself without a witness. And even when the church, or the man of the church, has induced upon himself a state analogous to that of the Jewish church when the prophets had ceased, Divine Providence permits a crisis to come, when a voice proclaims anew the day of salvation. This preaching of the Baptist is still going on. The mind of every unregenerate man is a wilderness, and in every one the Word comes preaching; for in every mind Divine mercy provides a remnant of the hearing ear and the

understanding heart, on which the teachings of the divine Word may fall, and awaken an interest in eternal things.

2. Supposing an interest awakened in the realities of eternal life, let us listen to the theme on which this infallible preacher addresses us, and the duty to which he calls us. Christianity, as first preached to the world, and as the revealed Word still preaches it to the unconverted, is expressed in the single word—*Repent*. Repentance is the beginning of religion in the heart of man, and thence the beginning of the church in the world. Repentance is the gate through which the soul passes from death unto life, the path which leads from the broad into the narrow way, the step which carries us over the boundary line between hell and heaven. Repentance, in fact, is an actual conversion of the mind, of all its faculties and powers, its ends and activities, from a downward to an upward course. Prone by nature to the world and self, man is raised by repentance to God and heaven. Repentance requires both devotion to the end and perseverance in the use of means. The very essence of repentance is **TO SHUN EVIL AS SIN AGAINST GOD**. Without a sense of sin there can be no repentance. The world may restrain, but it cannot convert; it may cause remorse, but it cannot inspire repentance. The bonds which the world imposes are upon the members, those which religion imposes are upon the conscience.

While the preacher calls men to repentance, he gives them a reason why they should repent: *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. We need hardly inquire what is meant by this kingdom, and by its near approach. The Lord's kingdom is the government of his love and truth in the hearts and minds of men. This constitutes the kingdom of heaven; for heaven is a state—a state of heavenly-mindedness. The kingdom of heaven was brought near by the coming of the Lord. It was brought near to men in his own person, and was about to be declared in his teaching and exhibited in his beneficent works. The judgment, too, was approaching, by which the power of hell would be diminished and that of heaven increased, and the perverted and obstructive dispensation of the Jews be succeeded by the pure and progressive Christian church; and when, above all, the work of redemption being completed, and the Lord's humanity glorified, there would be a new power and influence operating on the human mind, enduing it with power from on high to receive and act upon the teaching of Christ and his ministers. All this, and much more, is comprehended in the kingdom of heaven, into which men were called to enter through repentance.

3. In calling men to repentance, the Baptist (for these words formed part of his address, as appears from John i. 23) cites his authority. *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.* The prophecy in which this occurs is one of the sublimest of the predictions of the Lord's advent. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, Jehovah will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him" (Isa. xl. 9). As John takes his credentials from this prophecy, his hearers are referred back to it for the character of the personage whose way he came to prepare. That personage was Jehovah. In the person of Jesus, Judah and Jerusalem were called upon to behold their God. In citing the passage, John substitutes the name Lord for Jehovah. As this is the constant practice in the New Testament, Jesus as Lord is Jehovah incarnate. And if he is divine, he can be none else; for besides Jehovah there is no God and no Saviour. Such is the Being whose forerunner John the Baptist was. Well might he fall back upon ancient prophecy for the authority by which he assumed so high an office. And when John's representative character is considered, his reference to the prophet is peculiarly appropriate. For as the revealed Word is the voice that is alone adequate to proclaim the coming of the Lord, and to prepare his way, so is it the source whence all true knowledge of the Lord can be derived. Therefore John does not speak of the Messiah in his own words, but first introduces him to the attention of his hearers in the words of the grandest yet plainest prophecy that was ever uttered respecting him, and one that reveals him in his true character of Jehovah our Redeemer. The voice calls upon us to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make his paths straight. Where two things are spoken of that have a similarity of meaning, one relates to the will and the other to the understanding. These are the faculties in the human mind into which the Lord enters, and in which he is received. His way into the will is prepared by our ceasing from evil and doing good, and his way into the understanding is made straight by our rejecting error and believing truth.

4. We now have a description of John himself, and one that bears testimony to his representative character. *The same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and*

his meat was locusts and wild honey. That which John wore was the garment of a prophet, for a "hairy garment" was a badge of the prophetic office. Both the hairy garment and the leathern girdle are specifically mentioned (2 Ki. i. 8) as having been worn by the prophet Elijah, in whose spirit and power John the Baptist came. And he so came because Elijah represented the Word. The literal sense of the Word, which is the clothing of its spiritual sense, was specifically represented by the garment in which these prophets appeared, the leathern girdle about their loins signifying the bond of connection between the spiritual sense and the literal sense. The literal and the spiritual senses of the Word, like the natural and the spiritual worlds, and the human body and soul, have nothing in common; the one is natural and the other is spiritual; and yet they exist in the closest connection. What is it that forms the bond of connection and union betwixt them? This is an interesting question; and the true answer to it supplies a profound theological as well as philosophical truth. The literal and the spiritual senses of the word, like the natural and the spiritual worlds, and the body and soul, are united by CORRESPONDENCE. And correspondence is the mutual relation which exists between a spiritual cause and its natural effect. Correspondence is the "girdle" that unites the natural and the spiritual senses of the Word. The genuine truths of the literal sense of the Word are included in the meaning of John's girdle; for from these truths doctrine is derived and the apparent truths of the Word are explained. The spiritual sense is revealed to none but those who are in genuine truths. John's garment was of camel's hair, because the camel on the land, like the whale in the sea, is the symbol of that general kind of truth which is expressed in the letter of the Word. It was in reference to this symbolical character of the camel that our Lord said, "a camel cannot go through the eye of a needle," meaning that the mere literalist cannot discern spiritual truth. There is another interesting part in this description of the Lord's forerunner. His meat was locusts and wild honey. Without being a necessary, this was a natural result of his living in the wilderness; and, spiritually understood, has a meaning in harmony with it. For as the wilderness represented the desert state of the church, the locusts and wild honey which it afforded John for food represented the spiritual food which the church then supplied to her children. The locust was among the lowest kind of winged creatures that were permitted to be eaten by the "holy people" (Lev. xi. 22), and therefore signifies what serves as food for the intellect. Honey, from its sweetness, signifies what is

spiritually delightful. "Thy words are sweeter than honey to my mouth." Wild honey signifies what is delightful to the natural mind. John's meat, therefore, represented that in the church at that time the soul's food was the lowest possible by which spiritual life could be sustained. When John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, he was, like the prophets of old, a sign unto the children of Judah. His abode, his raiment, his meat, all spoke, in the symbolic language with which the Jews were acquainted, of the state of the church among them; and in the language of correspondence these will speak to all ages of the state of those who are in a gross and benighted condition of mind. And as this was a state from which John came to rouse the carnal Jews, so is it a state from which the Word of God is ever striving to awaken the sinner.

5. John's preaching was so effective that there *went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.* We cannot suppose that this is to be understood in the strictly literal sense. It cannot be supposed that the whole population of these places went out and were baptized. Like many other seemingly hyperbolic expressions in Scripture, this has been written for the sake of the internal sense. Jerusalem signifies the spiritual principle in the church and in man, Judea the celestial, Jordan the natural. The record teaches us that *all* in whom there is anything of spiritual truth, good, and obedience go out unto John, or obey the voice of the divine Word, which calls them to repentance, and go out from their unconverted state to one of new life and light—go to the divine Word for instruction, to learn what and where that kingdom is which is at hand, that they may be prepared to enter it.

6. The multitudes who went out to John, after being instructed by him respecting the Messiah and his kingdom, sealed their faith in him by receiving the sign of baptism. *They were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.* It is hardly necessary to say anything respecting the origin of baptism as an initiatory rite. Washings existed in the Israelitish church; and these, like many others of their ceremonies, would seem to have descended from the ancient, which was a representative church. Hence lustration came to form a ceremonial in all the nations, contemporary with the Jews, descended from those who formed the Noetic dispensation. It appears that the Jews, from whatever source they derived the opinion, understood that the advent of the Messiah would be ushered in by baptism. They demanded of John, "Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" This we learn from the Forerunner

of the Lord's second advent: that all the ceremonials of the Israelitish church were collected into the two sacraments of the Christian church—all washings into the sacrament of baptism, and all feasts into that of the Holy Supper.

The baptism of John had two distinct uses. It is declared in Malachi (iv. 5, 6) that Elijah's coming was to prevent the Lord's smiting the earth with a curse. Had the Lord come among the Jews without signing and sealing them with the ordinance of baptism, through which they were connected with heaven and surrounded with an angelic sphere of protection, his presence would have consumed them. The church, signified by the earth, would have perished prematurely, and no remains would have been left from which to form the beginning of a new dispensation.

Baptism had a second use: it represented purification. Water is the symbol of truth, and baptism is the sign of washing the heart from wickedness. John's baptism being performed in Jordan added to the significance of the rite. Through Jordan the children of Israel passed into Canaan; and as Canaan was a type of the church and heaven, baptism in Jordan was a sign that our passage into the church and heaven lies through purification. He who is baptized with this living baptism has put off the old man and put on the new—he is passed from death unto life, has been buried with Christ and risen with him.

7. Besides the numbers who were drawn to the baptism of John by feelings of true penitence, there were others who sought baptism from unworthy motives. *When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers.* Persons belonging to these sects might have come and been accepted; but these had come without manifesting the spirit which would have rendered their acceptance of baptism profitable to themselves. Of these two sects, so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, it may be useful in this place, where they are first mentioned, to say a few words. The Pharisees and the Sadducees may be regarded as the ritualists and the rationalists of the Jewish church. The Pharisees not only accepted the Scriptures, but the traditions of the elders, as their authority in matters of religion, which they made to consist chiefly in multiplied ceremonial observances. The Sadducees, on the other hand, rejected all tradition, and adhered rigidly to the written law, which they so interpreted as to deny the immortality of the soul and the existence of angels and spirits. The Pharisees formed the pious, the Sadducees the philosophical section of the church. Taking their character and their systems as the basis of their spiritual repre-

sentation, we cannot fail to see in the Pharisees and Sadducees the symbols of the will and understanding of the natural man, not merely unconverted, but perverted by self-righteousness and intellectual pride. John called them vipers, not from similitude, but from correspondence. The whole serpent tribe are emblematical of the sensuous part of man's nature. Originally this was very good; but when it had accomplished man's fall, it became degraded; the serpent walked on its belly, and dust became its meat. Sensuous wisdom, which should have been a protection to innocence, having become its destroyer, it is only now, when the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head, that it can, through his work and by his power, be deprived of its dominion in the heart of man. How complete that dominion had become, the Pharisees and Sadducees too fully exemplified. What was their state is that of every unconverted man as to his sensuous or carnal mind. This is that old serpent called the devil and Satan; and from these are produced a generation of vipers, in the endless reasonings in favour of self and the world.

John demands of his Pharisaical and Sadducean hearers, *Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* This is a question of the utmost consequence, and should be asked of himself by every one who wishes to flee from the wrath to come. In the first place, what was this coming wrath from which these men were induced to flee? Perhaps they understood him, as many Christians understand him, to mean the wrath of God. Divine wrath is indeed mentioned in the Scriptures; but this is the language of appearances: the reality is, that there is no wrath in God. Yet there is a wrath that overtakes the sinner, and as surely as if God could himself be angry. Wrath is in all evil loves as burning is in fire; and every one who loves and lives in sin carries in his own bosom the fire of his future torment. This is the wrath to come. Who hath warned you to flee from this coming wrath?—God or yourself, the Word or the world, sorrow for sin or fear of punishment? What is the thought that induces you, the motive that impels you? Is it the voice of God speaking through your conscience, or the voice of the world speaking through your interests? These are practical inquiries involved in the demand of John.

8. He who proposed the inquiry gives the test by which to know whether we can give the true answer. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.* If we are really desirous to flee from the wrath to come, the way lies through repentance. The purpose in the heart must show itself by amendment in the life. If our purpose is of God,

he will infallibly lead us to work it out by acts of self-denial. These are the works meet for repentance. "Cease to do evil" is the first great work of the repentant sinner. There can be no true holiness without it. To do acts of piety and goodness, without hating and shunning evil, is to cover and gild corruption. Merely to desist from evil may seem to be but negative virtue; yet the negative is the only foundation of the positive. Eight out of the ten commandments are prohibitory. Thou shalt not steal, nor bear false witness, nor commit adultery, are the forms in which Divine wisdom teaches us honesty, sincerity, and purity. And this is the way in which we are to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

9. But while the Word demands practical, we are all inclined to trust in hereditary and nominal religion. The Jews presumed upon being the descendants of the faithful—children of the promise. Divine Truth raises its voice against this vain confidence. *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.* While they were the children of Abraham according to the flesh, they were far from being his children according to the spirit. When, afterwards, the Jews boasted that Abraham was their father, Jesus answered them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." He then told them, too, that their father was the devil, whose deeds they continued to do. It is this hereditary relationship to Abraham which John warns them against as a ground of confidence, as answering all claims of religious obligation upon them. And as the same evil exists now under a different name, what is this plea in our time and on our part? Do not we Christians trust to the name of Christ, when we have not his spirit and do not his works? What virtue or profit can there be in this nominal religion, when *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham?* We need not trouble ourselves with the question of natural possibility; the spiritual lesson is that which concerns us.

Stones are types of truths. The apostle speaks of the members of the church as living stones: these are the true members of the body of Christ, who is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. But the stones out of which God can raise up children to Abraham—that is, such children as the Jews—are not living, but dead stones—truths without life, because without love and goodness. Nominal members of the church can be raised up from the knowledges of truth; real members only from the love and practice of the truth. The stones from which God could raise up children to Abraham are also the statutes and ceremonial laws of the Jewish church, as a representative and shadowy

dispensation. The law of the ten commandments was written upon tables of stone, to represent that in the Jewish church the law of Divine order and righteousness could only be impressed upon the outward man. Therefore, when the new covenant which the Lord should make with his church is treated of, he says, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. xxxi. 33). And so Paul: "Ye are the epistle of Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. iii. 3).

10. As nothing spiritual and useful could grow out of that dead root, which was never intended to be more than temporary, *now also*, said John, *the axe is laid unto the root of the trees*. Judaism was to be cut up by its roots, and all presumptuous hopes founded upon it to be overturned. Such was the sentence of divine truth upon the Jewish church, and upon all who clung to it in its then showy but fruitless condition. But there is a lesson here for us. Our motives are the roots from which our actions spring. Christianity lays the axe at the root of the tree; for it is not only a law to regulate our actions, but a principle to guide our motives; and whatever grows out of the ends of our life, that does not bear the fruits of holy living, must be cut down. Our selfhood constitutes the first root of our life. What sort of tree would man become if that root were not extirpated? But the evil root is not removed, and a new one implanted in its stead, unless man regards the evils which constitute the root as destructive to his soul, and on that account is desirous of removing them. As, however, they belong to his selfhood, and are consequently delightful to him, he cannot effect their removal but with a degree of unwillingness and of struggle against them, and thus of combat. The truth, which is the instrument of combat, is meant by the axe, and the combat itself by hewing down the tree. But the tree after being hewn down is to be cast into the fire.

These two acts have reference to the understanding and the will. To cut down the tree has reference to the removal of evil from the understanding; to cast it into the fire, to the removal of evil from the will. The axe and the fire, too, are symbolical—the axe of truth, the fire of love. As the removal of evil is not effected but by temptation, the hewing down of the tree refers to intellectual labour or combat against evil, and the casting it into the fire to conflict in the will. The imagery is expressive and instructive. The evil principle is cut down in the understanding, but is consumed in the will.

Faith prostrates the evil principle, love burns it up. Fire as a symbol of love and zeal, and burning, of the severest trials and the completest vastation, often occur in the Word. The Lord's conflict with the powers of darkness, in his zeal for the salvation of the human race, was to be "with burning and fuel of fire" (Isa. ix. 5); and even as a Regenerator, he was to be "like a refiner's fire" (Mal. iii. 2). He "came also to send fire on the earth" (Luke xii. 44); and to "baptize with fire" (Luke iii. 16). In all which there is reference to conquest and removal through the fiery trials of temptation, in which holy overcomes unholy love.

11. John proceeds to speak of the true means and agencies by which this work is carried on and completed, and of the last as greater than the first. *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.* John's baptism represented reformation; the Lord's baptism represented regeneration. The first is the removal of evil; the second is the implantation of good. John's baptism precedes and prepares the way for that of Jesus.

Man must learn from the written Word what evil is, and abstain from it; and so far as he does so, he receives new life from the Lord. John's baptism comes from without; the Lord's comes from within. John's baptism removes outward impurities; the Lord's inspires new inward life. Thus does the Lord baptize with the spirit of his truth and with the fire of his love all who faithfully follow the teachings of his Word, by ceasing to do evil. The second baptism is a greater work than the first, and a mightier power is required to effect it. So much mightier is he who comes after him, that John declares himself not worthy to bear his shoes. The lowest good of love is worthier than the highest good of repentance. But on this point we shall see something more in the next verse.

We cannot leave these words of John without a remark on the important testimony thus borne to the rank of Jesus, between whom and himself he admits of no comparison. If among those born of women a greater had not arisen than John the Baptist, who could that one be whose sandals John was not worthy to bear? His rank may be described in John's own words: "He that cometh from heaven is above all" (John iii. 3). And not only above all, but before all. Not only was he before John (John i. 15), but before Abraham (John viii. 58). He who was all this could be no other than the Highest and the First.

12. The Lord's baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire is to be followed by a thorough outward cleansing. *His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor.* This purification is to be distinguished from that represented by John's baptism. For as there is a truth which leads to goodness, and a truth which is derived from goodness, so there is a purification that precedes and one that follows regeneration. The first is a purification of the actions, from motives of obedience, the second is a purification of the actions, from motives of love. The first was represented by John's baptism, the second by the Lord's washing his disciples' feet, when he spoke to them as being already inwardly clean. This second purification is that by which the Lord "thoroughly purges his floor," making a full and final separation of good and evil. The floor is the outer memory, the common receptacle of acquired objects of thought and affection. The Lord's truth is the means by which separation is effected. The garner into which the wheat is gathered is the inner memory, the storehouse of ends and principles, which form our life, and remain with us for ever. The chaff is burnt up in the fire of an unquenchable zeal for singleness and purity. The wicked, who never judge themselves in this life, are judged in the next, and being themselves like chaff, are cast into the fire of burning lusts, in their own evil hearts, that nothing can quench.

13. Among those who came to John, to receive his baptism, was no less a personage than the Saviour himself. *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan to John, to be baptized of him.* Jesus, it would appear, had resided in Galilee till now. Thirty years of a life the most momentous to the world, though not in the world's sense, that had ever been lived by man on earth, had been passed in private, if not in seclusion. But now he publicly appears as the Saviour of the world, the great Teacher and Exemplar of the law. Before entering on a life consecrated to the highest use, Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized of John. The Lord as the Incarnate Word comes to him who represented the written Word, to receive at his hands this initiatory and representative rite. He came from Galilee to Jordan, to symbolize that progression of state from good to the truth which gives it quality and power—power to subdue. The primary idea involved in John's baptism was purification, especially that of the external man. The means by which this purification is effected are the truths of the Word, which are meant by the waters of Jordan. But these truths purify the mind in two ways—by repentance and temptation. Repentance is necessary for the removal of actual evil, temptation for

the removal of hereditary evil also. As every human being is defiled both with hereditary evil and by actual evil, which is sin, every one requires to be purified both by repentance and temptation. In this respect there was an essential difference between the Lord and every mere man. He had no sin, and therefore needed no repentance.

14. Well then might John forbid him to come to his baptism; for to Jesus it could be no baptism unto repentance, which John had proclaimed it to be. But although the Lord had no sin, and therefore needed no repentance, he had evil derived from his fallen mother, and required to undergo temptation. And to represent this means of purification, Jesus was willing to receive, at the hands of his own messenger, the rite which symbolized it. But John not only forbade Jesus, but said, *I have need to be baptized of thee*. There is one particular in this relation that it may be difficult to understand. If John represented the written Word, why did he say to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of thee?" Is the word of God impure, and does it need purification? In itself it is pure and holy, but as it had become in the Jewish church, and as it is in the mind of everyone not yet fully regenerate, it is more or less impure, by reason of their impure perversions of its meaning, and the sanctions of evil which they thence draw apparently from it. The Jews had thus perverted and defiled the Word; and it is more or less defiled in the mind of every child of Adam. These defilements needed to be removed; and no one could in the first instance remove them but he who was himself the Word. There was an analogy between the incarnate and the written Word. The Lord took human nature upon him, not fair as it came from the hand of God, but marred as it had been by the hand of man. And just so marred as was the nature of man, so marred was the Word of God. Corruption among the members of the church brings with it a corresponding corruption of the revealed truths of the Word, as the Pharisees made the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions. It was through these perversions that the truths of the written Word became instruments in the hand of Satan for tempting the Incarnate Word to do wrong. The Lord and the powers of darkness contended over the truths of the Word, as Michael and Satan are said to have done over the body of Moses. Evil spirits assaulted the Lord through the appearances of truth in the letter of the Word, which are capable of perversion, and the Lord overcame them by its genuine truths, which they could neither pervert nor resist. These conflicts were the Lord's temptations, represented by his baptism. With every tempta-

tion, when ended, the Lord put off some of the infirmities of his humanity, and put on, or put forth, some of the perfections of his divinity, till at last he became the Word in ultimates, as from eternity he had been in first principles.

15. When John forbade Jesus to be baptized, the Lord answered, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* In fulfilling the least of the requirements of righteousness the Lord showed that he would fulfil them all. He came to fulfil the whole law of righteousness, and thereby to become Righteousness. This is a great and important truth. He not only fulfilled the law of the commandments, but the law in its widest sense, which is the whole Word. He, by fulfilling, magnified the law and made it honourable. Through his fulfilling the law we can in our measure fulfil it also; through his becoming Righteousness we can become righteous. By fulfilling the whole law, or the Word, he became, as to his humanity, the Word. The fulfilling the Word means, not only that he obeyed its laws, but that he so transcribed the whole Word, internally and externally, into his own life, that he became the living form of all the eternal principles which it contains. All this is included in the Lord's words to John, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And as the law which he desired to fulfil by submitting to baptism was but a law of ceremonial righteousness, we learn from the Lord's condescending to it, that he fulfilled the ceremonial as well as the moral law, and that all its ceremonials had relation to him in his work of glorification and salvation.

16, 17. The immediate results of the Lord's baptism foreshadow the glory he would attain when he arose out of the trials which his baptism represented. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, &c.* Going down into and coming up out of the waters of baptism were recognized in the apostolic church as significant acts. Paul speaks of the Colossians as being "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Baptism was then regarded as the symbol of burial and resurrection—not of the body, but of the soul—the putting off the old man and putting on the new. Jesus coming up out of the water represented his resurrection, or, what is the same, his glorification. It also represented the result of every single temptation, his coming up straightway representing his emergence from the trial, and entering into a new and higher state of glory. The opening of the heavens is one of the blessed results of

emerging from the flood, which has not overflowed the soul. In the spiritual sense the opening of the heavens of the internal man is here meant. For the object of the baptism of temptation is to remove evil from the external man; and every purification of the external man has the effect of so far opening the internal man. Just as the world is overcome is heaven brought near to us. To us as followers of the Son of Man heaven is opened as often as we overcome in temptation.

And through the open or rent heaven *he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him*. The Spirit of God is God himself as a Spirit acting upon the human mind. The Scriptures speak indeed of the Spirit proceeding from God; yet even this is but an accommodation to our feeble intellects, as developed in a world of space: for he who is omnipresent, how can he proceed through space? It must be evident to every mind raised but a little above the sphere of the bodily senses, that both the shape and motion of the Spirit are figurative or representative. It appeared as a dove, because a dove is an emblem of pure and holy affections and thoughts, and in reference to God, of divine affections and thoughts, which are those of divine love and wisdom. And more especially do those gentle animal forms shadow forth the gentleness and purity of regenerate souls—symbols therefore of the descending love and truth of the Divine upon the human nature of the Saviour, by which also it became divine. The Spirit of divine love and wisdom is therefore the winged messenger sent from on high, with a message of peace to the soul that overcomes in temptation.

Besides the descent of the dove, there came also down from the opened heaven a voice, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. To those who think of divine as they think of human subjects, of spiritual as of natural things, this will present the simple natural thought of two Beings, one on earth and one in heaven—a Father declaring his love for his Son. The voice to the ear, like the dove to the eye, was the adaptation of the Divine, which is above all sense, to sensuous apprehension. Our Lord himself declared, after this, that no man had heard the voice of the Father at any time, nor seen his shape. This, then, could not be the Father's own voice, as the dove could not have been the Spirit's own shape. Both were representative—representative of realities, but of realities far above the mundane and sensuous appearances. The two were intended to teach us, representatively, that the Lord, coming out of the depths of his temptations, brought down to him, as the Man who was made perfect through suffering, a new measure of divine truth and

divine love. We do not, in this view of the subject, by any means ignore the doctrine of the Sonship of Christ. But we believe that his Sonship can only be predicated of his humanity; for the humanity it was that was born of the Virgin, and this is declared to be the only begotten Son of God. The human nature of Christ could alone receive the Spirit of God. But by receiving that Spirit without measure, the humanity came to have infinite fulness; and that which has infinite fulness must be divine. The human was made divine by successive acts of glorification. And it was when the human was fully glorified that Jesus was truly the Son of God; for by glorification he was born of God, as by regeneration we are: and then Jesus was the Son of the Father's love. And if he who dwells in love dwelleth in God, infinitely more must Jesus dwell in love; for he is the infinite wisdom of infinite love, the infinite form of the infinite essence—he in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily—he who has the Father as his very soul and life, and sends the Spirit as the emanating life of his love and light of his wisdom—one God in one glorious Person for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

WE have had occasion in our remarks on the previous chapter to point out the difference between the baptism of Jesus and that of every mere man, and to explain that in our Lord's case baptism involved the idea, not of repentance, but of temptation. Accordingly, no sooner does the Lord receive baptism than he engages in those conflicts which the rite represented. *Then was Jesus led up (or away) of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.* There is one particular in this which may strike the mind as singular, the Lord's being led into temptation by the Spirit—that Spirit which had descended like a dove upon him. Yet in this very fact is the law of progress exemplified. There is, however, nothing more surprising in this than in Israel being led up by Moses into the wilderness to be tempted. There is indeed an apparent inconsistency between the fact and the Scripture declaration, that "God tempts no man, but that every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lusts and enticed." But the truth is, that although temptation does not come from the Spirit of God, it comes of receiving it. The Spirit does not tempt, but it leads into that state in which temptation is experienced. Temptation is an inward spiritual conflict between good and evil, truth and falsity. There can therefore be no mental conflict except

in minds in which these opposites are present and active. The natural or unconverted man, who has no spiritual good and truth, and has no concern about eternal life, knows nothing of spiritual temptation; there is nothing in him to tempt. He follows unresistingly the impulse of his natural affections, and pursues his temporal aims undisturbed by eternal considerations. It is when the Spirit of the Lord descends upon him, and enters into his heart, that his false peace is first disturbed. A new life, which is spiritual and eternal, has commenced in his soul; and the old life, which is natural and temporal, rises up against, and enters into conflict with it. The Lord has come, but it is not to send peace, but a sword. The Spirit has lighted and abode upon him; but it leads, nay, drives him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The conflict, once begun, continues, though not without intervals of repose, till the natural and temporal submit to and serve the spiritual and the eternal. Then victory is followed and rewarded with peace, peace which the Prince of peace bestows, which the world could not give, and which it cannot take away. We seek to explain this subject, in relation to the Lord, by human experience, because Jesus was in all points tempted as we are.

We are not to suppose that this was the Lord's first reception of the Spirit, or that this was his first temptation. No doubt this was an epoch in the Lord's life and experience, the beginning of a new state, of a new stage in the progress of his glorification. His glorification had hitherto been chiefly that of his internal man, according to the law in regard to human progress, that the internal is first regenerated, and the external afterwards. As the Lord's work had hitherto been chiefly internal, his life had as yet been chiefly private; and his experience is unrecorded in the gospels, because, being that of the inner man, it does not belong to the outward historical sense of the Word. His glorification was now about to be brought more fully into the external, or, so to speak, into the body. Therefore the Lord received external baptism, and entered into the temptations which it symbolized, and came out into public life, and did outward and miraculous works, and taught lessons of truth in parables to the multitudes—the record of all which forms the outward or literal sense of the gospels. The work of glorification in the Lord, like the complete regeneration of man, consists not only of continuous, but of distinct degrees. Like man, the Lord passed through three distinct states, which we call natural, spiritual, and celestial. These may be considered to be represented, if not marked,

by the Lord's baptism, his transfiguration, and his resurrection; and his progression in them perhaps representatively described by the three journeys he made, during his ministry, to Jerusalem. His temptations in the wilderness were also three in number. These temptations of our Lord were not so much three acts, as three kinds, of temptation. Indeed, we are not to regard the historical relation as strictly literal. It contains the history of all his temptations. Excepting his agony in the garden and his sufferings on the cross, these are the only temptations of the Lord mentioned in the gospels. And yet his whole life was one of conflict and victory. His temptations could not be adequately described as they actually occurred, because, unlike his teachings and his works, they did not, except in a few instances, come under human observation. Although, on this account, they are not recorded in the New Testament, they are described in the Old. As the spiritual sense of the Word is the history of man's regeneration, the celestial sense is the history of the Lord's glorification. Everywhere, therefore, the Lord's temptations are the subjects, where war and conflict are mentioned in divine Revelation. In many parts they shine through the letter, and in the Book of Psalms they are often openly revealed. And when David is regarded as a type of the Lord, then in "David and all his afflictions" may be traced the Lord and all his temptations. The Lord's temptations were various as well as numerous, yet they may all be classed under the three kinds that form the subject of this chapter. A clear idea of these will enable us to have some faint conception of the nature of our Lord's trials, and also of his triumphs. To the remarks we have offered on the general subject, as introduced in the first verse, it may only be necessary to add, that the wilderness is a general representative of temptation; for the state which lays us open to the assaults of the enemy is one in which the mind has in it waste places, which regeneration makes to bud and blossom like the rose.

2. The particulars of the Lord's temptations come now to be described. *When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.* Forty is a common term used to express the duration of temptation, whether short or long, and expresses the continuance and succession of states rather than of times. For even temptation has its alternations and successions of state within itself. It has its successions of state, indicated by its forty days, and its alternations of state, indicated by its days and nights. There are no states without progressions and distinctions. Without them no state could come to an end, or leave its impressions behind. The worst

states through which man can pass are not of uniform darkness: there is variety—and variety even in suffering is a relief and a lesson. There is alternation; and if there is day and night, however long the night and short the day, in the winter of our trial, hope is never utterly lost in despair.

During the forty days and nights of our Lord's continuance in the wilderness he fasted. A fast of such duration was not a circumstance peculiar to him, though all such fastings had no doubt reference to his. Fastings were either voluntary or involuntary, and signified either the abstaining from evil or the deprivation of good. Voluntary fasts generally were signs of self-denial. Involuntary fasts were generally signs of the deprivation of the good which is the spiritual food of the soul. The soul has its food as well as the body. The Lord's soul had its food as well as his body; for he declared, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Temptation was just the time when fasting from this meat would be forced upon him. For temptation is a state when delight in the law, and power to do the will of God, seem to be taken away. The tempter tries to bring us over to love and do our will instead of the divine will;—first to love it, then to do it. First, the evil influence acts secretly upon the love, and this produces the soul's fasting. This is the state which is here described. The history leads us to believe that Jesus during these forty days not only ate nothing, but had no desire to eat; for it was not till the forty days were ended that he hungered. His appetite was taken away. We know that distress of mind takes away the natural appetite. And, correspondently, distress of soul takes away the spiritual appetite. The lamentation of the afflicted soul is therefore, "I have eaten ashes for bread, and drunken tears in great measure." "I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth" (Dan. x. 3). And as human experience was, in every particular, inconceivably increased in intensity in our Lord's case, what must have been the fasting of him whose very meat was to do his Father's will! But every state has its termination. When the Lord had fasted forty days, *he was afterward an hungered*. The object of the tempter is to take away the appetite for good, that he may create an appetite for evil. And this is the first part of the conflict. Actively to desire evil is the first step to doing it. If the inspired desire is resisted, the first object of tempting spirits is defeated; for if the inclination is neither approved by the understanding nor cherished by the will, but on the contrary condemned and restrained, the soul will gradually recover itself,

and the good desire will return, and the soul will hunger after righteousness.

3, 4. But the tempter, who acts secretly upon the desire and the motive, does not give up the contest when he has failed to bend them in favour of evil. From acting secretly on the love he proceeds to act openly on the life. The soul's hunger—its relish for good, its desire to do the will of God—has returned, and the temptation now consists in the adversary pressing the famished soul to satisfy its hunger with that which is not bread. *When the tempter came to him he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* The stones which the devil asked Jesus to change into bread were the stones of the wilderness, and represented, as we have seen, the truths of the Jewish church. As bread signifies good, to have made these stones into bread would have represented the changing of such truth into good; for truth is changed into good by doing it; and such as the truth is, such is the good which it produces. But even supposing that the truths which were revealed to the Jewish church had been preserved in their purity, the good produced from them would have been at the best but Jewish good—the righteousness of the law, the virtue of the letter—and could only have satisfied the Jewish appetite for the good of Judaism. This natural good was rather a substitute for goodness than goodness itself—a temporary means of preserving the remains of the last and lowest degree of spiritual life, till the spiritual truths of a spiritual church could be revealed for its real sustenance. For the Lord to have satisfied his hunger with such bread would have been to feed his senses and leave his soul unsatisfied. It would not have been doing the will of him that sent him, and finishing his work, but doing the will of him whose object it was to defeat that work, yet to defeat it under the guise of promoting it. The Lord was himself the bread that came down from heaven, to give life unto the world. Jesus fed a multitude of people in the wilderness, not by turning its stones into bread, but by multiplying the loaves and fishes. But even this divinely-created bread was not the only nourishment he gave them; for he had already satisfied their souls with his words, with good things out of the treasures of his wisdom: he had fed their inner man with spiritual good, and now fed their outer man with its corresponding natural good—showing, by his own twofold means of satisfying their wants, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. In referring to the place in the Old Testament, where the saying which our Lord repeats against his adversary occurs, we

find this truth involved in the meaning. Moses says, "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. viii. 2, 3). The Lord Jesus was typified by the manna, he being the true bread; he, therefore, is eminently the Word of God by which man lives. This first temptation of the Lord, as the second Adam, was of the same nature as that of the first Adam—it was a temptation by the serpent to eat of the tree of knowledge instead of the tree of life. In his temptation the first Adam fell, introducing sin into the world; in his corresponding temptation the second Adam overcame, providing in his triumph for man's restoration.

5. We have already remarked that the Lord's temptations describe three classes, and not merely three acts, of temptation, and that they advance progressively from lower to higher, as those of man do, from natural to spiritual, from spiritual to celestial. The temptation to turn stones into bread describes the first class of temptations, those which belong to the natural class, or which appeal to the natural affections and perceptions. The next temptation is one of another and deeper kind, being spiritual in its character, but connected with that which precedes it, as one of a series. If, when tempted to appease its hunger by turning stones into bread, the soul maintains its integrity, in full conviction of the truth that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, it will next be tempted to place its confidence in the truths of the Word, to the exclusion of its goods. Or, to express it in its relation to man: when Satan cannot overturn a man's faith, he tempts him to trust in faith alone. For this purpose he takes him up into the holy city, and sets him on a *pinnacle of the temple*. A city signifies doctrine, and holy is predicated of truth. The holy city is therefore the doctrine of truth, but such as it is in the church. The temple, too, has reference to truth, or to the understanding as its receptacle. When it is called the *house of God*, it relates to the will; when named the *temple*, it relates to the understanding. To take the Lord up into the holy city, was to draw and abstract his mind from other things, and fix it on the doctrines of truth in the church; and to set him on a pinnacle (literally, a wing) of the temple, was to seek to inspire him with the pride of intellect, or elation of mind. We are not, of course, to suppose that such a temptation was capable of actually producing these effects in the mind

of the Saviour, in the same sense and degree as it would in the mind of an ordinary man. We have to describe and conceive of these states as they are in frail humanity, without which it would be impossible to describe them at all; but we must never forget that at best they can give but an exceedingly imperfect idea of the Lord's states; and to conceive of them as identical with those of mere man, would be to profane a subject in itself most holy. The Lord, although tempted in all points as we are, never allowed the least of sin to enter into his holy mind: but we never are tempted without betraying our frailty; and even when we overcome, which we do by the power of him who overcame before us, we are but as brands plucked from the fire.

6. Whatever we may conceive to have been the Lord's state, as signified by his being set on the pinnacle of the temple, that did but form the prelude of his trial. The temptation itself consisted in his being tempted to cast himself down, in the confidence that he would be borne up. *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* It is a singular fact that some, at least, when raised to a giddy height, are seized with an impulse to cast themselves down. If natural effects are the results of spiritual causes, there must be some analogy to this natural impulse, if natural it may be called, in the spiritual life. In the spiritual world we know this is the case. Spirits, when raised above the level of their proper life, are seized with an impulse to cast themselves down, and actually do so. Had the Lord been raised above the level of his proper life—had Satan been able to exalt him into a state above that to which his glorification had raised him, the Lord could not have maintained his elevation, but must have cast himself down. But Satan has no power to raise men, but only to make them proud of their elevation. And "pride cometh before a fall." It was this pride that Satan sought to excite in the mind of Jesus, as a means of his downfall: for Satan only seeks to raise up, that he may cast down. To understand what is meant by the Lord casting himself down, it may be useful to turn our attention to some of the particulars in the Word that bear upon it. One of the statutes of the Mosaic law declared, "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence" (Deut. xxii. 8). This civil law contains a spiritual truth. The house is a symbol of the mind, the highest or inmost of which is

meant by the roof. The spiritual calamity which this law was intended to guard against is that of a man falling from a higher into a lower, or from a superior to an inferior state of spiritual life—which is to fall from a state of good to a state of truth, or from a state of charity to a state of faith; and he who does so violates or profanes what is holy, which is to bring blood upon his house. It was because of this important principle being involved in the Mosaic law that our Lord, treating of perilous times that were coming on the church, when men were exhorted to flee from Judea into the mountains, exhorted them that were on the house-top not to come down to take anything out of the house—that is, those who are in a state of good or love are not to come down into a state of truth or faith, for by doing so they come from a superior to an inferior state, and so pervert divine order, and destroy both good and truth in themselves. The great law of life is progression, and the order of progression is from truth to good, from faith to love. The divine command is, “Go forward—go up higher.” This is the law of divine order, because it is the order of human improvement, and therefore of human happiness. But the efforts of the tempter, or of the whole powers of darkness, are to reverse this law. Not progression, but retrogression—not higher, but lower—not nobler, but baser, is the order which hell recognizes and acts upon, and endeavours with all its power and cunning to promote. Evil and hell are what they are, because they are in every respect the opposites of good and heaven. The tendency of hell is to go down lower and lower, that of heaven is to go up higher and higher. When, therefore, the devil tempted Jesus to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, he desired him to cast himself down from the holy elevation on which he stood; and only fulfilled what had been written in the prophetic psalm, “They only consult to cast him down from his excellency” (lxii. 4). The devil endeavoured to strengthen his cause by appealing to Scripture. Evil spirits do not tempt men to do evil as evil, but to do it either as good or as an act which has the sanction of what the tempted recognize as authority. Before they can use the truth in their evil cause, they must pervert it. It had, indeed, been written (Ps. xci. 11), “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” But this promise was given to those who walk in the right way. The angels bear up and protect those who desire their support and protection, and those who live in harmony with, not those who violate, the laws of order, within which support and protection lie. Hence the importance of under-

standing, that we may obey, the Scripture, and that we may resist temptation, which often comes to us under the guise of liberty sanctioned by divine authority. The truth makes us free from sin, not from the law which condemns it; free to do good, but not to do evil. In regard to the passage quoted from the Psalms, though prophetic of the Lord, it is to be understood of him in a spiritual sense. He needed not the support of angels; for angels, like men, are dependent on him. But angels, when mentioned in the Word, signify something of his own divinity; for all that makes them angels they derive from him. Angels, therefore, signify divine truths, and their hands are the power of truths. These truths were the Lord's supports, and these prevented him from stumbling over the falsities that prevailed in the church, which were the stones, against even one of which he was to be preserved from dashing his foot. No mere man walks in this world without stumbling. The Lord alone walked in it, through all its perils and temptations, and stumbled not.

7. Jesus answered the tempter by saying, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* Men are said in Scripture to tempt God when they doubt or dare his power; and they no doubt tempt him when they presume on divine support in doing wrong. We may thus be tempted by the devil to tempt God. Our Lord overcame the tempter by appealing to the law against tempting God. There is another sense in which our Lord's use of this law of the Word is to be taken. The devil demanded Jesus to cast himself down, to prove that he was the Son of God. He was thus himself tempting the Lord God in the person of Jesus Christ, who was God incarnate. And our Lord's answer includes this idea. Indeed, as the tempter acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God, he must have known that he whom he tempted was the very Being who was not to be tempted. There is another truth contained in this circumstance. The Lord said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," to instruct us that the Divine itself is above all temptation. As the Son of God, the Lord himself was beyond temptation. The Lord is called the Son of God and the Son of man. And whenever he speaks of temptations and sufferings, he calls himself the Son of man, because the Lord was tempted as to his divine truth; but he never, in speaking of his temptation and sufferings, calls himself the Son of God, because this name is expressive of his divine good. And that divine good is incapable of being tempted, the Lord meant when he answered the tempter by the words of Moses, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

8. The last temptation is still more dreadful and daring than the preceding. The intensity of temptation increases as it proceeds. *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain.* A mountain is the symbol of love, and exceeding height is the symbol of what is exceedingly intense, because exceedingly interior.

This is a symbolical mode of saying that this class of temptations is grounded in the love which forms the inmost of man's life. The inmost love of man's life, in his natural state, is the love of self; and the next, which is like unto it, is the love of the world. Our Lord inherited from his human mother the seeds of this as of every other love; and it formed in him, as in other men, the ground of temptation. Strange indeed it may seem, that he, who was the meekest, and the humblest, and the most disinterested among men, should have had in his humanity the seeds of such evils as the love of dominion and of gain; but we need not be astonished at what in itself is so natural, nor even at the result, which is so reasonable. Our Lord's merit consisted in his displaying such exalted goodness, while yet, like other men, he was born with the seeds of evil. Merit arises from or consists in being good where there are inclinations and temptations to be evil. The Lord was perfected through suffering. And he suffered because he had in his nature that which was the ground of suffering. He had the hereditary love which formed the ground of this temptation, and he experienced it in its greatest possible intensity: "he was taken up into an exceeding high mountain." From the top of the lofty mountain the devil *showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.* This particular is an evidence of the symbolical nature of this relation. Sundry explanations have been offered, but no satisfactory one has been given. Besides, if Jesus was truly the Son of God, he did not require to be carried by Satan to the top of an exceeding high mountain, to have the sight presented to him. He knew more than the devil could show him; and Satan himself must have known that too well to be guilty of such an absurdity. Such conduct must have done much more to defeat his scheme than to advance it. But though it cannot have been true literally, it is instructively true spiritually. The exceeding high mountain and the kingdoms of the world were in the mind of the Saviour himself. The whole world was there, with its passions and its interests, but slumbering in the depths of his human consciousness, till called into activity by an influx from the kingdom of darkness. And when, under the strong pressure of its influence, self-love is excited in the will, all the kingdoms of the world are seen by the understanding;

for the fire of love in the will becomes a flame of light in the understanding. In this way it was that the devil took Jesus up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. But this did not constitute the temptation. Indeed, there is nothing evil in the love of self and the love of the world themselves. They are necessary elements in the constitution of human nature; for while man lives in the world he must take his part in the affairs of the world, its government and acquisitions; and he could not engage in them unless he had a love for them, for without love there can be no action. Our temptation in the world is, not to love and use the things of the world, but to fall down and worship the devil, that we may possess them. So long as we acknowledge the world to be God's world, and use it as his, we sin not; nay, we would sin in not using it. It is not its use, but its abuse, that forms the subject of temptation; and all abuse comes from evil, which, abstractly, is the devil. Evil claims the world and everything else as its own, and wishes to be worshipped as its owner. Our temptation, therefore, is to worship self instead of God, and possess and use the world for the sake of ourselves and our own glory. He whom we serve is the object of our worship. And we serve whoever or whatever is the object of our ruling love. If we supremely love self or the world, self or the world is the object of our worship. The devil is ever striving to excite this love in our hearts. The love of self and the world are not, in our fallen state, disposed, as they were intended, to find their happiness in serving God; they desire to usurp his authority and claim his possessions as their own. This is the ground of our temptations. Whether shall we serve and obey God or self? this is the question. To decide this great practical question of life or death is, in fact, the use of temptation, and the Divine purpose in permitting it. The devil is ever suggesting to us—*All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*; while God through his Word is ever answering this seductive appeal, by saying, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. Jesus overcame the temptation with this divine truth, which proved an antidote to the poison which the old serpent was attempting to infuse into his mind. The Word is the armoury from which we must draw the weapons of our warfare in our conflicts with the world and self. And he who does this faithfully shall never be moved. The Lord, who permits us to be tried, never allows us to be tempted above what we are able to bear; and with every trial he provides a way of escape: and that way will be found in the truths of the Word and obedience to them.

We find that the tempter is called both the Devil and Satan. These two names are expressive of two kinds of evil spirits. As heaven consists of the good and the true, hell consists of the evil and the false. The evil are called the Devil, and the false are called Satan. The tempter is called by both these names, to indicate that the Lord was tempted by both these classes of evil spirits, and consequently from both the evils which distinguish them.

It is of the utmost importance that we should have some clear view on the subject of the Lord's temptations, and should avoid the mistake which our imperfect knowledge of their nature and purpose is likely to cause. A knowledge of the purpose for which the Lord assumed human nature lies, of course, at the foundation of all right views respecting the nature and use of his temptations. The opinion entertained by many, that Jesus assumed man's nature to suffer in it, as man's substitute, the punishment due to man's transgressions, reduces the Lord's temptations to a judicial infliction. And in order that he might bear it in man's stead, it is supposed that he himself must have been free from the common ground of temptation and suffering, which is evil. It is therefore assumed that, though born of a fallen woman, he himself was unfallen, having, by the miraculous conception, received a manhood pure as that of Adam. To say that the Lord assumed human nature in its fallen state will seem to those who hold the opinion that he was born pure, as virtually calling the Lord a sinner. Some suppose that if Jesus had inherited moral imperfection, he could not have made atonement for other men's sins, but only for his own. The nature of the Lord's work in the flesh required that he should assume human nature in its fallen state, having in it the seeds of *all* human infirmity. It was to do the very work that man has to do that the Lord assumed man's nature. And the purpose of the Lord's doing that work in himself was, that he might afterwards do it in us, according to the nature of the work he first effected in himself. In reference to the present subject it is therefore said that he was tempted in all points as we are; and it is further declared, that he was made perfect through suffering. And in regard to the purpose, in relation to us, for which the Lord endured temptation, it is said to have been, that he might succour those that are tempted. Both these truths were declared by the Lord himself when he said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth." The Lord's temptations were among the means by which this sanctification or glorification of his humanity was effected, and by which he became the Author of

sanctification and regeneration to men. Had not the Lord assumed an imperfect humanity, having in it the seeds of evil, he could not have been tempted as other men are, nor could he have been perfected through the suffering of temptation. The opinion that these seeds of evil made the Lord a sinner is a mistake. Every man inherits evil; but no man is a sinner till he has committed sin; for sin is the transgression of the law. The grand distinction between Jesus and every other man consisted, not in the difference of their state by birth, but in the difference of their state by life. Jesus, like other men, was born with hereditary evil; but, unlike every other man, he was entirely free from actual sin. He is indeed called, by birth, a holy thing; but this is applied to him as the Son of God, and not as the son of Mary or the son of man. It is remarkable that his sinlessness is spoken of in the Scriptures, not in reference to his birth but his life—in fact, in reference to his trials and temptations. "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." Had such a remark been introduced in connection with his birth, there might have been some ground for the opinion that he was born absolutely free from moral infirmity. Had it been said, for instance, that he was born of a woman, yet without sin, the objection would have had some force; but when we find his sinlessness associated with temptation, in which all other men to some extent fail, we may conclude that practical, and not hereditary freedom from evil is meant. This constituted the great value, as well as the great merit of our Lord's sinlessness. He was tempted, but he never yielded in temptation. He met the whole power of evil, both on earth and in hell, on the battle ground of a frail humanity, but, notwithstanding its frailty, he conquered in every temptation, and crowned his work with complete victory. Thus did the Lord subjugate the powers of darkness and glorify his humanity. As he conquered, so has he now the keys of hell and of death. And now does he say, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

11. When the Lord's temptations were ended, *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.* We find here another hint of the existence of an inner sense in the Scriptures. The Lord did not require the assistance of angels, who, however exalted above the condition of men, are but finite beings, and could afford no aid to him, who, being from above, was above all. But there is deep truth in this, although it is not to be literally

understood. The condition of mankind at the time of our Lord's coming was so deeply evil that hell was near, and heaven was far from them. The Lord came to reverse this order. He came to drive back the powers of darkness, and restore man's connection with heaven. He overcame hell by admitting temptations into himself. When he overcame these temptations, then was hell removed, and heaven came near. This was a general result of the Lord's conquests. But it is said that the *angels came and ministered unto him*. The angels ministered unto him, as men in their devotions and virtues serve him, not by giving him anything he did not already possess, but by satisfying, by their ministrations, his desire for their happiness. This desire is his hunger; and our doing his will is our ministering unto it. There is another and more practical lesson which we learn from this relation. The Lord was our Example. What is recorded of him is to be realized by us. This record describes the result of *our* overcoming in temptation. When we resist the devil he flees from us, and when the devil leaveth us angels come and minister unto us. Here are hope and consolation for those that are toiling in the upward path of regeneration. Tempted Christians, who feel themselves beset on every side by evil spirits and evil influences, which shut out the light and love of heaven, may gain strength and take courage, knowing that if they continue to hold bravely on in the day of trial, their perseverance will be rewarded with deliverance from the oppression of the enemy, when angels will come near as ministering spirits, sent to minister unto them who have shown themselves worthy of being heirs of salvation.

12. The circumstance which is next related, apparently in continuance of the series of historical events, is yet separated from the Lord's temptation by a considerable interval of time. Yet the two seem to be connected in character; and this, no doubt, is the reason that these events, although they have no historical connection, are here brought together. Who would suppose that an event that did not take place till about three years after the Lord's temptation in the wilderness, should be introduced in the form, *Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee?* Yet may we not find a reason for this in the similarity of our Lord's being in the wilderness, as it were the prisoner of Satan, and John's being cast into prison by one who may justly be regarded as an emissary of the kingdom of darkness? This bringing together of these distant events will be seen to be all the more appropriate and significant when we re-

flect, that a similar treatment of the Incarnate Word by the powers of darkness, and of him who represented the written Word by the powers of the world, are related in signification to each other. As it was the aim of the tempter to overcome the power and frustrate the object of the Incarnate Word, so was it the purpose of the corrupt church, of which Herod was the type, to deprive the written Word of influence and authority. As this was done in Judea, where the church had her chief seat and her ruling power, Jesus departed into Galilee. This was to represent that, the Word having been perverted and rejected by the Jews, the Lord, as the Incarnate Word, betook himself to the Gentiles, to raise up among them a new spiritual church, in place of that which had ceased to exist among the Jews.

13-15. But although the Lord departed into the country whence he had come to Jordan unto John to be baptized, he did not return to the city where he had previously dwelt. On his return from Egypt, Joseph, to avoid Judea, where Archelaus reigned, "turned aside into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene;" but now, when, on Herod's imprisonment of John, he returns to Galilee, he leaves Nazareth, and comes and dwells in Capernaum, that another prophecy may be fulfilled: *The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.* The cities or villages in which the Lord dwelt being made the subjects of prophecy, indicates a higher meaning than appears on the surface of these divinely-inspired Writings. Besides their minuteness in very inconsiderable things, there is another particular that may impress us with a conviction of their spirituality. Galilee is spoken of as being beyond Jordan. Galilee was not on the east of Jordan, out of the land of Canaan, although "beyond Jordan" generally has this meaning. Understood with some degree of latitude, the words may mean that the Lord's work was to extend to the Gentiles on both sides of the Jordan, as we find from this chapter that it did. For the fame of Jesus' teaching and healing went throughout all Syria, which was on the other side Jordan; and among the great multitudes that followed him some were "from beyond Jordan" (v. 25). May we not suppose, however, that Zabulon and Nephthalim were described as situate beyond Jordan, to express the distinctly gentile character of those to whom the Lord now turned?—out of the land being equivalent to out of the church. Whether this

be the case or not, there can be no doubt that we are here to understand the Lord's turning to the Gentiles. Two particulars enable us to ascertain the spiritual meaning of Capernaum. It was *upon the sea coast*. The sea signifies the external of heaven and the church, in which are the simple who have thought naturally, and but little spiritually, about sacred things. It was also *in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim*. In reference to the people among whom the Lord had now come, besides being called Gentiles, the description indicates that they were in an external state, being on the "coast" and on the "borders." The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim, also Galilee of the Gentiles, as nations, signify that a church was to be established among the Gentiles, who are in the good of life, and receive truths, and thus are in the conjunction of good and truth, and in combat against evils and falsities. That the establishment of the church and the reformation of such Gentiles are understood, is also evident from the series of expressions, as that the land was *beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles*, and also that *the people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light had sprung up*. Such being the signification of the country or land where Capernaum was, we have only to reflect on the signification of a city, to arrive at a knowledge of the place which this one holds in reference to the present subject. "In the universal sense, cities signify the doctrinals of the church; but in the singular sense they signify the interiors of (the natural mind of) man, where doctrinals are, or rather where truths are, conjoined with good. For the truths and goods pertaining to man form as it were a city; hence a man in whom is the church is called the city of God. The signification of a city is like that of a house. In the universal sense a house signifies good; but in the singular sense it signifies a man, and specifically his mind as to good and truth there conjoined; and a house, with its apartments, circumjacent buildings, and courts, is a city in the least form." Capernaum, then, represented the doctrinals of Christianity as adapted to the state of the well-disposed Gentiles, and the natural mind in which they are received. For the Lord dwells in that region of the human mind where his truth and good are received, and, indeed, where they are conjoined. The connection of Capernaum with the church which the Lord was about to raise up from among the Gentiles is indicated by the circumstances connected with the very next mention of that city by Matthew. For when the Lord, after his sermon on the mount, "entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion beseeching him to heal his servant," and

whose humility drew forth from him the remark that he had not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

The state of the Gentiles at the time of our Lord's coming was widely different from that into which the Jews had so deeply plunged themselves. All, both Jews and Gentiles, were included under sin, but as the Gentiles, unlike the Jews, sinned, not against the clear light of Revelation, but against the dim light of tradition, their spiritual condition was much less deplorable. *They sat in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death*; but their darkness was the error of ignorance, and their death was the evil of natural concupiscence. They were in the region of death in regard to the unregenerate state of the will; and as evil in the will, by intercepting the light of truth flowing in from heaven, casts its dark shadow on the understanding, they were intellectually in the shadow of death. And not only were they in this region and shadow of death, but they "sat" therein, an expression which always implies a degree of confirmation in the particular state of life to which it relates. Yet the evils and errors of those who are out of the church, and even of the ignorant and simple-minded within it, are not of so deeply malignant a character as those of the well instructed, who have entered deeply into the mysteries of faith. They, therefore, who sit in this darkness are capable of seeing great light, when it is revealed to them, and to them who sit in the region and shadow of this death light springs up when it shows them the way of life; for they are more disposed than the wise and prudent to receive the light of truth, and to be led by it into a true faith, and into genuine charity.

But this subject deserves to be considered in reference to the Lord himself; for Capernaum, as his new place of abode, must have the same relation to his public life as Nazareth had to his private life. "In the supreme sense, Zabulon and Nephthalim (as the sons and tribes of Israel) signified the union of the Divinity itself with the Lord's divine humanity, by means of temptation admitted into himself, and victories therein obtained by his own inherent power." For this union in the Lord is analogous to the conjunction of good and truth in man. When we consider the difference between the Lord's two states and modes of life, before and after his baptism, and the different significations of Nazareth and Capernaum, we must see the appropriateness of his leaving that "where he was brought up" for one which henceforth became "his own city." In the Lord's private and public life we cannot fail to see a correspondence with the two successive states of man's regeneration. The internal is first to be regenerated, and after-

wards the external. Nazareth, signifying separation, represented that state and period of the Lord's life when his internal was regenerated—his state as a celestial man separate from the world. Capernaum represented that state and period of his life during which his external man was regenerated. To this Capernaum, being "on the sea coast" and "on the borders" of the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim, answered. But there are other instructive circumstances besides these. Between the Lord's abode in these two places lay his baptism and his temptation in the wilderness. The baptism of John represented the purification of the external; and temptation, which was included in the signification of that rite, and into which our Lord entered immediately after his baptism, is the means by which evil in the external man is subdued, and by which the internal and external are united. And here we see the suitability of the Lord, after his temptations in the wilderness, coming into the land of Zabulon and Nephthalim, which, we have seen, signify the conjunction of good and truth by means of temptation, and, in reference to the Lord, the union of his divinity and humanity through temptations from the powers of darkness and victories over them. While, therefore, Nazareth was the place where he was "brought up," Capernaum was, in a divine as well as in a natural sense, "his own city," for he became what Capernaum represented. It is not to be understood that the Lord's temptations were ended before he entered into Capernaum. On the contrary, he suffered much from the Capernians themselves, among whom he had done many of his greatest works. But we are to remember that even among the Gentiles there were, as there still are, the evil as well as the good, and consequently the unbelieving as well as the believing. And it was against Capernaum, as consisting of and representing these, that our Lord afterwards uttered such severe censures and denunciations.

17. The state on which the Lord had now entered being one in which the Word came forth from its interior recess in the internal of the Lord's humanity into a more outward development and manifestation, he began to take up the thread of John the Baptist's discourse, and preach the same doctrine to mankind. *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* This is indeed an epoch in our Lord's history. It forms the commencement of his ministry—the first of the sublime teachings which make up the incomparable code of interior and spiritual wisdom that stamps the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation. The time from which Jesus began to preach was that in which "he

learnt experience from the things which he suffered." He had been tempted, and had passed through the fiery ordeal refined and tempered. And now he was prepared to give the world the fruits of his practical wisdom. Time is the emblem of state; and the state which results from successful temptation is, as we have seen, a state of conjunction—in the Lord's case, the union of goodness and truth, and a proportional union of his divine and human natures. Preaching is appropriate to the state on which the Lord had now entered; for it is the function of the internal to think and feel, of the external to speak and act. It is worthy of remark that the theme of the beginning of the Lord's preaching is precisely the same as that of John the Baptist's. It is said by some that repentance is not the gospel. No doubt the gospel includes much besides the doctrine of repentance, but there can be no gospel without repentance. Repentance, we repeat, as it was the first duty preached, is the first to be performed. It is the gate of introduction to that kingdom of heaven which was declared to be near at hand. It is not "believe," but "repent *and* believe," that forms the enlarged teaching of the gospel. "Repent" was the first word uttered by the Divine Preacher, and stands as the Portal of the True Christian Temple of religion. Whoever would enter in, must pass through the gate of Repentance. Although there is no literal difference, there is a spiritual distinction between preaching and saying; mentioned together, they imply that the Lord addresses himself to the will and to the understanding; and repentance respects both, for we have to repent of our evils and also our errors.

18. But when the Lord appeared before the world as the Preacher of the gospel, he was pleased to employ other instruments to carry on the great work. *Walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.* The calling of the apostles is an interesting and instructive circumstance. The selection of the men who were to be, so to speak, the companions of the Saviour in his life, and labourers with him in his beneficent work, is a matter of deep interest. But when we know that the apostles, as a body and as individuals, sustained a representative character, the choice becomes instructive as well as interesting. The apostles were the first-fruits of the church, and represented it. There is an evident resemblance of the twelve apostles to the twelve patriarchs and tribes of Israel, which is rendered evident by the names of both being inscribed, one on the foundations, the other on the gates of the Holy Jerusalem, (Rev. xxi.)

The twelve apostles, like the twelve patriarchs, represented all of every class who constitute the church on earth and in heaven, of which the sealing of the twelve tribes in the Revelation (ch. vii.) may convince us. As the apostles represent all the members of the church, abstractly, they represent all the principles of the church, or all the graces and virtues that constitute the church or heaven in the regenerate mind. Understood in this sense, each apostle represents a particular grace. And the order in which they were chosen, like that in which the sons of Israel were born, represented the order in which the corresponding graces are received into the mind in the progress of the spiritual life. The New Testament does not give the history of the calling of all the twelve apostles, as the Old Testament does that of the birth of the twelve sons of Israel, but so far as the history goes, the parallel is complete. The first four apostles are similar to the first four patriarchs. The call of the one and the birth of the other are correspondent. Like Simon Peter, Reuben signifies faith in the understanding; like Andrew, Simeon signifies faith in the heart; like James, Levi signifies charity; and John, like Judah, signifies love. It was when Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee that he saw the brethren, and called them. The scene which this part of the gospel presents is touching and beautiful in its simplicity. Jesus, choosing out men for his work of evangelizing the world, walks along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and calls unto him some of the fishermen engaged in their humble calling, that they may become fishers of men. The sea, we have seen, signifies the external of heaven and the church; and those who dwell by the sea are such as are of an external but simple character. The Sea of Galilee represented the heathen world as to its intellectual character and condition, and those who were fishers in it were, by analogy, suited to become fishers of men. But the sea has another and kindred signification. As "the gathering together of waters," which are emblematical of truths, the sea signifies the literal sense of the Word, which is the ultimate receptacle of all divine truth; and the fish in the sea signify the living, literal truths which it contains. Fishers in this sense are such as study the Divine Word, to draw from it the truths that sustain the religious life both of themselves and others. This is a qualification required in those who become fishers of men. And, indeed, the catching of men is effected by the acquisition and communication of the truths of the Holy Word; so that none but those who search the Word can evangelize the world. It was because both these meanings were included in the Sea of Galilee that the Lord walked on its shores, to choose

from among its fishermen those who were required to go forth to teach and to preach in his name. As he walked he saw two brothers. And there was a reason for those he then chose being brothers. Truth and good are brothers, or, what is the same thing, faith and obedience are brothers; for truth in the understanding is faith, and truth in the will is obedience. In choosing Peter first, our Lord teaches us that faith is the first grace that finds a place in the minds of the regenerate. Repentance, we have said, is the gate of introduction into the church; but repentance is rather an act and a state than a grace—it is a general turning of the mind away from sin, which prepares it for the reception of the graces of religion, or of the principles which form it. Repent and believe. Repentance, like John the Baptist, precedes and prepares the way of the Lord; faith, like Peter, comes after him, and follows up his work. Hence our Lord said, "Follow me." Faith is not mere intellectual belief, but is the faith of truth grounded in good. He who was first chosen is therefore called Simon Peter, though the surname had not then been given, because these two names indicate faith as an intellectual state resting on the will; and Andrew expresses its fulness by being manifested in the life. When the Lord called these brethren, they were *casting a net into the sea*. They were in the very act which represented the exercise of the function they were called to assume, and using the instrument that corresponded with the means they were so successfully to employ, in drawing truths from the Word and men into the church. A net, like a hook, signifies doctrine, because it is an application of science to obtain results that men's unaided powers could not effect. Doctrine is necessary both to draw truths from the Word and men into the church; for without it we can neither rightly understand nor apply truths. Therefore "fishers," which Peter and Andrew are said to have been, are "those who search out and teach, first natural truths, and afterwards spiritual truths, in a rational manner."

19. When Jesus saw Peter and Andrew, *he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*. In the time of our Lord's sojourn on earth, men who received the Lord as the Messiah were frequently required literally to follow him. Spiritually, all require to follow him by walking in the truth and imitating his holy example. And this the disciple must do if, from being a learner and teacher of natural truth, he would become a learner and teacher of spiritual truth. This progression is meant by becoming a fisher of men. Fish signify natural truths, and men rational truths. To be fishers of men, the disciples must be able to teach spiritual truths after

a rational manner. And this can only be done by following the Lord as the Divine Truth itself, and as that Divine Truth manifested in human nature; for the Lord became man, that he might become the fisher of men, both immediately and by means of others.

Faith in the understanding, however clear and bright, will not alone suffice for our salvation. Peter has indeed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and can open it to our view; but he must be accompanied by his brother Andrew before we can fully enter into it. For as Peter signifies faith in the understanding, so Andrew his brother signifies faith in the will, as a willing devotedness of oneself to the practice of what faith teaches.

It is to such characters as these, or to those who are earnest in connecting faith and obedience, that the Lord peculiarly addresses himself, saying, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This injunction is of the utmost weight and importance. We follow the Lord when we become his disciples, more especially when we follow his example; but the deep import of this command can only be seen when it is understood that the Lord alludes to the process through which he passed in glorifying his humanity and uniting it to his divinity, of which transcendent process the regeneration of man, or the process by which man acquires a spiritual quality and attains conjunction with the Lord, is an image and imperfect copy.

20. It is surprising, and shows the influence which the Lord exercised over well-disposed minds, that when he called the two brothers, *they straightway left their nets, and followed him*. It is to be understood, that while the Lord was raising up a church among the Gentiles, the first fruits of his ministry were Jews who were in a Gentile state, for such were necessary to be instruments of reaching others through the Scriptures. The doctrines and truths of the Word were the net by which they were to draw men into the church. But in order that they might receive and use the "gospel net," they must leave their Jewish net behind. And such only as were willing to do this could become apostles of the new dispensation. New wine cannot be put into old bottles. New truths cannot be put into old doctrinals. The doctrinals of the Jewish church related in a great measure to ceremonials, which were to be abolished. As bottles they had served their use, and new bottles were to be provided for new wine. The old nets were not more required than old bottles. These two disciples, leaving their nets, followed the Lord—followed him in the regeneration, in performing works of love, and in teaching truths of wisdom.

Happy are they who have advanced to the state represented by Simon and Andrew when they obeyed the Lord's call; for they have entered into a state of conjunction with the Lord, and secured, if they faint not, a place in his kingdom.

21. But excellent as this state is, it is not the highest that the Lord has prepared for them that serve him. For we find that Jesus went on further. *And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.* By going on is meant a progression or advancement in the state treated of. This, with respect to the Lord himself, is a progression towards more intimate union with the Essential Divine called the Father; and with respect to man, it is progression towards more interior conjunction with the Lord, or a deeper and more interior reception of him in the mind—the opening of a principle in the mind in which he can more intimately dwell. Accordingly, we find that a very distinct state is alluded to; for it proceeds to say that he saw *other* two brethren. The reason of this particular distinction is because Peter and Andrew, considered together, represent here the first state of the regenerate life, in which the understanding dictates and the will obeys: but the calling of James and John represented a state in which the will itself is renewed, and, no longer requiring to be led by the understanding, asserts its pre-eminence, and needs only to consult the understanding to draw thence the means of executing the good purposes which it now intends. James, accordingly, is the type of the heavenly principle of charity, or of love towards the neighbour; and John is that spontaneous determination of love into action by virtue of which a benevolent purpose is no sooner conceived in the heart than the hands and all the outward faculties are put into requisition for its performance. How elevated a state that is in which love and charity immediately influence the will, and good is done from spontaneous affection! and how superior it is to the doing of good from motives of obedience only, and from intellectual conviction, must be evident to all. Still more superior is it to that state in which men do good from the promptings of good natural dispositions, without any spiritual charity in the heart or any spiritual truth in the understanding. Natural good is indeed a medium for receiving spiritual good, but cannot be a substitute for it. This good seems to be denoted by Zebedee, the father of James and John. When good from the Lord is received, this natural good as a principle of action is no longer wanted, nor, indeed, admissible; and therefore James and John, when they received the Lord's call, left their father and followed him. That Zebedee represented

the will-principle in general as to the good natural affections which are received by birth, would appear from another important occasion on which James and John are named as his sons. When the mother of these two disciples came to ask of the Lord that they might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom, she is called the mother of Zebedee's children, no doubt to mark the natural origin of the request, in which there was something of self-exaltation which required to be crucified—for the Lord said to the sons, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" but which had so much good in it as to be able and willing to endure the trial—for they said, "We are able."

22. *And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.* The Lord required of his disciples that they should leave father and mother, and wife and children, and all that they had, and follow him. This, which was literally done in the days of his flesh, is to be done spiritually now. For these natural relations were the types of the natural principles which constitute our selfhood. It is in reference to these that the Divine Teacher also says, that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household;" and from whom he is therefore required to separate himself. The two brethren leaving the ship and their father to follow Jesus, was thus a natural act, representing the spiritual duty of giving up all things, both of the natural understanding and the natural will, that we may become the Lord's disciples. And this is done "immediately," when it is done without hesitancy or reservation; for as the spiritual sense has no relation to time, but only to state, "immediately" means certainly, as the result of strong affection and unwavering faith.

23. The Lord, though he had chosen labourers to work in his vineyard, did not on that account cease to work in it himself. *Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.* Galilee, we have seen, represented, in relation to man, the natural mind. And when the Lord, after choosing these four disciples, went about all Galilee, we are instructed that when the Lord, as the Divine Truth, is received in faith and love in the inner man, his Divine presence and power descend into the external, carrying light and joy and healing into every faculty and principle therein. The Lord's labours there are particularly described. He was employed in teaching, preaching, and healing—teaching truth to the intellect, preaching good to the will, and healing the disorders of evil and falsity in the life. He

taught in their synagogues, for a synagogue signifies the church as to doctrine; he preached the gospel of the kingdom, for the gospel signifies the truths and goods of the Word, revealed at the coming of the Lord and governing in the heart; he healed all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people, for sickness and disease signify the practical disorders of the life, arising from evil lusts and false persuasions being brought into act; and their existence among the "people" signifies that the disorders had an intellectual origin: for evil may either pass from the understanding into the will, or from the will into the understanding; and those which originate in the intellect are less malignant and deadly than those which originate in the will. Sins of error are less destructive than sins of intention. And this more especially is the character of evil among the Gentiles, or those in the church who are in a Gentile state; and these are meant especially by the Galileans, who dwelt in the land, which represented the church, and were yet in a Gentile state.

24. *And his fame went throughout all Syria.* Syria, or Aram, was out of the holy land, on the other side of Jordan. But it was in this country that the Hebrew church commenced, and some remains of the knowledges of which still existed in the time of Abraham, who was of Padan-aram, and even in the time of Balaam, who knew Jehovah, and made a perverse use of the knowledge he possessed, by using divination against the children of Israel. The remains of the Hebrew, or second ancient church, continued in Syria a long time; but it at last became idolatrous. Syria has therefore two opposite significations. Considered as the seat of the Hebrew church, it signifies the knowledges of good and truth; but considered as idolatrous, it signifies the opposite, or these principles perverted. When, therefore, the Lord's fame went into all Syria, it went among a people who were not pure Gentiles, but who had affinity with the church. And the result showed that the Syrians were ready to receive the gospel, and to acknowledge the Lord as the Messiah; for *they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy.* Sickness is a universal term, including under it general and particular evils of every kind. Evils generally are those of the will and the understanding, which are here meant by diseases and torments. Particular evils are those of the will, the understanding, and the life, and these are meant by the three afflictions that follow. Devils are evils of the will; lunatics are falses of the understanding;

and palsies are evils of the life. These include, indeed, almost all the maladies that are mentioned in the New Testament, as those with which the multitudes were afflicted that came to Jesus for a cure. His power was equal to the greatest demand that was made upon it. The present relation gives us the impression, if not the assurance, that the maladies were not only diverse, but numerous,—they came from all parts of Syria, and were additional to those who came from Galilee. Yet *he healed them all*. And he is still the same merciful and infallible Physician. He heals the spiritual disorders and diseases of all who come to him, and who trust in his power to save.

25. Besides the numerous sick and afflicted that were healed, *there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan*. These great multitudes represented the numerous thoughts and affections of the mind that the Lord, by healing and regenerating the soul, draws into connection with himself, and conforms to the laws of his own Divine life, which is specially meant by following him. The regions from which these multitudes came indicate the kind of thoughts and affections they represent. Those from Galilee and Decapolis signify the inner and outer, or celestial and spiritual-natural; for Decapolis was out of the land, lying between Canaan and Syria; Jerusalem and Judea signify the spiritual and celestial; and those beyond Jordan signify the sensual and corporeal. Thus these multitudes include all classes of persons and principles, spiritually considered, that receive love and light from the Lord, and that follow him in the regeneration. Taken in connection with the calling of the four disciples, and making them fishers of men, and their following him as their Lord, this great multitude from all parts represented affections and thoughts of all kinds, brought under the influence of the Divine Love and wisdom of Jesus, the Saviour, now received as the Supreme Object of faith and love into the understanding and will. These are the great multitudes to whom, with the disciples, the Lord addressed his Sermon on the mount. The sublimity and universality of the truths he then delivered deserved an audience drawn together from all parts, both within and beyond the land of Canaan. And so with us individually; all our best thoughts and affections should be turned to the Lord, every faculty and power should be devoted to him, when he discourses to us of those high and holy principles that he came on earth to reveal, and which he is ever teaching through his Word, and continually operating by his Spirit to implant in the hearts of men.

CHAPTER V.

THIS forms the commencement of that sublime series of saving wisdom, the whole of which has ever been the theme of general admiration, as known by the name of the "sermon on the mount." This appears to have been the first regular and continued discourse that fell from the lips of the living Word of God—of Jehovah, as incarnate for human salvation. For until he had been baptized by John, at which time the glorification of his Humanity was so far advanced as to admit of an immediate communication between his divine Essence and his external man—represented by the opening of the heavens, the descent of the Spirit as a dove, and the voice of divine acknowledgment then heard—he did not enter upon any public ministry at all. He then underwent the temptation in the wilderness, after which he returned to Galilee, "and from that time," as we are informed in the previous chapter, "Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is precisely the same as John the Baptist had proclaimed before, the burden of whose preaching is described in the very same words. "Jesus," however, it is said, "went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people." But the first specimen that is given of his teaching, beyond the general announcement that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, is that which is here recorded. And how admirably in accord with the character of the Divine Speaker, and with the errand of love on which he has descended into the domains of fallen humanity, are these heavenly sentences! It is to pronounce blessings that he opens his lips; and the first word which issues from them is the encouraging word "Blessed." And how truly, how sweetly encouraging is this blessing! In the sequel he abundantly declares how high is the tone of morals and true excellence which his religion requires; but, instead of beginning with this, or putting it in a form implying reproof and condemnation, he encourages his disciples to engage with cheerfulness in the duties which he shows to be those of true religion, by pouring out blessings upon the humble, the afflicted, and the well-disposed. He begins with evincing that the human race are the objects of his tender affection; that all that is good in them he desires to foster and increase; that their miseries are regarded by him with the softest pity; and that the delight of his heart is to remove evil and sorrow, to impart good, and eternally to bless.

1. As he thus so characteristically begins his divine teaching by manifesting his love—by evincing that it is from the purest Divine Love that all his instructions and requirements, all his words and actions, all his communication and dealings with the human race proceed—so this was represented by the circumstances and situation in and from which he delivered this discourse. *Seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them.* His seeing the multitudes not only signifies that he beheld them with the eyes of his natural body, but also, according to the spiritual import of the phrase, that he perceived the state or condition of the wandering objects of the children of men—how, as is said in another place, they are “scattered abroad as sheep not having a shepherd”—his discernment of all their wants and needs, and his providence over them, keeping them under his care, and providing, in the best manner that their situation would permit, for their real and eternal good. Divine sight is especially foresight and providence. The Lord’s being said, then, to see the multitude, is expressive of his exercise of this providence over the human race according to their state. For all the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ were representative, no less than his words were expressive, of divine and spiritual things—of some activity of his divine love and wisdom, either as existing within himself, or as going forth upon the human objects of his care and compassion. On account of this representative character of all his actions it was, that, when about to deliver the instructions of love composing this discourse, he went up into a mountain. This, indeed, in a natural point of view, gave him the advantage of the better seeing and being seen by the multitude that he was to address, and conveyed his words more audibly to their organs of hearing: but the action was nevertheless correspondent to the state or principle in himself from which he addressed these encouragements and instructions to the people. We have seen that, as the style of the commencement of his discourse most plainly evinces, he uttered it from the impulse of his divine love, and of this a mountain is a correspondent emblem. Frequent mention is made in the Holy Word, especially in its prophetic parts, of mountains and hills; because, in a good sense, a mountain is representative of celestial love, or love to the Lord, and a hill, of spiritual love, or the love of our neighbour. For it is from love that all spiritual elevation proceeds; and the more exalted and ardent the nature of the love in which man is principled, the more truly elevated is his internal state—the nearer to heaven and to the Lord. Thus, when

the prophet declares that in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains, and be exalted above the hills, it is evidently the principle of love, as revealed in the new church, and its supremacy over every lower celestial and spiritual affection, that are signified; and when the Lord is said to go up into a mountain, preparatory to his addressing the people, the signification is, that he entered into the depths and heights of his own unfathomable love, and that from that divine and infinite love flowed his divine words—all the truths which he communicates for the edification and regeneration of the human race.

When he was set, it is added, *his disciples came unto him*. It was the custom with teachers in the Jewish representative church to deliver their instructions in a sitting posture, and not that of standing, which most nations have regarded as the most convenient for that purpose. The reason of the former choice was because sitting is significant of permanence and confirmation. Thus, to deliver instructions sitting, implied that the doctrines delivered were the dictates of permanent and immutable truth. How truly was this applicable to the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ! With strict propriety and weight of meaning is it therefore recorded that he seated himself, and that in a mountain, when he delivered this divine discourse. The doctrines he then delivered were the dictates of eternal and immutable divine truth—eternal and immutable because grounded in the purposes of infinite beneficence and love.

2. Thus it was that *he opened his mouth, and taught*—revealed the doctrines and communicated the life-giving instructions of that infinite wisdom which is constantly directed to the promotion of the true welfare of man, the salvation of the human race.

3. When the Lord was thus set upon the mountain, with the disciples around and the multitude before him, he began his divine discourse by saying, *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*.

Before we proceed to consider the beatitudes, we may offer a few remarks on the connection that exists between them. There can be no doubt that, like all things stated in the Divine Word, there is a regular order and series in these beatitudes, and that, though each appears in the letter to stand by itself, and not to be in any wise dependent on those which follow and precede it, they nevertheless are all connected by divine principles of arrangement, whence each has relation to the others in the series, and each occupies its proper place in it, so that it could not with the same propriety stand

anywhere else. What the principle of the arrangement is, however, is not so plain here as in many of the discourses, narratives, and precepts of the Holy Word; and as I have never met with anything in which this matter is illustrated, what I shall offer upon it shall be proposed with great diffidence. I cannot discern that the several blessings fall throughout into classes either of two or of three each, as is usually the case with series of subjects in the Word of God. They are commonly reckoned eight in number, because the two last, both relating to enduring persecution, are usually regarded as composing but one. In form, however, the two last are distinct, making nine in the whole: thus, the distinguishing word "Blessed" is nine times repeated. Hence they cannot be divided throughout into classes of *two* each. They might be divided into classes of *three* each, but, as appears to me, not without violence—not without separating parts that are most closely connected, and uniting others which are obviously more distinct. I incline, therefore, to conclude that the first four are connected together, forming two specific classes of two each, but each two having also a plain reference to the other two, so as to compose altogether a general class of two great portions, each again consisting of two members. Thus, *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, and *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted*, are plainly united, the one having respect to the good and the other to the truth of the same order or state, and composing thus that heavenly marriage; the existence of which we have often occasion to notice in the Divine Word. The one clause has reference to those who regard themselves as destitute of good, and the other to those who regard themselves as destitute of truth. But the two next clauses are connected together in the same way, and also answer respectively to the two first. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth*—*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*, are clauses which relate to those who are in the desire for goodness and truth; and there appears a relation between the meek, in the first of these clauses, and the poor in spirit in the first clause of the preceding class: whilst there is a relation no less plain in the beatitude promised to each, the inheriting of the earth clearly answering to the possessing of the kingdom of heaven. So the hungering and thirsting after righteousness, in the second clause of this second class, is closely allied to the mourning mentioned in the second clause of the preceding class; and the being filled answers to the being comforted.

Thus, while each of the two classes contains a clause relating more

to truth, and a clause relating more to good, the two classes have the same relation taken together. The poor in spirit and they that mourn, both have relation to the principle of truth, if viewed in connection with the meek, and with those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, which have relation, so viewed, to the principle of good; but to good more as looked to and desired than yet actually attained.

The three next clauses are closely related with each other, and so little connected with the preceding and following that they appear to me to form one general class together, and by themselves. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.* All these terms—the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers—seem to belong properly to the states of the will or love, and thus to those who are in the enjoyment, respectively, of three degrees of good from the Lord, and thence are principled in pure divine truth, or gifted with its perceptions.

The two last clauses, relating to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and for the Lord's sake, evidently belong to each other, and form a class by themselves. They relate to those who, by temptations, both as to good and as to truth, attain to states of good and of truth through purification from evils. Thus they relate to the means by which are effected the conjunction of the internal and the external man, and the conjunction of man himself with the Lord.

I know not whether, by this slight sketch, I have been able to convey any clear idea of the mode in which, as it appears to me, the clauses of these beatitudes are to be classified. I think, however, it will be seen that the two first clauses, relating to the poor in spirit and to them that mourn, form a pair; the second two, relating to the meek and them that hunger and thirst after righteousness, another pair, and these two pairs a compound pair together; that the three next, touching the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers, form a class by themselves; and the two last, respecting the persecuted and reviled, a class likewise. Thus the whole may be viewed as falling into three general portions: the first consisting of two compound, or of four single, members; the second of three single members, and the last of two.

However, whether this attempt at classifying the clauses be seen to be just or not, there is another principle which prevails in the Holy Word, where a general series of subjects is delivered, which cannot fail to be perceived to be applicable here. That is, that the first mentioned

in order is a universal principle, which reigns through all the others, and determines their specific quality. That principle here, then, is the being *poor in spirit*. Evidently, to explain the phrase in one word, this denotes the principle of humility, which is the only ground in which heavenly graces can truly grow. We are therefore taught, by its being here mentioned first, that in order to the enjoyment of any of the beatitudes which follow, humility must first be established, and made a universally reigning principle in the heart and mind.

But what is this humility? Humility is the opposite of pride and arrogance. Unfortunately, in our language we cannot express the quality of being poor in spirit by any one term which does not, according to the genius of the language, convey the notion of what is abject and mean, and which therefore implies rather selfishness than self-abnegation. Yet this cannot be the character of those whom the Lord pronounces to be blest for being poor in spirit, when, in the sequel of this very discourse, he condemns all selfish views in the most decided manner, when he expressly commands his disciples to "do good and lend, hoping for nothing again." It is true that he says to those who do act in this disinterested manner that their reward shall be great in heaven; but this does not mean an external recompence or repayment independent of the state of good, and thence of happiness in the person's own mind, but the blessedness which is inherent in that good itself, and which becomes greater and greater in proportion to the degree in which a person is capable of doing good for its own sake, or from the pure love of goodness, irrespective of any reward or any recompence whatever.

But they who are the most capable of acting with real disinterestedness, without regard to recompence, either in the shape of a return of the same kind, or of credit, reputation, and applause in its stead, will most heartily acknowledge that they possess nothing which they have not received; that there is but one source of all real goodness, and of all real greatness; and, consequently, that whatever of these may be exhibited in the conduct of a created being, only has a residence in him by gift and communication from his Creator. To separate man from God would be equally to separate him from all good, and then he could neither cherish any feelings nor do any actions but such as are altogether evil. And the only way in which man can be in the reception of pure goodness, truth, or any heavenly attribute from the Lord, is, by being habitually in the acknowledgment that whatever he has of that kind is from this divine Source—

thus, that nothing of it is from himself, unconnected with his Maker. And in proportion to the depth and fullness of the feeling and conviction which man has, that nothing good or true is from himself alone, will be his capacity of receiving ennobling gifts from his Creator and Redeemer. Therefore it is that the Lord pronounces the first of his beatitudes in favour of those that are poor in spirit, and affirms that *their's is the kingdom of heaven*. For to be poor in spirit is to be in the heartfelt acknowledgment of our spiritual poverty and destitution in and of ourselves; specifically, to see and feel that nothing of true knowledge, understanding, and wisdom is of ourselves, or is self-derived. In proportion as there is this heartfelt acknowledgment, there is the capacity of receiving the corresponding gifts from the Lord, and of enjoying and exercising them by derivation from him. These, consequently, are imparted in abundance to such a mind; in other words, there is the kingdom of heaven—the reign of Divine Truth, with all the graces which it brings. And if by reason of temptations from beneath, or from the activity of the evils of man's nature striving to engross his affections, the kingdom of heaven is not at all times felt by such a person to be his in possession, it nevertheless is, even in his darkest states, his in property, or in right, and by the best of all rights, that of gift and endowment from its Divine Originator and indefeasible Proprietor.

4. One with the promise made to the poor in spirit is that to *those who mourn*. For if one of these terms refers more specifically to the acknowledgment and perception, on the part of man, that he has no knowledge, understanding, or wisdom of himself, the other refers to the corresponding acknowledgment that he has no good, no charity, no heavenly love of his own; that, viewed as he is in and of himself, and separate from his connection with the Lord, he is destitute of the graces of the heavenly kingdom in regard to the furniture of his will, as well as in regard to that of his understanding. Therefore, again, man being thus emptied of self, there is room for the Lord to enter, and to fill him with his good. Wherefore, also, it is said of those who mourn, that *they shall be comforted*—that all their wants shall be supplied—that the destitution of which they are sensible in themselves shall be removed—and that, being well aware that they can pretend to nothing good of their own, or originating in themselves, they shall be supplied with good in all abundance, and according to the utmost of their capacity of reception, from the Lord.

It is, however, a fact, that man is not only, negatively destitute of all truth and of all good in and of himself, but also, that positively, in

and of himself, he is nothing but evil—that, by what is called the fall of man, and the accumulation of evil which has thence gone on through innumerable generations, man brings into the world with him an immense mass of tendencies to every direful and abominable enormity, so that his selfhood is entirely made up of such evil tendencies; and that every one has, to a greater or less extent, allowed these tendencies to come into act, and so has alienated himself farther from the pure reign of the Lord and of goodness. Here is abundant ground, when a man becomes sensible that such is really his state, for mournful sensations literally; and grief on account of the privation, absence, or perversion of good, is the proper spiritual signification of mourning when mentioned in the Holy Word. No one, however, can truly mourn over the evils which he perceives in himself but from something good interiorly received from the Lord. Whenever, therefore, there is real sorrow for sin,—not merely alarm on account of its expected punishment,—there, to a certainty, a principle of good, of mercy, or of grace, is present from the Lord, operating to effect a cure. That cure is effected when the good thus present with man from the Lord has accomplished the removal of the evil opposed to it—when it has become paramount in the soul; and not only so, but when it fills the whole heart, mind, and life, so that, being consciously loved, it is attended with a corresponding sense of delight and happiness. And this is what is strictly signified by the assurance, that he that mourneth is blessed, because he shall be comforted.

5. As the two first beatitudes relate to those who, from a principle of good in the internal, see the disorders of the external, in which they discern there is nothing but evil and falsity, so the two next beatitudes which answer to them, relate to those in whom goodness and truth are implanted in the external also, evil and falsity being removed. *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.* The earth is used in Scripture to signify the church, and, in relation to man individually, his external man: here it denotes the external man in a state of regeneration and order. The meek denote those who are principled in charity, and who, from charity in the internal man, are mild and forbearing in the affections of the external man, towards those who oppose or ill-treat them, instead of acting, as the unregenerate man does in such cases, with resentment, passion, and violence. Thus it is said of Moses, in reference to the causeless sedition against him of Miriam and Aaron—“Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were on the face of the earth,” (Num. xii. 3). And the Lord takes the character himself when he says in

that pathetic address to the weary and heavy laden, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart." They, then, who are meek are they who, from a principle of charity, are able so to direct the feelings and conduct of the external man as that no emotions of anger and bitterness shall arise or break out on any occasion whatever—who, partaking of the long-suffering attribute of the Divine Master, are able in their patience to possess their souls. This is a state, not merely of acknowledgment of evil, and of grief on account of it, but of good, which succeeds upon its removal in consequence of such acknowledgment. And the happy ones who thus cultivate this grace of meekness shall assuredly inherit the earth. This does not mean, what many have dreamed, that the saints shall become the sole possessors of what are called the good things of the world, and that a temporal kingdom over the realms of the earth shall be conferred upon them: what it means is, that the external man, which by natural birth is the seat of all evils, shall be reformed and regenerated, and all its evils be removed and so controlled by the prevalence and dominion of heavenly principles, as to be in complete subjection and quiescence.

I have observed that the meek are they who are principled in charity, and thence regulate the emotions of the external man according to the principles of charity. But it is to be remembered that charity in its essence is truth, being the affection of living according to what truth teaches. Moses also, who was said to be the meekest of men, represents the law divine, or truth divine, in its internal ground. So that strictly, the term *meek* describes the quality of internal truth, which is not contentious, but pacific. In this view the clause will answer very exactly to that respecting those who are poor in spirit, they being specifically such as acknowledge that nothing of knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom is from themselves, thus, that of themselves, they are destitute of truth. This acknowledgment of destitution is in due time followed by the communication of truth; or the poor in spirit, to whom belongs the kingdom of heaven, or who have the internal man opened, in due time become the meek who shall inherit the earth—those who, being in internal truth and the good of it, come into the possession of all the graces of the regenerate external man.

6. The next beatitude, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled*, relates to the blessedness of being in the affection of goodness and truth; which affection is sure to be gratified, according to the degree of its intensity, by the communication of all the good and of all the truth which there is a capacity

for receiving. Hunger, when applied to the Lord, is the earnestness of his desire to communicate good to mankind thus, for their salvation. So hunger, when applied to man in the sense of having an appetite for food, denotes his desire to be endowed with goodness, which is the proper food of the will; and in like manner thirst, thus applied, is his desire to appropriate truth, which is the proper food of the understanding. Righteousness is evidently goodness. Thus to hunger and thirst after righteousness is to desire and look to good with all the powers of the will and the understanding.

This is a desire which in a manner fulfils itself, since truly to desire to become better is actually to become so: only we must take care not to mistake a barren wish, the result of a mere intellectual conviction of the superiority of the state regarded, for that real desire of affection which alone is true spiritual hunger and thirst. Thus desiring, we shall know what it is to be happy. The happiness promised to such states will begin its development even in this life, by inspiring an inward peace and contentment: and it will expand hereafter into the utmost fulness of delight and joy.

We have observed of the first four beatitudes, that they seem to constitute two double clauses, answering in each of their members respectively to each other; agreeably to that species of heavenly marriage, or union of goodness and truth, so often observable in the structure of the Divine Word. But besides the arrangement of the clauses into pairs, and into double pairs, which are so often found in the more poetical parts of the Word of God, triple clauses also not unfrequently occur, expressive of the three degrees of divine order existing in everything that proceeds from the Lord, by reason that such a trine or trinity exists in his own nature; and thence by derivations in the nature of man, his image, and thus also in heaven and in the church, and in anything whatever that is full and complete; whence the number three itself, also, in the divine style of writing, signifies what is full and complete. In agreement with this order the three next beatitudes appear to be arranged; all which seem to relate more especially to states of good, and thus to denote three classes of persons who are distinguished by their attainments in heavenly good and love; and also to the three degrees of those excellencies as opened in the mind which is regenerated throughout its faculties. "Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers." All these terms—merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers—certainly refer primarily to states of good; and most admir-

able and exalted must be the states which are properly described by such heavenly characteristics,—and they are used in reference to what our doctrines call the celestial man, through all the powers of his mind.

As the preceding beatitudes evidently describe an upward progress, it might be supposed that the ascending order would be still observed; but there are several points, not necessary to be mentioned, which indicate that this is not the order in which these three beatitudes are to be taken. We will now attempt to ascertain what is denoted by these three beatitudes respectively.

7. *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.* Mercy, as we commonly use the word, is the affection of the mind which is exercised towards those who have been guilty towards us of some injury or offence, and whom we forgive and do good to notwithstanding. But the original term, though containing this meaning, is of still more extensive import, as it includes all that we mean by compassion and pity—that is, all benevolence exercised towards those who are unhappy or distressed. If we remit to a person who has injured us the punishment he has deserved, we call it having mercy on him; if we sympathize with and relieve, where the case admits of relief, a person in distress, we call it having compassion on him. Both are included in the Scripture idea of mercy: indeed, the highest degree of tender benevolence, exercised especially towards those who are in affliction or distress, is what is called mercy in Scripture. Thus, as man, of himself, is a helpless creature, exposed to great miseries, and, if left to himself, to eternal ruin; therefore the Lord's love, as exercised towards him, is properly mercy; hence we find his love so continually spoken of, especially in the Old Testament, under the name of mercy; and his mercy is what is so continually supplicated in the inspired petitions of the Psalms. And they who are most sensible of their lost and wretched condition by nature and birth, and of the utter impossibility of their attaining real happiness, or any permanent good, except it be imparted to them as a free gift by the Lord, the most truly receive all the communications of his love and bounty as being of pure mercy. His love, as received by them, and exercised towards them, is felt and acknowledged to be mercy. The inmost feeling of their hearts is expressed in that divine saying of Jeremiah (Lam. iii. 22), "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." They know well, that if his love, the communications of his mercy, were to be withheld from them a single moment, in that moment the evil of their selfhood would break

forth and sink them into ruin. And the more profoundly man feels this, the more fully are those gifts conferred upon him; because, though the Lord never withholds them, it is only thus that room is made for their more fully flowing into him. He thus becomes most fully the recipient and the subject of the Lord's all-embracing love. Thus they who receive the Lord's love in the greatest degree, and thence are most especially the objects of his love, are they who ascribe all to his mercy. This, then, is eminently the characteristic of the celestial man—of the man who is most intimately principled in love to the Lord.

Now, it is an unquestionable fact, that they who thus are most replenished with the Lord's love in their own souls will necessarily overflow most with love and compassion towards others. Such then are "the merciful" spoken of in this beatitude. They are those who feel compassion from an internal, a celestial ground, for the miseries and infirmities of others. They will be merciful towards those who have injured or offended them, ever ready to forgive and to do them good. Yet their charity in this respect will be guided by prudence, and while they look upon the misconduct, even of their bitterest enemies, with pity, and cherish no inclination to do them injury in return, they yet will not so act as to encourage them in their wickedness, or to give them the means of perpetrating it to a greater extent. They will cherish feelings of benevolence towards all, and of mercy and compassion even towards the greatest sinners; but they will exercise charity in externals to every one according to his state,—thus, in one way towards a wicked man, and in another towards a good, knowing that the Lord's love towards mankind, to be exercised at all, necessarily takes the form of mercy; and feeling this experimentally in themselves, they will desire to act, in their finite degree, and according to their feeble ability, in a similar way towards their fellow creatures. They will view them, in some degree, as the Lord views them: they will feel compassion on beholding them wander from the paths of real good and happiness, and will thence desire above all things to contribute in some degree to reclaim them from their blindness and evil ways, and to promote in them the reception of the Lord's love and mercy. Thus, in every respect, they will cherish towards all the feelings of compassion and tenderness—of external compassion for those who are in outward calamities, of internal for those who are in spiritual destitution; and they will desire to do good in both respects as far as their ability extends. Thus receiving the Lord's love, though in comparative obscurity, while in the world, and cultivating the

merciful spirit which it inspires, they shall enjoy it openly and fully after death, and shall experience for ever the inestimable blessing of having obtained mercy.

8. The blessedness of *the pure in heart*, though also belonging to those who are of a celestial character, yet appears to partake more of an intellectual quality, and to relate rather to the understanding of those who are grounded in celestial good, while the being merciful describes the quality of their will itself. The intellectual part, however, of those who are in the celestial state, or whose ruling love is love to the Lord, is completely one with their will, so that they never can think of anything from a mere intellectual view of it, but always in connection with their love and affection: hence their very thoughts are in a manner nothing but affections, being derivations, in a conscious form, of the love which occupies their inmost will. Thus to be pure in heart denotes to have a will purified, or cleansed, by the operation of Divine Truth, because it is the character of the celestial man, when he hears any truth, not to deposit it in his memory as a matter for occasional thought or speculation, but to appropriate it immediately in the life, thus making it the means of the still further purification of the will. The heart is always mentioned in Scripture as an emblem of the will; and to be pure in heart is to have a will purified from the defilements of evil, through the continual practice of appropriating divine truths, the only effectual purifiers, in the life, and thus, by their means, continually removing all impurity and evil more and more.

That there is here a reference to the intellectual state of those who are grounded in celestial good, is obvious from the blessing promised to this state, which is, that they who thus are pure in heart *shall see God*. This clearly relates to the intuitive perception of Divine Truth, which *they* enjoy who are principled in celestial good—whose state of good is grounded in the will itself, and not in the intellectual part only. *To see* is always spoken in the Word of the perceptions of the understanding, and the Lord is called *God* more especially in regard to that essential of his nature called Divine Truth: *to see God*, then, spiritually means, not only to behold a manifestation of the Lord in person (though this also is a privilege which such as are here treated of frequently enjoy), but also to see or apprehend the Lord's Divine Truth by an interior sort of sight or perception. And none really have such perception but they who are pure in heart—who apply all the truth they learn to the purification of the will and its affections, thus allowing it effectually to cleanse

them from evils, by immediately incorporating it in the life and practice.

9. In the two former of these beatitudes we have a description of the state and blessedness of the celestial man, both as to his will and as to his understanding, or rather his perceptive faculty, as making a perfect one with his will. It will easily be seen that the third beatitude in order—*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*—relates to the life and practice of such heavenly-minded characters. What conduct can be conceived more expressive of the outward operation of an inward principle of pure and exalted love—more appropriate to such a ground in the heart—than that of making peace! Love, it is obvious, is the great pacificator; and where its operation is extended and received there will be peace. There no doubt is also a reference to the Hebrew form of speaking, in which to seek the peace of any person or place, means, as we often see in the Old Testament, to promote their welfare in general. In this view the original term would be rendered in English, “peacemakers,” a meaning which it bears equally with that of peacemakers: and a peacemaker, or a maker of peace, would be one, all whose actions tend to good and usefulness—to promote the prosperity of all with whom he has to deal; whose actions universally tend to good. I have no doubt that both the sense of *makers of peace*, and that of *peacemakers*, are here intended; and in both of them we have a full and most characteristic representation of the life of a man who is influenced in all he does by celestial love. All that such a man does tends to peace. If all mankind were influenced by the same heavenly love, there would be nothing but peace throughout the earth. None would do an act which tended to the injury of another; and where, by any means, such an act was done, all would hasten to repair it, and to heal the breach which had been made. To do and to make peace, then, is undoubtedly the characteristic in act of him whose life in the will is constituted by love to the Lord and mutual love; who is merciful by the reception of the Lord’s mercy; and who, by continually applying divine truths to the life, is pure in heart.

But no doubt a more interior meaning still is couched in the term *peacemakers*. The term relates, in the purely spiritual sense, to those who remove the contrariety which exists, by natural birth, between the natural man and the spiritual, and thus, also, between man himself and God. By inheritance and birth, as the apostle has informed us, the natural man lusteth continually against the spiritual; and the opposition can only be removed by the subjugation and regen-

eration of the natural man, by which it first submits, and then receives, in its degree, an affection for the same things as are loved by the internal or spiritual man ; and then, whatever the spiritual man dictates, the natural man executes with promptitude and delight. This making of peace, then—by which, at the same time, peace is made, or conjunction is effected, between man and the Lord—is what is meant in the purely spiritual sense, when those celestial characters who are here spoken of are called peacemakers ; and the result of this internal pacification is, the performance, by the external man from the internal, of such works of good and peace as have been spoken of before. It is also to be observed, that the estimation in which love in act is held by the Lord, is indicated here, as in various other places, by this circumstance—that the highest blessing mentioned is ascribed to these peacemakers. It is said, that “they shall be called the children of God ;” and by the children of God are meant they who are born of Him by regeneration ; and regeneration is not complete with any, till what the internal man wills the external does, and feels in the doing of it that delight which only results when the action is free and spontaneous.

In these three beatitudes, then, we see, in a coherent series, a picture of the most exalted state that can be attained by a finite being. Its purity and holiness may perhaps, at first, have a discouraging aspect, as if it were such as no man could hope to attain. Yet, certainly, this is not the case. It is a description of a state which is open to every sincere and humble follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. The way of attaining it is that which is pointed out in the second of these three beatitudes—the becoming pure in heart by immediate application of divine truths to the life. Faithfully employing the truths which it is our privilege to know, there is no state of heavenly blessedness which we may not hope to realize ; and no degree of angelic excellence which, by the mercy of the Lord, may not eventually be ours.

But while the first seven beatitudes, taken separately, form a series complete in itself ; considered as part of a continuous discourse, they form only a branch of a more comprehensive whole. Regarding the Sermon on the mount under one view, the first seven beatitudes describe the formation of the graces of religion in the heart and mind, while its subsequent part, relating to the law and its duties, describes the manifestation of those graces in the virtues of a religious life. Thus the first part relates to the regeneration of the internal man, and the second to the regeneration of the external man. Now

the regeneration of the external, and its union with the internal, cannot be effected but by means of temptation; for the external man is contrary to the internal, and cannot be reduced to obedience, and brought into harmony with it, without repeated and severe conflicts. This is the reason that, between the first seven beatitudes and the exposition and enforcement of the law, the Lord introduces the subject, and speaks of the blessedness, of persecution, which we now come to consider.

10. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.* Persecution signifies temptation. Temptation is inward spiritual persecution. This is a kind of persecution to which the Christian disciple is liable in all ages, which exists independently of outward trials, and which he will have to endure when all outward persecution has for ever ceased. Were not this the case, the Lord's words would have no practical meaning for most Christians of the present time, and for all Christians of the coming age. This inward persecution is that which is truly endured for righteousness' sake and for the Lord's sake. It is descriptive of temptation in which the conflict is for the principle of righteousness or goodness, and for the Lord's love in the heart, as the very life and joy of the soul. Temptation is intense in the degree that it is interior. The higher the prize the severer the contest. The more precious the good which the heart loves, the deeper the anguish when its loss is threatened. But all such trials tend to make goodness more precious, and its possession more secure, to make it enter more deeply into the affections of the heart, by removing the opposite evil. The more our self-love is subdued, the more the love of God is exalted; and with its exaltation there is an increase of all true joy and happiness. It is almost unnecessary to say that this blessing is not promised to us for being tempted, but for overcoming in temptation. This is implied; for temptation is but a means to an end, and only when the end is attained is the reward experienced. Here, again, the reward is the *kingdom of heaven*. The beatitudes end as they begin. The kingdom of heaven is the first and the last of our spiritual blessings. First heaven is opened in us, and then it is perfected.

11. But the Lord proceeds to say, *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.* It is only necessary to remark on this, that the extent of the temptation is here described, its nature being indicated in the previous words of our Lord. And the temptation here covers the whole man. For to revile is expressive of opposition to

good in the will; to persecute is expressive of opposition to truth in the understanding; and to say all manner of evil falsely is expressive of opposition to good in the life. The persecutor also says this falsely "for the Lord's sake." Those who are persecuted are the disciples, who represent all the Christian graces and virtues, or all the principles of good and truth. And these are persecuted when the principles they represent are opposed in us by evil and malignant spirits; and evil spirits hate and oppose and desire to destroy good and truth in us, because the Lord is in them; for the Lord dwells in us by the graces and virtues which we receive and do from him, and the divine sphere of the Lord, as the supreme good and truth, produces the deadliest hatred in the spirits of the kingdom of evil.

12. The Lord not only promises, but he exhorts. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad*—that is, when ye are persecuted. We find the same sentiment expressed by the apostles to whom these words had been addressed. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James i. 2). Paul, too, utters the same truth. "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. v. 3). To joy in tribulation and temptation is no doubt a sign of a high state of Christian perfection. Adversity in any of its forms, internal or external, is one of the sharpest trials of our faith—a stone of offence on which many stumble, and on which some fall and are broken. But what is the state of mind which enables us to rejoice in it? Many of the early martyrs displayed this state in a remarkable degree. Yet it is perhaps more difficult to rejoice in inward temptation than in outward trial. The mind may be calm when the body is tortured. In temptation it is the mind that suffers; the body meanwhile may be free from pain. This kind of affliction is therefore not joyous, but grievous at the time. Its fruits are joyful. When the storm has passed away, and the sun shines out in the heavens, cleared of the impurities with which they had been surcharged, new life and vigour animate the soul. This inward joy is the great reward in heaven promised to the tempted soul; for the heaven in which the reward is experienced is the heaven of the inner man, whereinto the delights of heaven descend and are felt as joy that passeth all understanding. The disciples are exhorted to "rejoice" and "be glad;" for joy is an affection of the will, and gladness is an affection of the understanding. And they are to rejoice and be glad, because the prophets had been so persecuted before them. Understood spiritually in reference to one person, this previous persecution of the

prophets relates to previous temptations of a lower order and more external kind. A prophet has relation to truth, as a righteous man has to good. And temptation as to truth is spiritual temptation, and temptation as to good is celestial temptation. The first prepares the way for the second; and he who has overcome in the less has the prospect of overcoming in the greater.

13. The four verses which immediately follow the conclusion of the beatitudes form together one connected subject. "*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" Salt signifies the desire that is inherent in all genuine truth for conjunction with good, and in all genuine good for conjunction with truth. They who are addressed are the professing members of the church, who are salt by virtue of their possessing the knowledge of divine truth. But if the truth, as received in their minds, is unattended by any desire for conjunction with goodness, it is compared to salt which has lost its savour, and which is fit for nothing but to be thrown away; indicating, that such unfruitful members are cast by the Lord out of his church.

The disciples personally were the means of spiritually seasoning and preserving the world in their day. All true disciples perform this service to the world in their generation. In dark and corrupt times the righteous few are the means of preserving the connection of the race with heaven, and so of preserving the mass from utter corruption. In the spiritual sense the Lord's words to his disciples have, of course, a higher meaning. The disciples represent the truths and goods of the church, and the church itself is represented by the earth and the world. In its particular application the earth and the world represent the natural mind, the spiritual principles in which are represented by the disciples. Viewing the subject in this particular application, let us see what the language of correspondence teaches us. Salt, as symbolical of affection, was extensively used in the ceremonial worship of the Jews. It was also ordained that salt should be offered with every meat offering, and that the salt of the covenant of their God should not be lacking (Lev. ii. 14). The Lord, who showed how Christians were spiritually to fulfil the ceremonial law, pointed out its

application when he said, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." The way to live in peace with each other is to have affection for each other. In his words to his disciples on the mount there is an instructive signification. The natural mind, meant by the earth, is the seat of spiritual corruption. This is its hereditary state, and without some corrective, the corrupt disposition would adopt principles and induce habits conformable to itself. The correction is truth in which there is affection—salt in which there is saltiness. "But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewithal shall it be salted?" If truth have lost its affection, or its goodness, wherewith shall the mind be seasoned and preserved in health and activity? What is truth, or thought, or act, or word, or even life itself, without affection? Affection is the true salt of life. Without it the relish of life would be gone. Truly, if the salt have lost its savour, it is thenceforth fit for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. If affection, which is the essence of religion, is gone, truth, which is the form of religion, is fit only to be cast out and to be trodden under foot; and indeed it is so, if not in this world, at least in the next. For men reject truth for which they have no affection, and trample it under their feet. The feet correspond to the natural and sensual part of man's mind; and that which is trampled under foot is that which, instead of being a power to influence the natural mind, is rejected from it as vile, and contemned, and cursed. There is a striking version of this same saying of our Lord's in Luke xiv. 34, where the savourless salt is said to be fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill. The state here treated is the extinction of spiritual affection which has once been cherished in the heart. This constitutes profanation. As salt which has lost its savour is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but to be cast out, so profaners are neither fit for heaven nor hell, but are cast out into a region separate from all others, where they exist as things, but do not live as human beings.

14. The Lord next says to the disciples, and of them, *Ye are the light of the world*. Light is always used in Scripture to signify truth; of which it is so plain an emblem, that every one intuitively sees the correspondence. Light makes natural objects manifest, and causes them to appear in their true forms and colours; and truth does the same in regard to the objects of thought and affection. They, then, who possess a correct knowledge of divine truth, and whose minds are so formed by it, that they always think and speak in conformity with its dictates, are thereby qualified to lead the opinions and guide the practices of those who have not derived the same gift immediately

from the fountain-head. Therefore the Lord says of his true disciples, "Ye are the light of the world!" What an exalted privilege does such a title describe and imply! But there can be no privilege without a corresponding duty; and assuredly it can be no mean duty which they have to perform who are to act as the lights of the world! There certainly ought to be something about them distinguishing them from the mere people of the world. It is not in following in the common track of worldly men, nor yet by going before them in their own way, outdoing the common herd in the practices delighted in by the external man, that anyone can become what Divine Wisdom calls a light of the world. It is not by conforming in all things to the ways of the world that a person acquainted with divine truth can follow his vocation to be a light of the world. What is necessary, beyond a mere knowledge of truth, to make him such, the Divine Instructor proceeds to show.

A city (he says) *that is set on an hill cannot be hid*. This is a very obvious natural fact; but how it illustrates the case of those who, possessing the knowledge of divine truth, are to act as lights to the world, cannot be seen, except in a very general and indistinct manner, till the correspondence of the natural image is known, and the spiritual sense thus deciphered. A city is constantly mentioned in Scripture to denote the doctrine of divine truth, or the church, or the mind of a member of the church, as framed according to doctrine. A hill is always used as a symbol of love or charity, or, in an opposite sense, of worldly or selfish attachment. It here obviously bears its good signification. A city set on a hill, then, is the doctrine of truth grounded in love and charity; and when it is said that a city so situated cannot be hid, the meaning is, that the church, or the member of the church with whom the doctrine of truth is grounded in love and charity, cannot but exercise an illuminating and beneficial influence on those around. Where truth is inspired by love, it must be active and useful; and benefits to the church, to society, and to the world at large, cannot but ensue according to the extent of the sphere in which such a church, or such a member of the church, has the means and opportunity of exercising an influence. Most assuredly, a city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid: neither will they be hid among mere people of the world whose faith or knowledge of truth is united with love, and thus with zeal and the desire to be useful. And as a city on a hill is visible at a less or greater distance according to the height of the hill on which it stands, so will the light of him who possesses the knowledge of divine

truth the farther extend its influence according to the magnitude or degree of the affection with which it is united.

15. The divine Admonisher next illustrates, by a comparison of an opposite nature, what is necessary in order that a church, or its members, should be the light of the world. *Neither, says he, do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.* The general meaning of this illustration is as obvious as it is striking. A candle certainly is always lighted for the express purpose of giving light to those in the room where it is; and it would indeed be the height of folly, on having lighted one, to put it under a bushel measure, so as to render it quite as useless as if it had not been lighted at all. Just as useless to the person himself, as well as to all others, is the light of truth, when it has been kindled in the mind, if it is kept there as mere matter of thought and speculation, without producing any effects upon the conduct and life of the person himself, or any that can conduce to the advantage and edification of others. A bushel, or any other hollow measure of capacity, has reference to the receptive faculty in man; and all measures or vessels generally signify the same as what they contain, as when a cup is mentioned to signify wine. But a measure, to hold anything, must be placed with the open side upwards, when it is representative of that in the mind which receives the truths and graces of the Lord's kingdom, and thence of those truths and graces themselves: whilst a measure, to have a candle put under it, must be turned upside down; and then it represents not that which receives the truths and graces of the Lord's kingdom, but that which rejects and excludes them; and then, if any nevertheless find admission, it is by entering from beneath, thus in inverted order, and only to be suffocated, perverted, and destroyed. In such a mind the light of truth, when it has entered, is immediately immersed in the selfhood, and rendered incapable of illuminating the mind, directing the actions, or effecting any saving and beneficial purpose. To have such efficacy it must be placed in its proper situation, raised aloft upon a candlestick so as to diffuse its rays unobstructed around. The candlesticks, or rather lamp-stands, of the ancients were not the small articles which we use for the purpose, made to stand upon a table: they were lofty pillars and branches, of ornamental construction, standing on the floor, so that the lamp placed on the top shed its light on all sides, with the least possible interception; and a lamp so placed corresponds to truth in the mind in a state of elevation, by virtue of being conjoined with the affection for goodness—the desire

of applying it to its proper use. So situated, as the Lord observes, "it giveth light to all that are in the house," throwing its rays both on things and persons, and showing what and who they are—corresponding to the effect of divine truth in showing the nature and quality of all the furniture of the human mind (of which a house is the symbol), and enabling the man to arrange everything in due order, and to make the proper use of all.

16. The Lord closes the subject with a most forcible admonitory application of the images just employed. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* What then? are we to do good works purposely to be seen of men—to obtain the good word of those who witness them? What is here meant is, not that we are to do good works purposely to be seen of men, making that our object and aim; but that we are to do them in obedience to the will of God. We are to allow the light that is in us to produce its proper operation, by manifesting itself in a life and conduct of corresponding order and purity. Such a life, indeed, though not cultivated with the view of gaining favour from men, cannot but be seen by them, and procure respect for the principles by which they see we are actuated; thus disposing them, seeing that we act from sincerity and not from ostentation, to give the glory to him to whom we shall most heartily give it ourselves—our Father who is in heaven—and encouraging them to go and do likewise. The main object of the sincere Christian must ever be to allow the light of truth in his own mind to become instrumental in effecting in him, and by him, the will of the Lord its Author, accomplishing his own regeneration, and bringing his life and conduct into heavenly order, making him an instrument of use to his fellow-creatures, and thus causing everything within him to give glory to his Father who is in heaven.

17. Having pressed upon his hearers the uselessness of unpractised knowledge, and the necessity of showing their faith in their works, the Lord now proceeds to declare the stability and show the spirituality of the law which imposes upon them the perpetual obligation of obedience. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets.*

No religious apophthegm more weighty, and at the same time obviously just, was ever enunciated, than that which holds a conspicuous place among the doctrinal tenets of the New Church, and which affirms, "That all religion has relation to life, and that the life of religion is to do good." Religion is justly defined to be the bond of

connection between man and his Maker: and what can possibly connect man with his Maker, in any real and reciprocal manner, but conformity on the part of man to his Maker's will, producing, in a finite manner, similarity of character? What is God but the Source of all good—Goodness itself, that has given origin to all things with a view to their enjoyment of the blessings suited to their nature, and to man especially, that he might be the subject of blessings of the highest order, having a capacity to reflect on his condition and his privileges, to know his God, and to be made a partaker, in his finite measure, of the perfections, and thus of the felicity, of his Creator? The Author of all good, then, himself, what can God look to, in his rational offspring, but that they should apply themselves to receive of the good that is imparted from him? But the passive reception of good from God, that is, of spiritual and moral good, is a thing impossible. Man must re-act to and from the good that flows into him from the Lord, or it cannot become in any respect his own—be imputed to him, or even dwell in him at all.

No revelation ever was or could be given by God of which this was not the grand burden. The Old Testament, consequently, throughout is full of precepts and admonitions, plainly testifying that, in the estimation of its Divine Author, "all religion has relation to life, and the life of religion is to do good." When the Jewish Church, and the revelation given under it, had become wholly perverted, and He came to found the Christian Church, to accomplish the work of man's redemption, and to give a further revelation of his will and wisdom, he did not intend to abrogate the revelation he had given before, but only to clear away the Jewish corruptions of it, and to develop more of its true nature, meaning, and design, than had ever been known in the Jewish Church at all: these things compose the substance of the declarations—which the Lord commences with the words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

18. And yet notwithstanding the Lord's statement, there have not been wanting among professing Christians those who have maintained a doctrine exactly opposite to what is here so explicitly delivered; and have even availed themselves of these words to confirm a sentiment, directly contrary to that which the words themselves so plainly affirm,—that justification and salvation are by faith alone, and do not depend upon either charity or good works. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." By that very circumstance, they reply, Jesus Christ came to fulfil the law, and did fulfil it in his own

person, which no one had ever been able to do before: and this fulfilment of it by him is imputed to all believers as if it had been done by them: and though no actual fulfilment of it is required of any one of them, and thus, as to such actual fulfilment by them, it is completely abrogated, yet it is not to be considered as destroyed for all that; God *accounting* it as fulfilled by every one of them, because he *imputes* to them the fulfilment of it by his Son. Thus again is the Word of God made of none effect by man's tradition or invention. And they confirm this as the true meaning of the passage by extending it to the next verse, in which the Divine Speaker says, *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* Here, because it is said that "one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," they argue, that when all was fulfilled, as was done by the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole did pass away, and was of no force against believers afterwards. So far is this from being the meaning of the Lord's words, his declaration, that nothing shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled, is a solemn pledge of the perpetual duration and conservation of the law in every jot and tittle. The true import of these divine sayings, and that which alone is consistent with the context, is, that the moral law, delivered in the Old Testament, such as that of the Ten Commandments, and similar precepts regarding life and practice, are not abolished, but opened and enforced by the gospel of Jesus Christ. As to the spiritual sense, the law and the prophets are mentioned together for the sake of indicating that union of goodness and truth so constantly attended to in the language of the Word of God. The law is a term which has relation to good, and prophets is a term which has relation to truth; for by the law is spiritually denoted all such divine truth as has more relation to the duties of life, and by the prophets all such divine truth as has more relation to points of doctrine. Now, it must be abundantly clear that the Lord, who is the Truth itself, never could come to destroy or abrogate his own Divine Truth, either as defining the duties of life or laying down points of doctrine. What is once true, on either subject, is eternally so, and can never be done away with. Destroyed by its Author it never can be: but it may be opened; and, by new aid imparted from him, in consequence of accommodating himself to his creatures by assuming the Humanity, it may be introduced more deeply into the heart and mind of man, rendering both his inward and outward life more conformable to its heavenly dictates. In these respects, it is *fulfilled* in regard to man: and it is most true that the Lord fulfilled

every tittle of it in his own person: and as he thus glorified his Humanity, it is thus that he enabled man to fulfil it likewise.

“Heaven and earth” is a phrase that includes the whole universe; but by them is spiritually meant the Lord’s church in heaven and on earth. These never can absolutely cease; and therefore to say that till heaven and earth pass not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail, is the same as to say, that the Divine Law or Word can never fail; or, in other words, that the Divine Truth is eternal; and that it really is so, is obvious of itself.

19. The perpetual obligation of the law of God, and the necessity of obeying it from an internal principle, as well as in mere outward form, is further enforced in the words: *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least (or one of the least of these) commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* This does not mean that a person may habitually break some of the Divine commandments, and teach others to do the same, and yet go to heaven, though he will occupy one of the lowest places: it means that all who are in heaven will think little or meanly of such a person, so that he cannot enter into their society at all—that the low station he will occupy will not be within heaven, but out of it. The angels are not beings who will despise one another, so that the most exalted angel will never think meanly of the lowest. They who are called least, that is, who are of the quality expressed by that term, are such as are least and lowest in every characteristic of human nature—who occupy the meanest of stations among all who belong to the class of rational and immortal creatures—who retain least of the traces of true humanity, and are not in heaven, but in hell. But observe the Divine tenderness: it is not said, as some say, that whosoever has once broken one of the least of the commandments has incurred irrevocable condemnation, but whosoever shall break one commandment, and *shall teach men so*, evidently meaning, who treats the commandments as of no authority or obligation, and teaches others to do the same, arguing or ridiculing them out of regard for divine things. The same is obvious from the use and proper signification of the word rendered “break,” which does not mean to transgress, or to infringe a commandment by a casual or passing act, which may afterwards, if not repeated, be repented of for the future; but it means the same as the word before translated “destroy,” which is the same word in a compound form. It means to *dissolve*, to *abolish* as to *obligation from the authority of a thing*. In the two acts mentioned by the Lord in this declaration

of his, there is reference to the two faculties of man, the will and the understanding. Purpose from the will is meant by breaking the commandment, and confirmation from the understanding is meant by teaching men so. Every such person, whether the sins he commits be little or great, is one of those who are called least in the kingdom of heaven.

The converse follows of itself: *Whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* It will thus be seen that he who is of a character truly good is adapted for elevation to heavenly greatness, this solely depending on man's state as to goodness; whence, in the spiritual sense of Scripture, *great* means *good*. Whoever keeps one of the least of the Lord's commandments, from a truly reverential regard to the will of their Author, is in the perpetual effort to do all the commandments, and to do so more and more perfectly. And in heaven, where these intentions are seen, and are what alone are regarded, such a person is called great, or is accounted good, notwithstanding the imperfections which may still adhere to him, and which he is himself in the continual endeavour to surmount. Therefore the being called great, like the being called least, is not made to depend upon conformity to the greatest of the commandments, but to the least, or those which it requires least effort, least resistance to the natural inclinations to comply with: because it is seen that he who keeps even these from a sincere regard to God in his heart, is in the life of goodness received from him, and would on no account offend him by sinning against the greater.

20. The Lord sums up his whole doctrine on the subject of the law by the solemn declaration: *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.* The scribes and Pharisees, indeed, were strict in requiring, and punctilious in attending to, the external observances of the divine law, even in little matters; but they often contrived to evade its obligations in things of greater importance. As the Lord says of them, they paid tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, and the love of God; on which the Divine Reprover says, "These things ye ought to have done, and not leave the others undone." They generally, however, evaded these weighty obligations under some specious pretence of conformity to another commandment, as when they refused to assist their friends in distress by making a fictitious donation of their property to God, calling it *corban*, because it was not lawful to apply things

really devoted to God, or made a sacred gift of, to any purpose whatever. Usually, however, they kept the commandment in the external form, but positively maintained that, provided this was done, the state of mind in doing it was of no consequence. Thus, David Kimchi, one of the most learned and judicious of the rabbins and commentators on Scripture, positively says, that the meaning of these words, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me," is not, what every one sees is their real import, that the Lord can pay no regard to outward prayers while evil is intentionally cherished in the heart, but that, if evil is only cherished in the heart, and does not come into outward actions, the Lord will pay no regard to it; for it is only actions that are condemned, not thoughts. The righteousness, then, which is to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, is that which extends to the heart and thoughts, as well as to the outward actions. This is the righteousness which the Lord regards, who looks far more at the heart and thoughts than at the words and actions. How plain is it, then, to see that the Lord did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them, and to enable us to fulfil them also; that there is no abrogation of the Divine law by the gospel, and no contrariety, but the most perfect harmony, between them. Under the gospel we are not to abide in the mere letter of the law, but must enter into its spirit; knowing that, as the apostle observes, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; and that the power thus to walk is given to those who look to, and exercise true faith in, Jesus Christ.

21. Having laid down these general principles respecting the law, the Divine Speaker proceeds to illustrate them by contrasting the genuine import of the commandments of the ancient law, and its Divine infillings as now opened by himself, with the lax and superficial, and in fact make-believe manner in which it was interpreted by the Jewish teachers and observed by the people. *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill.* A very singular sort of mistranslation occurs here, and in the repetition of the same phrase in subsequent parts of the chapter, in saying, *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time.* All the learned agree that this ought to be, as it is given in the margin, "*Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time.*" And, indeed, common sense shows this must be the meaning intended: for it is one of the ten commandments which is referred to; and these were not delivered *by* the Israelites of old, but *to* them by Jehovah. Another defective translation occurs in

the repeated use of the phrase, *in danger of*, as if the ensuing punishment were not certain to follow; whereas the original implies that the person has become subject to the penalty alluded to. Whosoever shall kill, shall be not only in danger of the judgment, but liable or subject to it: and so in other places.

The Lord now proceeds to show the difference between the mere letter and the spirit of the Divine law. The Jews had received the Divine command, "Thou shalt not kill," and had understood it prohibited only the act of murder. The Lord teaches his disciples that this law was in reality designed to prohibit not only the criminal act, but every disposition which tends to produce it. To represent, as the scribes and Pharisees did, all sorts of malignant and revengeful feelings as lawful, while they were restrained solely by the fear of punishment from proceeding into the most atrocious of outward acts, is to break or destroy the authority of the Divine requirements in a very awful way indeed. The Lord therefore proceeds to show that states of mind partaking of what is opposite to love, which is the fulfilling of the law, such as hatred and malice, and actions thence proceeding, though not including the commission of murder in the external form, may nevertheless bring upon the person, as to his spirit, and as to his external state hereafter, consequences as awful as can result from the outward commission of murder itself. He further shows that there are three degrees of such states, the slightest of which involves eternal condemnation equally with external murder. In other words, that there are three degrees of spiritual murder, involving all the eternal consequences, from the mildest to the most grievous, that can follow the commission of natural murder, whether the external crime be committed or not.—(1.) The first of these is causeless anger. *He that is angry with his brother without a cause shall be liable to the judgment.* It is plain that this must be with regard to the sinner's state hereafter; for none but the Divine Judge can know whether anger includes the principle of murder or not. But by the eye of Infinite Wisdom it is seen that such anger as is here alluded to is a crime of the same nature, and if left unchecked, would terminate in the same end, and therefore brings the person into the same state, and cannot but draw upon him the same eternal punishment. But the words must be looked at a little more interiorly, in order that their purport may be truly seen. All evils are either milder or more malignant in proportion as they include, in a greater or less degree, the confirmed and intentional rejection of the opposite good. Thus all offences against others are milder or more malignant in proportion as they

include less or more of a deliberate rejection of charity, and disregard for the Divine law, which enjoins charity, and forbids all violation of it. The term brother is always used in the Divine Word, when understood as to its spiritual sense, to denote charity, because charity, or mutual love, is the principle of brotherly union. To be angry with a brother means, therefore, to be in a state contrary to charity, either absolutely so, or only in appearance. Therefore the state of condemnation here treated of is mercifully limited by the being angry with a brother *without a cause*, anger without a cause being a sure mark of a state contrary to charity. It is true that opposition to charity must always be without a cause; but there may be cause for being angry with persons who are nevertheless our brethren, either more nearly or more remotely, and who are to be regarded with charity. There are few persons in this world who are such perfect forms of charity as never to say or do anything calculated to give offence or provocation to others; and there are equally few so highly graduated in charity as never to feel offended or provoked at inconsiderate conduct or language in others, much less at what is said or done with a view to offend or provoke them. Self-preservation is an indelible instinct in every being that has conscious life: hence every animated being instinctively repels aggression, and, when suddenly assaulted, feels resentment or anger. Such resentment or anger, which passes away with the occasion that momentarily excited it, is not incompatible with charity; it only becomes so when it is cherished afterwards, and is suffered to degenerate into revenge. There is also a feeling of anger which is without malignity, being directed rather against evil, than against the person who commits it. This is more properly zeal than anger, for the love of good, and even the love of the evil-doer, lies at the foundation of the emotion. This feeling is attributed to the Lord himself. Jesus looked round on the Jews with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts (Mark iii. 5). So when grief is the origin of anger, it is the warmth of love and not the fire of hatred, and therefore incurs no condemnation. When, on the contrary, the heart feels and cherishes the anger of uncharitableness, the state which is induced upon the mind exposes the soul to the same judgment or condemnation that the Divine Truth has decreed against murder. (2.) The second degree of opposition to charity is expressed by one saying to his brother, Raca. This was a name of reproach and contempt, equivalent to calling a person a worthless fellow. Here, again, it is evident that it is not according to the literal sense that the words are to be understood. For though it may easily be true that one man may call another a

worthless fellow in a spirit of hatred, that would bring him under the condemnation here treated of, yet it is evident that such condemnation cannot be the result of the mere utterance of the word. But we are to remember that the brother thus reviled is the principle of charity: thus, spiritually understood, to say, *Raca*, means to hold charity in utter contempt; to consider a regard to charity as a thing too ridiculous for attention, as conduct only fit for a weak or silly person. Thus, a rejection of charity, and total opposition to it, from a deeper ground than was signified by the first example, is here implied. On this account it is said, that he who acts thus shall be in danger of the council. This is an allusion to the supreme court of judicature among the Jews, which for great crimes awarded the punishment of stoning to death. This is referred to, to indicate the loss of all spiritual life incurred by those who spiritually say to a brother, *Raca*. It expresses the present and eternal state of those who confirm themselves intellectually in opposition to charity, and thence act against it without any concern or remorse. (3.) The Lord adds, *But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*. The term fool is constantly applied in Scripture, not to the weak-minded, but to the most obstinately and desperately wicked. To call a brother a fool, then, means to be in such direct opposition or contrariety to everything of charity and goodness as to regard good as evil, and to act against it with the utmost malignity and determination of purpose. It implies opposition against it from the deepest ground of the will; not merely contempt for it, but the utmost aversion and hatred against it. Therefore, also, the punishment of it is declared to be hell fire, or the fire of Gehenna, which means the most direful raging and tormenting lusts of evil, with the distracting anguish that ever attends their presence. We see, then, of what immense importance it is that we should ever be careful to guard against the admission into our bosoms of any feelings contrary to those of charity, especially how all-important it is that we should never allow the tendencies of that kind which exist in us by nature to obtain indulgence and confirmation. On the contrary, we should resist everything in our hearts and conduct that is opposite to charity, and assiduously cultivate the heavenly grace of charity itself, till love to the Lord and mutual love become the animating principle of our lives. Thus, not only shall we escape the judgment, and the council, and hell fire, but become prepared for the society of those happy beings who never experience any opposite emotion, and who dwell around the throne of divine love in the interchange of kind offices and affections for ever.

23, 24. Having shown the direful nature of all lusts of evil that partake of enmity or hatred, or anything that opposes or makes no account of the principle of charity, the Divine Instructor now admonishes his disciples of the need of looking into their own hearts, to see if anything inconsistent with the most genuine charity lies lurking there; of the indispensable necessity of making such investigation, in order that any of our exercises of external worship may be acceptable to the Lord; and of the importance, therefore, of practising self-examination, especially connecting it with the most solemn acts of our devotion. "Therefore," he says,—seeing, that is, that the indulgence of bad feelings in the heart, and the allowing them to appear in what are usually regarded as deeds of little importance, have eternal consequences as fatal as the actual commission of the greatest external crimes,—on this account, *if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* To bring our gift to the altar is to offer to the Lord the homage of prayer and praise, which ought to proceed from affections of love to him and charity towards our neighbour: all the good and blessing of which, in any form, we may be partakers, is, in all sincere worship, ascribed to the Lord as his gift. There to remember that our brother hath ought against us, is on such occasions to be made sensible that we cannot worship the Lord in an acceptable manner, or from such love and charity as alone can give to worship a quality that he can approve, through the cherishing of some affection inconsistent with charity in our bosom. A brother, as already observed, is always named in the Word as a type of that charity which ought to reign in the breasts of all mankind, and especially in the hearts of the members of the Lord's church, towards each other. In reality, all mankind are brethren, being all the children of the Almighty Father, and all creatures of the same nature, designed for the same eternal end; but most especially are all they brethren who have been born again of their heavenly Father, through the reception of his divine truth and the formation thereby of a principle of spiritual life in their souls. A brother, therefore, in the true sense of the name, is one who feels as a brother—who cherishes the affection which brethren, both natural and spiritual, ought to feel and show for each other. Abstract, then, in idea, the affection itself from the person in whom it exists, and you see that a brother is a proper term in the Holy Word to express the grace of charity itself, which only can be given from the Lord, since it is quite obvious that He who formed

mankind to exist, both in families and in large communities, in the relation of brotherhood, is, together with the relation, the Author of the affection which is its distinguishing characteristic. To remember, then, at the altar, that our brother hath ought against us, is to be made conscious, when before the Lord, and reviewing our state by the light of heaven, that something contrary to charity both possesses our minds and influences our practice. We cannot be in a state to offer acceptable worship to the Lord so long as we cherish any malignant feeling towards any one, however much he may have injured us. We cannot indeed be in a state capable of presenting with acceptance our offering at the Lord's altar, or coming before him in worship, till we have removed the offending principle from our minds, and can feel a consciousness that we entertain no affection or emotion incompatible with charity in regard to anything that exists. The course, then, of this state of the mind, in regard to the principle of charity, is what is directed by the Lord when he says, "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." It is remarkable that the Lord does not direct the gift to be taken away again. He is addressing a sincere, though erring disciple, who comes to worship him from some degree of good received from him, but which, the mind being in other respects not sufficiently purified from evils, is defiled by their presence, and cannot be in such good as the Lord can be acceptably worshipped from, till the evils that render it not genuine are put away. Thus no one is ever to think, because, as we hear people sometimes say, he is not yet good enough for any particular service, that he may as well disregard it altogether. He still must bring his gift before the altar—must engage in acts of divine worship—and must perform the preliminaries necessary to prepare him for doing it with saving benefit to his soul. He must meditate, for instance, on the Divine will and Word; he must explain his own state in the light which will thence open his mind; he must allow the beams of divine truth to discover him to himself; and leaving his gift before the altar,—that is, still having his mind directed, with devotional feelings, to the Lord, and looking to him for help,—he must go his way, and be reconciled to his brother—he must set earnestly upon the work of removing from his affections every principle, feeling, or sentiment which is inconsistent with genuine charity. He will find the brother eager to be reconciled, for the brother is the principle of charity itself.

25. The next duty which our Lord enforces on his disciples forms a counterpart to that which we have just considered, although this

does not clearly appear from the literal sense. *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him.* The adversary here is expressed in the original by a word which properly and strictly means the opposite party in a question of right, or in a suit at law. It is evidently supposed in the present case that the claim is a just one, and that, if brought into court, the judgment would be against us. We are advised, therefore, not to let it come to this, but to settle with the claimant in time, either by satisfying the whole demand at once, or coming to such an agreement or compromise with him as he will accept; otherwise, the decision of the judge will be given against us. We have said that this passage is the counterpart of the preceding one. As we are to be reconciled to our brother by removing the cause of offence, we are to agree with our adversary by settling his equitable demand. The brother, spiritually, is the principle of charity, the legal antagonist is the principle of truth. Divine truth—the precepts of which compose the Divine law—demands attention and obedience to all its requirements; and so long as we neglect to pay regard to them, it stands to us in the relation of an adversary at law. We must agree with this adversary quickly, while time yet remains; we must be well-minded towards him, acknowledging his claim to be just, and satisfying it to the best of our ability. And who can dispute the justice of the demand, or the perfect reasonableness of all that it includes? Who can imagine that the divine truth of the Lord can require anything of man which the Lord does not at the same time enable him to perform? The Divine law does not utter requirements of truth alone, but of truth in union with goodness and love; and when truth, if alone, would irreversibly condemn, love steps in, and offers pardon and peace on faith and repentance. Accordingly we find, that even while divine truth stands to us in the character of a legal adversary, in consequence of our not paying due regard to its requirements, it still is presented under the aspect of a peaceable one, who is willing to come to an agreement with us, accepting what, on acknowledging the justice of its demands, we may be enabled to do towards discharging them, without rigorously exacting the penalties that might otherwise be levied. We are exhorted to agree with our adversary *while we are in the way with him.* Naturally, this means while the suit is pending, and has not gone beyond the preliminary steps. But spiritually, to be in *the way* with our adversary means, to be in a state capable of receiving instruction from divine truth, which is meant by the way; of listening to its claims and admonitions, and applying ourselves to attend to them, and so profit by them.

Divine goodness has provided that every debtor to the law may come to an agreement with his legal adversary while he is in the way with him. This may be done, because divine truth is ever so tempered by its union with divine love as to remit all its claims for the past as soon as their justice is heartily acknowledged, repentance is sincerely felt and made operative in amendment, and such a change is effected as will regard its requirements for the future. Unless this state of agreement with divine truth, regarded as our legal adversary, is in some good measure attained, it will change the character of a legal opponent into a much more formidable one. The Lord not only says, *Agree with thine adversary quickly*, but he adds, *lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison*. This means, that unless divine truth be reconciled to us, or rather we to it, as our adversary, we shall hereafter meet it as our judge—that is, as the word here implies, as passing on us sentence of condemnation. Then, in the further character of the officer, to whom it belongs to carry the sentence into execution, it will transfer us to some one of the dungeons of the prison-house below.

26. And *verily*, the Divine Truth incarnate adds, *Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing*—which is only a figurative way of saying that we shall remain in the infernal prison for ever. If we pay no share of our debt of obedience here, while in the way of probation, how can we do so when our evils are confirmed by continued impenitence, and the life of them is become the unalterable life of our souls—the very principle of our existence? To say, then, that we should by no means come out thence till we have paid the uttermost farthing, when we are in a state and place where we can procure nothing to pay with, is the same as to say that we must abide in it for ever. How solemn an appeal is this to us to use all diligence to agree with the truth while we have the opportunity which life constantly affords, and escape the consequences of disregarding or resisting its just demands.

27. From the law against killing, the Divine Teacher proceeds to speak of the law against another evil that may well be associated with it. *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery*. Although among Christian nations this evil is not punished as a criminal offence, it is yet one of the worst crimes, as well as one of the deepest sins, of which a Christian can be guilty. Unlike other evils, it can rarely be committed without involving another in its guilt, as well as in the ruin which it brings.

It is the enemy and destroyer at once of domestic and social, of moral and religious virtue and happiness. Justly, therefore, did the prohibition against it find a place in the decalogue, as the most holy portion of the law revealed by Jehovah amidst the thunders of Sinai. Marriage is a divine institution, and was designed to be, not a natural and temporary, but a spiritual and eternal union. He, therefore, who commits adultery violates that which is holy, and cuts himself off from all communication with heaven.

28. The Jew regarded this commandment, as he did most others, only as a rule for the regulation of his outward conduct; but the Christian is to esteem it as a law for the government of his inward life. Therefore the Lord says to his disciples, *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* If hatred is murder, lust is adultery. Civil laws or outward considerations may prevent the desire from becoming an act; but if it is secretly cherished, the evil has already been committed in the heart. And as God looks upon the heart, and judges men by their intentions as well as by their acts, sins intended are as condemnatory as sins committed. Christianity, which goes to the root of every evil, requires men to judge themselves by the desires by which they are inflamed, as much as by the actions they commit. Whatever is wilfully and deliberately cherished is an act of the mind, and would become an act of the body also, if outward circumstances were favourable. There is, however, a wide difference between the evil that is cherished and the evil that is only excited. Every heart has its concupiscence; but every heart does not approve or cherish it. Instead of encouraging the lust, the mind may condemn and strive against it, in which case the evil will not become sin, even although there may be the opportunity and enticement to commit it.

As, in the spiritual sense, to kill is to destroy the principles of spiritual life in ourselves or others, to commit adultery is to pervert and profane them. The principles which constitute spiritual life in the soul are goodness and truth, or love and faith. These are the partners of the spiritual and heavenly marriage, of which truth is the husband, and good is the wife; and from whose union are produced all the virtue and blessedness of human and angelic beings. The opposite of this heavenly marriage is the union of falsity and evil, from which spring all the sin and misery that prevail in the world and in the kingdom of darkness. But spiritual adultery consists, not simply in the union of evil and falsity, but in the union of truth and evil, or of falsity and goodness, which is as the union of heaven and hell. The

first is the profanation of truth, the second is the profanation of goodness. The natural evil corresponds to and results from the spiritual; and they are ever united as cause and effect. He, therefore, who looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath, in his heart, committed both the spiritual and the natural sin.

29, 30. The Lord follows up his remarks on this subject by saying, *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.* The eye is the symbol, as it is more especially the organ, of the intellect, as the hand is of the will. And as thought is an act of the intellect, and desire is an act of the will, these are included in the signification of the eye and the hand. It is the offending thought and desire, therefore, that are to be removed. The eye that looks upon, and the desire that lusts after, prohibited objects and pleasures, are the causes of offence; and these must be rejected, that we may be guiltless of the offence, by its being no longer in the intention. If these, as the causes of offence, are not rejected, we are guilty of the sin, although we may never commit the act.—But the offending members that are removed are the right eye and the right hand. Of the members of the body, those on the right side correspond to faculties and powers of the will, and those on the left side, to faculties and powers of the understanding. The right eye and hand offend us, or rather cause us to offend, when impure thoughts and desires are grounded in the will—are not simply the offspring of the natural weakness and corruption of the flesh, but proceed from evil, known to be such, and wilfully cherished in the heart.

The Lord tells us what we are to do with the offending member. We are to *pluck out the eye, and cut off the hand, and cast them from us.* If impure thoughts arise in our minds, we are to check and reject them, so that they may form no part of our intellectual life; and if impure desires are excited in our hearts, we are to condemn and resist them, so that they may form no part of our voluntary life. The two distinct acts of cutting them off and casting them from us are expressive of two distinct operations of the mind, which are necessary to effect the full rejection of evil. The separation of evil cannot be complete unless it be the joint operation of the understanding and will. Evil may be said to be plucked out and cut off when the understanding first sees and opposes it as evil; but it is not cast out from the mind until the will or love is also against it, and thus unites with the understanding to effect its full rejection.

The Lord concludes his exhortation to pluck out the eye and cut off the hand that offend by saying, *For it is profitable for thee that one of thy*

members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. According to the literal sense it would seem as if the excision of these members was to leave the body mutilated, which, indeed, is plainly stated in another place, where the Lord says, "It is better for you to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands and two feet to be cast into hell." It does not, however, follow that those who enter into life halt or maimed remain for ever so. The body of which all this is said is not the natural but the spiritual body, the external man, where all evils reside. It is the eye, and the hand, and the foot of this body that offend or scandalize us, that obstruct and prevent the operations of the internal man, and which therefore have to be maimed by self-denial, that we may enter into the life of love and faith, and finally into heaven. Self-denial consists in resisting evil in its active states, either in acts of the mind or of the body; and therefore we are required to pluck out the eye and cut off the hand, and so, by losing one of our members, save the whole body from being cast into hell, or becoming a confirmed form of evil. But in the spiritual life there is a process of renewal as well as of excision. Self-denial plucks out and cuts off, active goodness restores and renews. He who lays down his life by crucifying the lusts of the flesh, takes it up again by walking in the newness of the Spirit. The old members are removed by ceasing to do evil, the new are acquired by learning to do well. Halt and maimed are conditions of the spiritual body when goodness and truth, or charity and faith, are unequal and divided. As these twain graces become one, the body acquires its true symmetry and beauty, becoming the perfect organ and instrument of the new life into which the cross-bearing Christian has entered.

31, 32. The Lord extends his remarks on the law against adultery, as understood by the Jews, to the law of divorce. Under the Mosaic law men were permitted to put away their wives, which they sometimes did for very trivial causes. This law, be it remembered, did not originate the practice, which was in its very nature hateful to the Divine mind (Mal. ii. 16). Why, then, did not the law prohibit it? Our Lord gives the answer—"Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so" (ch. xix. 8). It is important to distinguish, in the Scriptures, between laws of command and laws of permission. God, by his very nature, can command nothing but what is good; but it is consistent with a wise and beneficent providence to permit a less evil to prevent a greater. Permission, therefore, forms a necessary part of the laws of God's moral government. A prohibition of divorce among the Jews

would have been unavailing, or would have produced a greater evil than it prevented. What the law could not prevent, and therefore did not forbid, it moderated, by subjecting divorce to prudent and stringent regulations. This was the state of the case when our Lord explained and enforced the Christian law of divorce, which was to supersede that of Moses. *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.* In this law the Lord lays down the important principle, that adultery is the one only legitimate cause of divorce. There may be other just causes of separation, but there is no other legitimate cause for the absolute dissolution of the marriage tie. True, there is no real marriage without a union of heart and soul; but to make the want of such a union a ground of divorce, would be to introduce into the church and society disorders that would inevitably work their ruin. It is of the utmost consequence, therefore, that the Lord's teaching on this point should be a fundamental principle in all ecclesiastical and civil law.

The purely spiritual sense of this law relates not to persons, but to principles in one person—the principles of goodness and truth, or love and faith, the union of which constitutes the spiritual and heavenly marriage. The spiritual law which is the origin of the law of marriage consists in this, that every truth has its own good, and every good has its own truth. A good and a truth may be pure, and yet unsuited to each other—in which case their tendency is to separate. This is the case even in heaven, where the blest are distinguished into societies according to the differences or distinctions of goodness and truth; but these distinctions are not discords, but harmonies. Divorce, which is complete opposition and separation, cannot take place between pure good and truth, but between pure truth and adulterated good, or between pure good and falsified truth, which is as the separation which exists between heaven and hell. If separation were to take place for any other cause, good, deprived of the instruction and protection which it should find in truth, might unite itself with some false principle, and so be profaned.

33. Another subject is brought before us by the divine Teacher. *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all.* It has been thought by some that the giving testimony upon oath is here prohibited. There is,

however, nothing profane, and therefore nothing sinful, in judicial swearing. It would appear, from the forms of oath which the Lord adduces, that his object was to prohibit those which the Jews had added to the law, and not to affirmation upon oath in questions at law.

Spiritually to swear is to confirm Divine truth. Jehovah swore by himself, to teach us that as he only is the author of the truth, so he only is the witness of the truth. This is a character which Jehovah incarnate likewise sustains. "Jesus is the faithful and true witness," and as such is the author and finisher of our faith. He who reveals the truth by his Word convinces us of the truth by his Spirit. We cannot convince ourselves from ourselves. We are indeed condemned for unbelief, because if the Lord does not convince us, it is because we reject his Spirit, which is always ready to give us the spirit of belief. While we reject his Spirit, we may yet labour to confirm what we regard as the truth. Some vain or selfish motive may prompt us to confirm the truth; but such confirmation is superficial, and does not enter into the inner life of our spirit.

34. The first thing by which men are commanded not to swear is heaven:—*Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne.* To swear by heaven is equivalent to swearing by the Lord himself, because heaven is and can be heaven only because of the presence in it of the Lord. The Lord himself is indeed above heaven, in the centre of the Divine glory, which constitutes the sun of heaven, and which is the first emanation of his divine love; but, nevertheless, if he were not present in heaven, heaven would have no existence. The angels have nothing of their own that can constitute heaven: they are angels—human beings in a state of the most exalted finite glory and happiness—purely because they are recipients of the Lord's divine love and wisdom, by the proceeding emanation of which he is present with them, and is actually in them; and this it is which constitutes heaven. The Lord's divine love and wisdom, as existing in himself, are the divine good; and the same principles emanating from him, and abiding in the angels, or in heaven, are called the divine truth. The divine truth is the Lord in heaven: and this is one with the sun of heaven, being the divine proceeding thence of spiritual heat and light adapted to the capacity of the angels for receiving it. Thus in heaven the Lord is all, and the angels respectively are nothing; of which they have an inmost conviction and sense, though it is given them to feel the gifts of the Lord's love and wisdom in them as if they were their own, whilst they know most assuredly, and acknowledge most heartily, that nothing of them is truly their own, but all of the

Lord, as present with and in them. Thus they perfectly know, and are delighted to have it so, and to acknowledge, that the Lord is the all in all of heaven. Most evidently it follows from all this that to swear by heaven is to swear by the Lord himself, and must, as to the literal act, be unlawful in the same manner and in the same circumstances. In the purely spiritual sense, to swear by heaven is to confirm any sentiment by the Lord's divine truth in heaven. This can only be done from the Lord, and not from man himself. For, as before explained, none but they whose internal man is opened can see genuine truths in the Word, and confirm them by the truth of any sentiment which may be presented to their minds; and such persons know and acknowledge, as we have seen the angels of heaven do, that all they thus perceive, and are enabled to confirm, is from the Lord, and thus that the confirmation itself is from him, and not from themselves, or from man. In this sense, therefore, of prohibiting man from confirming truths, or any notions which he regards as truths, from himself (and if they are not truths they can only be confirmed from himself), every such person dreads to offend against the Lord's command, "Swear not by heaven; for it is God's throne." Heaven is called God's throne because by that expression is spiritually signified the divine truth which proceeds from the Lord, and which is what fills heaven, with all the angels, and makes the angels to be angels, and heaven to be heaven.

35. In the same manner, to *swear by the earth* means by the church, and thus by the divine truth which proceeds from it—and in its essence is the Lord himself—as it dwells in and constitutes the church. For if heaven is not heaven by virtue of anything belonging to the angels, which is truly their own, but solely from the presence and residence of the Lord with them and in them, most certainly the church on earth is not the Lord's church by virtue of anything belonging to the professing members as their own, but altogether from the presence and residence of the Lord by his divine truth or divine proceeding with and among them. To swear, then, by the earth, in the purely spiritual sense, is to swear by the church—that is, to confirm truths received as truths divine by the divine truths as known and understood in the church. This, again, to be truly done, can only be done from the Lord, and not from man, as explained already. The earth, or church, is said to be God's *footstool*, as being below heaven, which is called his throne; and the divine truth by which it is constituted appears in the form of the Holy Word in its literal or natural sense, upon which rests divine truth such as it exists in heaven in its

purely spiritual sense. The foot, also, from which a footstool takes its name, always signifies, in the Holy Word, the natural principle of man, upon which all interior things rest, and by which they are sustained. For although the church, while in a state of order, is enlightened to understand the letter of the Word, so as to distinguish the genuine truths which it presents from the mere appearances of truth, and to draw from it pure doctrine; and although its members may in some measure apprehend its spiritual senses, which are what are perceived, and are alone perceived by the angels,—still the ideas of spiritual things capable of being perceived by man while in the world are not purely spiritual ideas, as are those of the angels, but are spiritual ideas conceived in a natural manner, according to the unavoidable condition of the spirit of man while an inhabitant of the natural world. Thus the church on earth, however pure and elevated the dispensation under which it exists, can never be in any other state than that which is spiritually denominated God's footstool,—can never acquire the character which belongs to heaven itself, which constitutes God's throne. If, however, while here, we truly belong to the church, in the sense in which it is God's footstool—however humble a part of the footstool we may constitute,—when we go hence we shall have a place in his throne—shall constitute some portion or atom of that glorious seat, and have the Lord himself, in his pure divine truth, perceived by us, not as now in a natural manner, but in a purely spiritual one, eternally present with us, in us, and over us.

It is further enjoined that we swear not by Jerusalem, for it is the *city of the great king*.

To swear by Jerusalem is to confirm divine truth, or what ought to be such, by the doctrine of truth existing in the church, and drawn from the Holy Word. It may easily be concluded that when mention is first made of the earth, to signify the church, and then of Jerusalem, called the city of the Great King, and considered, therefore, as the capital city of the earth, then Jerusalem must denote the doctrine of the church, according to which everything belonging to the church is regulated and determined. Here, then, again, truths can only be really confirmed by the doctrine of the church from the Lord: and therefore man is prohibited so to confirm them from himself, by the command not to swear by Jerusalem. As heaven, the abode of angels, is denominated God's throne, and the earth, or the church, his footstool, so Jerusalem, as the doctrine of the church, is called the city of the Great King. The Lord is called a King, and the Great King, because he is

the governor of all things, by his divine truth proceeding from his divine good; and Jerusalem, as denoting the doctrine of the church, is called the city of the Great King, because, as just remarked, it is by its doctrines that all things of the church are regulated or governed, as the Lord himself is the universal Governor by his divine truth. The doctrine of the church cannot be separated from the Lord as the Divine Truth itself: and as to swear by Jerusalem involves swearing by the Great King, whose royal city it is, so to confirm anything by the doctrine of the church is the same, in effect, as confirming it by the Lord's divine truth, which cannot possibly be done by man from himself—to attempt which is therefore prohibited by the command, Swear not by Jerusalem.

36. The last oath specifically prohibited is, swearing by one's own head. The head is often mentioned to signify intelligence; and also what is chief and primary. Thus, for a man to swear by his own head, is to confirm anything by the truth which he accounts as the chief point of intelligence, and which he makes the truth of his faith. But man has no intelligence and believes no truth of faith from himself, but only from the Lord: consequently, no truth can thus be confirmed by man from himself, but only from the Lord. The folly of thinking to confirm any truth from self-intelligence is expressed by the observation, that man cannot *make one hair* of his own head either *white or black*. The hair signifies the truth of the external or natural man, such as is possessed by those who hold a true faith, not because they see it to be true by light in their own minds, but because the doctrine of the church so teaches. Because they believe it, not because they see it, but only because they have been taught it, they are commanded not to swear by it, or confirm by it from themselves anything as true, because they cannot make one hair white or black; for to make one hair white signifies to say and to see that truth is truth from themselves; and to make a hair black is to say and to see, from themselves, that falsity is falsity. As this can only be done from the Lord, man is forbidden to swear by his head, because this signifies to confirm truth from himself, or from self-derived intelligence. It will thus be seen that the prohibition against swearing extends to all things, from the greatest and highest to the least and lowest—from heaven to the very hairs of our heads. And as all these are under the immediate care of the Most High—who numbers the stars of heaven and the very hairs of our heads—the command not to swear by any of them, is a command not to confirm or uphold, by our own wisdom, the authority of the divine wisdom, and not to obtrude ourselves, or our

own wisdom, into the domain of the eternal government, where the wisdom of God is all.

37. Having prohibited swearing, the Lord concludes by saying, *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* This is a description of the state of the highest celestial angels, whose perception of truth is so clear that there is no room to doubt about it whatever. It is like seeing an object before our eyes in the clearest daylight, respecting which no one enters into any reasonings as to whether such an object is before him, or attempts to convince others of it by any asseverations, since he knows that they see it as well as himself. All reasoning, or any sort of mode of confirming any truth, arises from there being some degree of obscurity respecting it in our own minds, or in the minds of others whom we wish to convince of it; and all obscurity of the understanding in regard to truths originates in a defect of the will in regard to good. If we loved good with our whole heart, and always followed it; if we hated evil in every form, and constantly shunned it, we would possess such light in our minds that we should recognize every truth to be truth as soon as we heard it, and should have no need to be convinced of it, or to be confirmed in it, by any reasons, or by any corroborating considerations whatever. Thus the cause of every degree of obscurity in regard to truths is the existence of evil in the will: consequently, every help we have need of to assist us in our understanding of truth, and to obtain a thorough conviction respecting it, is needed, and is exercised from that cause. No legitimate means that can be employed, whether reasoning or asseveration, are themselves evil: on the contrary, everything that tends to assist us in the understanding of truth is good, and is granted by the Lord's mercy; but that which makes any such assistance necessary is the darkening influence of evil, so that, thus considered, it is most true that whatsoever is more than the simple affirmation, which is the result of so clear a perception as requires no argument to assist it, cometh of evil. No mathematical truth, however clearly demonstrated, is so clear as its axioms; and were the human mind in genuine order, all spiritual truths would be in it as axioms perceived by intuition, and only capable of being made less clear, and not more so, by any mode of reasoning and demonstration.

38, 39. The law of retaliation is that to which our Lord next directs the attention of his hearers. *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil.* (The law of retaliation delivered to the children of Israel was derived from the universal law of order—"All things

whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." This being "the law and the prophets," it is the law of heaven, and thence of the church.) But in descending into the Israelitish Church, it assumed a form in accordance with the character of the people. (Yet the *lex taliones* is substantially the law of Christian nations. Punishment must be awarded to crime, and with some relation to its nature and extent. The spirit of our Lord's teaching in respect to this law is nevertheless observed when crime is punished solely with a view to the protection of society, and to the amendment, as far as possible, of the offender.) But in all the laws of the Word of God there is a spiritual element and an eternal object. The laws of retaliation were not intended only for evil men in the natural world, but for evil spirits in the spiritual world. The law of heaven, "Do to others as ye would that others should do to you," becomes in hell, "As ye do to others, it shall be done to you." In heaven all are actuated by benevolence, in hell by malevolence. And as every principle carries within it its own reward, happiness is the result of the one and misery of the other. (Every evil has along with it a corresponding punishment. That punishment is not a divine retribution; it is not inflicted to satisfy any divine attribute; but is a permission for the purpose of restraint and correction—we do not say of amendment, because this can have no existence in the regions of darkness. (The law of retaliation acts in the spiritual world precisely as it acted among the Israelites in the natural world. The punishment is demanded and inflicted by the blood avenger—the Lord, as the universal Judge,) like his prototype, only doing what the judge of Israel did, regulating and moderating the punishment, that it exceed not the limits assigned by the law of retaliation. There also the retribution of evil takes place according to the law of contraries, as opposite to the reward of good in heaven. (Good willed or done by any one in heaven opens the heart to receive an influx of good, with its delight, from every side, so that the delight of all is imparted to each. Evil done by any one in hell draws upon him the wrath of the whole society,) just as among the Israelites the claimant for vengeance was tracked by the congregation, who only waited for the avenger to throw the first stone, to rush simultaneously upon the offender.

(And it is in relation to the spiritual life of man, and not to his outward natural life that he lives in the world, that the Lord delivers these precepts, when understood in their spiritual meaning, which is the only meaning in which they are to be strictly observed. *An eye*

for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, signifies that it is a law of divine origin, that so far as any one takes away, or desires to take away, from another the understanding of truth, or the sense of truth, so far they shall be taken away from him; and this is an effect which is seen to follow the effort or intention. (The eye signifies) the understanding of truth, and a tooth what may be called the sense of truth; for tooth signifies what is true or false as it appertains to the sensual man, or as it is perceived by the ultimate region of the human mind, called its sensual principle. (That the evil, or the doer of evil, is not to be resisted, signifies that the good, upon whom such spiritual assault is made, are not to fight in return, and recompense evil with evil. Angels, we may be sure, do not fight with the evil, still less do they recompense evil for evil; but they permit evil spirits to hurt them if they can, because it is impossible for them to do it, on account of the protection which surrounds the angels from the Lord, which is such that no evil from hell can hurt them. So when the Lord proceeds to say, in illustration of the precept not to resist evil, *whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also*, it is because the cheek signifies the perception and understanding of interior truth (as the tooth does of exterior truth), (the right cheek signifying the affection, and thence perception of it; to smite the right cheek is to endeavour to injure such affection and perception; and the command to turn the other implies that the attempt is to be permitted, because it is impossible, as just remarked, that the (evil can do real injury to the perception and understanding of interior truth in those who, being grounded in such perception and understanding from genuine good, are encompassed with the sphere of the Lord's divine protection.) In the original, the word used properly signifies the cheek-bone, or the upper jaw, of which the cheek is the covering, consisting of the muscles by which it acts. The jaws form the opening of the mouth; and the mouth and all the parts connected with it, as the throat, the lips, the cheeks and jaws, and the teeth, signify such things as relate to the perception and understanding of truth, because these principles in the mind correspond, or answer by correspondence, to these organs of the body, on which account they are named to express those mental faculties in the literal sense of the word, which is entirely written by such correspondences. So when the Lord says farther, *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also*, the meaning is, that if any endeavour to take away the internal truth of which we are in possession, he may be allowed to take the external truth likewise; for the coat, or inner garment,

signifies interior truth, and the cloak, or outer garment, signifies exterior truth. We are informed that the angels do this with the evil; for the evil cannot take away anything of truth and goodness from those who are really principled in them, as the angels are, but they can take away from those who, in resentment of the attempt, burn with enmity, hatred, and revenge, because those evils avert from him who cherishes them the Divine protection of the Lord. So, again, when the Lord further says, *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain*, the spiritual and only true signification is, that he who wishes to draw away from truth to falsity is not to be resisted, because he cannot do it—a mile being the measure of a road or way, which signifies that which leads to truth, or from it. When the Lord says, finally, *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away*, the meaning is, that whatever we possess or know of goodness and truth is to be communicated to all who wish for it; and this whether he desires it in sincerity or only to pervert it, and deprive others of the truth by such perversion. This, however, they are not able to do; and all who derive instruction of us, whether for a good or a bad end or object, of which we can seldom judge with certainty, are to receive it. Even also when the object at the time may be a bad one, we cannot tell what benefit the inquirer may derive from the information imparted: it may possibly be the means eventually of his reformation.

It is quite evident that all these injunctions may be carried out spiritually without our losing anything of good or truth, or any mutual or spiritual endowment, by doing so. We may freely let a man take our spiritual coat and cloak without losing them ourselves; and we may give to him who would ask or borrow of us without being in any respect the poorer. (We ought ever to be willing to do good in all ways, even to the evil; and most assuredly the greatest good that can be done to the evil is to communicate to them that instruction, imparted with compassionate kindness, which may be instrumental to their reformation.)

43. The previous sections of this Divine discourse begin with quotations either from the ten commandments or from other precepts of the Mosaic law; but this passage continues with a citation from the law, a precept which nowhere occurs in the sacred writings. The Divine Speaker says, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*. The first clause is certainly a Divine command. It is found in Lev. xix. 18, where it is written,

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” and in conjunction with the command to love the Lord with all the heart and soul, it is repeatedly quoted by the Lord Jesus Christ, who declares that “on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” But nowhere is to be found in any part of the Old Testament—of the law and the prophets—any more than in the New, any precept which says, “Thou shalt hate thine enemy.” In the margin of our Bibles we are referred to Deut. xxiii. 6, where the children of Israel are enjoined not to seek the peace nor the prosperity of the Ammonites and Moabites all their days for ever. But this is a special case; and the very fact that it was an exception proves the rule that they were to love, or at least not to hate their enemies. But even this does not enjoin hatred. It does not come within the spirit of the Christian precept to love their enemies: it only excludes these enemies from the benefit of the active seeking of their peace and prosperity by Israel.

Another passage referred to, in illustration of the Lord's statement, is the 10th verse of the 41st Psalm, “O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.” This is indeed a prayer of David in relation to his enemies. But this is no precept commanding hatred. It is in the spirit of other Old Testament utterances, but it expresses the mind of man and not of God; nor is anything to be found, even in the Scriptures addressed to the Israelitish people, that can be construed into a Divine command to hate their enemies. When, therefore, the Lord says, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy,” it is plain that he must mean, as to the latter clause, that it has been said by the Jewish doctors—the scribes and Pharisees—who, it is well known, have always repeated this as a doctrine of the law of Moses, though, in reality, the law of Moses never says any such thing. It is true they were commanded to drive out or exterminate the previous inhabitants of Canaan; but in this they were to act as the executors of Divine judgments, called down by the extreme wickedness of those nations, which, as is expressly stated, had grown to such a height that the land itself could bear them no longer, but absolutely, in the strong symbolic language of the Word of God, vomited out its inhabitants. The Israelites were to hold no communion with such a people, because this could not be held without contamination; and as communication could not be avoided if they lived together with them, they were, as just remarked, commanded to exterminate and drive them out, as executors of the Divine judgments on their wickedness; but this is very different from being commanded personally to hate them, and to execute the awful

commission assigned them in a spirit of malignity. It is true that the Jews were not content to live separate from the nations, but cherished hatred towards them; yet this was due to their own character, and not to any recommendation of, or authority for, such a principle from the Word, which comprises many precepts whose tendency is directly the contrary. Thus, not only was the commandment given (Lev. xix. 18), "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which the Jews consider includes none but their own nation; but in verse 34 of the same chapter it is added, The stranger (that is, the foreigner) that sojourneth with you shall be as one home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. So in Deut. x. 18, "God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Evidently, then, the Mosaic law teaches no such principle as hatred of enemies, but directly the contrary. Yet it is certain this was a grand precept of the Jewish doctors, and heartily received by the whole nation.

44. In correction, then, of this feature of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, the Divine Author of the Christian religion says to *his* disciples, *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* It may be asked, Why should a Divine teacher, who knew that his church would not be formed of Jews, few of whom were capable of receiving pure Christianity, address so much of his instructions to the correction of Jewish errors and principles of conduct? The answer is, because those Jewish errors and principles—if not the very same doctrinal errors, corresponding sins, and the very same principles of affection, life, and practice—are deeply rooted in the heart and mind of the natural man, and constitute *his* principles of thought and action in all ages. Therefore the Lord says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies."

The command, "Love your enemies," certainly appears as a hard saying to the natural man. How we can actually love those who, we know, hate us, and would, if they had the power, destroy us, is certainly a problem of which mere nature cannot suggest the solution. It is true that duty does not require us to love them as to that principle and state in them from which they are our enemies, and would, if they could, injure or destroy us; for no one is an enemy to another, and wishes to injure or destroy him, but from some principle of evil—some overweening impulse of self-love or the love of the world, which are the basis of all evil; and evil in no one

is to be the object of our love, but always of our aversion. But duty requires us to remember that there is no one who is altogether evil. If all have evil inherent in them from self, and present with them from will, all likewise have good present with them from the Lord and from heaven. All are human beings, our fellow-creatures, possess the human endowments of rationality and liberty, and thus retain somewhat, however disfigured, of the image and likeness of God. The desire and the will of the Lord is, that the good which is present in every one from him should be brought forward and increased, and appropriated by the person, and acted from *as* his own, and exalted to the supremacy in his affections; and that the evil which is in him from himself and from hell should be subdued and removed before it. And what is the will of the Lord respecting any or every individual of the human race must be also the will, or must be made the will, of every one who would truly be the Lord's disciple or his servant, his friend or his son. How then can we act—even in the lowest of these capacities—as the Lord's servant or disciple, if, in regard to any one of whom we know that such is the will of the Lord—that is, any one of the human race, any fellow creature—we allow the petty consideration, that the evil which is in him, and which he shares with ourselves and with every one, happens to be specially directed against us, and induces him, mistaking us, to act as our enemy—if, I say, we allow this feeling, this merely selfish consideration, to prevent us from complying with the will of the Lord, and from acting as *his* children or disciples, by constituting ourselves enemies of that individual in return, and hating him because he has fallen into the error, and is injuring himself by appropriating the evil of hating and wishing to do injury to us? The grand thing we have to attend to, and never to forget, is, to distinguish between a man's evils and his person, because he is a human being—by creation our brother—capable of becoming an angel, equally with ourselves the offspring of our Creator, and the object of his paternal tenderness; while we regret and lament his evil conduct or principles, we should on no account do anything to confirm him in them, but should gladly do everything in our power to promote their removal. In fact, the true definition of what is meant by loving our enemies is to feel and act towards them under the influence of charity. However truly a person may be an enemy to us, we are never to suffer feelings of enmity against him in return to establish themselves in our hearts; and though we may do whatever is necessary to defeat his endeavours to do us injury, we must never

admit the wish to do him injury in return. Everything is comprised in the direction, that we are ever to regard him with the feelings of true charity, and to act towards him with such feelings alone.

That it is in this manner that we are to love our enemies is evident from the additions with which the Divine Speaker accompanies that precept. After saying, "Love your enemies," he continues his precepts on the subject by saying further, *Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.* These are all marks and manifestations of charity. The end which all charity has in view is to promote the good of those towards whom it is cherished, and to do them good in whatever way we are able, so as to contribute really to their benefit. One way of doing such good is to bless them that curse us. To bless implies desiring blessing from the Lord; and it includes, where there is opportunity of doing so with effect, the imparting such advice and instruction as may tend to bring them into a state admmissive of the Divine blessing. To do good to them that hate us is evidently to return good for evil, and thus to convince them how little reason they have to hate us, and to bring them to feel the evil of doing so. To pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us cannot, in the spiritual sense, mean anything very different from what the letter expresses. When so ill treated by an enemy as to have no means of doing anything directly good to him, we can only elevate our souls in devout desire for his true welfare to the Lord, and intercede at the throne of mercy on his behalf; and, little as human reason may be able to discern the probable use of such a course, we may be sure that it would not be enjoined by Infinite Goodness and Wisdom, did not that Wisdom see how it may be beneficial, and were not that Goodness disposed to make it so. Doubtless, in many cases, no human intercession on behalf of others can be of any avail; but if the Word of God is to be believed, there certainly are cases as numerous, whatever philosophy may argue to the contrary, in which it may. And as it is impossible for us to know what cases may belong to this class, and what to the other, it is doubtless our duty in all, from special emotions of charity, to comply with the Lord's command, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. The Lord himself prayed for his enemies on the cross. His prayer could neither be formal nor unavailing; and if we are true disciples we will follow his example, believing sincerely in the blessedness of the result.

45. But the Divine Speaker does not confine himself to simply

commanding us to love our enemies: he adds to the command the strongest motives, reasons, and inducements to the love of enemies: *That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* The not regarding of injuries, so as to seek to requite them; the not hating, but the loving of our enemies, so as to regard them with entire charity, and to desire nothing but their good, is, beyond everything else, that which makes man, in his finite measure, like God, insomuch that God regards such a man as his son, and *gives* him this title. The reason of this is, because such genuine, disinterested charity—charity thus free from all contamination by the love of self—is the very Divine principle as received by and dwelling in man; and though man can never have anything divine in him as his own, so as to be himself a god, yet in the form of such charity it is imparted to him, *as if it were* his own; and though it cannot make him a god, it unites him, in his finite manner, with God, and effects a real conjunction of life for him with the Lord himself. With it he receives power to be, and is accounted as, a son of God. He has an intimate conjunction with the Lord Jesus Christ as to his Divine humanity, and in the humanity with the essential divinity—the inmost divine essence and nature.

For the Lord, in his unfailing bounty, maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Not only does he do this literally, communicating all needful benefits to all, but spiritually likewise, by communicating to all the means of salvation, together with ability to make saving use of them. The rising of his sun is the communication of the influences of his love, conveying all spiritual good; the rain that he sends is the influence of his truth, making the mind receptive of the knowledge conveyed through his Word; and both are the gifts of his Holy Spirit, which are constantly present with every one, and when received and appropriated, replenish the soul with spiritual life, and prepare the man for the blessed enjoyment of life everlasting.

Other reasons are offered by the Divine Speaker and Benefactor, to convince man how readily he should comply with the Divine desires in his behalf, by acquiring that charity which can love its enemies, and thus become an inheritor of all heavenly excellences and joy.

46. And, first, he shows that religious men have no advantage

over the men of the world unless they show a better example of unworldly love. *For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?* As natural men hate, so do they love. As they hate those that hate them, they love those who love them. In thus loving others they only love themselves. They love others so far and so long as others minister to their self-love or self-interest. Christian love is entirely different from this. A Christian loves his neighbour for his neighbour's sake. And this he does whether his neighbour love him or not in return. His principles prompt him to desire the welfare and happiness of others, and to do what he can to promote them. Not self-love, but the love of God, is the principle from which he loves and acts. And as God loves all, and dispenses his bounty to all, he who loves God must love as God loves. There is another duty inculcated—that of saluting others besides our brethren.

47. *And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?* The distinction is that which exists between loving and doing, and, spiritually, is one that so often occurs to mark the distinction and the union of the will and the understanding in all our intercourse with our fellow-creatures—that heavenly marriage of the good and the true from which all spiritual virtue springs. Unless the Christian acts from these heavenly principles, what reward has he? The publicans have selfish gratification, and sometimes worldly advantage, as the reward of loving and saluting those who love and salute them. The reward to which the Christian looks is inward satisfaction and advantage; but it is the satisfaction of doing good, and the advantage of increasing his own capacity for usefulness and happiness.

48. As the Lord pointed to the Father in heaven as the pattern for men in their love for and conduct to each other, he concludes by exhorting his disciples to imitate him even in his perfection. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* This must seem to many an impracticable lesson. The Lord cannot, of course, mean to teach us that we can be perfect in the degree that God is perfect; but he certainly intended to teach us that there is a perfection to which the Christian can attain which is an image of the Divine perfection. What is it that, apart from his infinity, constitutes the perfection of God's nature? It is the perfect union in him of love and wisdom. The same union constitutes human perfection; the only difference being, that while the perfection of God is infinite, that of man is finite. Love for God

in man's will, and wisdom for God in man's understanding, make man an image of God; and man is a perfect image so far as these principles are united in his mind and in his life. According to this idea of perfection, the humblest member of the Lord's body can be as perfect in degree as the most exalted. For he who has little of love and of wisdom may have that little in as perfect a state of union as the greatest. The union of love and wisdom, or of good and truth, of charity and faith, of will and understanding, of doctrine and life—this is perfection; and to this perfection all can attain.

What a beautiful conclusion do these verses form to the series of Divine lessons which this portion of the Lord's sermon conveys! How excellent and amiable does the religion of Jesus Christ appear, according to its nature, as here described and insisted on by himself! How far surpassing anything ever imagined is here presented, as the character of the true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, when, as necessary to distinguish him from men of the world, and to evince that he is a true disciple of his Divine Master, we are told that he must love even his enemies, and return blessings and prayers for curses and injuries; and when, after a picture of our heavenly Father as the Author of good to all, we are instructed that, in this respect, we are to take him for our pattern, and strive after a perfection imitative of his! In practice how few of us appear to think that such precepts are given in earnest, as intended to be obeyed, and that unless we are at heart in the sincere effort to obey them, and to govern our affections and habits of life in conformity with their directions, we have no claim to be accounted as Christians, or to assume the name, and expect the consequent blessing, of him as the disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VI.

THIS chapter, while it forms part of the series of the Lord's discourse, forms at the same time a series which is distinct by itself; and which again consists of distinct parts, forming again other distinct series. Thus, the first eighteen verses obviously constitute one series of subjects, consisting again of three parts, intimately connected together: the first treating of the duty of almsgiving, the second of that of prayer, and the third of fasting.

1. The first verse is a general introduction, not only to the subject of almsgiving, but also to those of prayer and fasting. In our version the Lord is made to say, *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men;* but in the margin *righteousness* is given instead of alms. The reason of this is, that in a great number of manuscripts, including those that are most ancient, and in some of the most ancient versions, the word properly meaning righteousness, or justice, is here found. This would appear to be the correct reading. For righteousness being a general term, denoting any kind of religious duty whatever, includes the three different duties, of which almsgiving is one, and which, therefore, comes appropriately in the next verse. The general precept, then, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven,* implies, that no kind of religious duty whatever is to be done for the sake of the applause of men, or on account of any external consideration whatever; and that when so done, it ceases to be truly an act of religion, and brings no blessing upon the hypocritical performer.

2. Having taught that in the performance of religious duty in general, regard is not to be had to men, otherwise no reward attends them from our heavenly Father, the Divine Instructor draws from the general precept an inference relating to the specific duty of almsgiving. *Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.* Almsgiving, as one of the most obvious good deeds which spring from a principle of charity, is here mentioned to denote all good in general,—every sort of performance which has, or ought to have, charity or love as its origin,—all good which man can will or do. That almsgiving is one of the forms of such good, there can be no doubt; although, in a corrupt and artificial state of society, there is need of prudence and caution in its exercise; lest by this means the unworthy should be supported in idleness and profligacy, and, by importunity and hypocritical pretences, should monopolize the bounty which is only well bestowed upon those whom misfortune, and not vice, has reduced to a situation to require it. But almsgiving alone is not what is here intended in the spiritual sense, but, as remarked, all good whatever that man can will and do. Nothing of the kind is to be done for the sake of outward appearance. *Do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.* To sound a trumpet is a figurative form of speech, denoting, when applied to divine things,

revelation by truths grounded in celestial love : here, therefore, where it is applied to a subject of an opposite nature, it denotes publication and boasting, grounded in self-love, and the love to obtain the glory of men, and to desire reputation by such means among those who only behold the outward appearance, but cannot look into the heart. Thus it is to do good only for the sake of appearance, without any regard for good in itself. The synagogues and the streets, where the trumpet is blown, signify, in the good sense, doctrines and truths; and therefore point to the nature of the act as being one of intellect, and not of the heart, the result of study and contrivance with a view to self-glory. It implies also the practice of selfish benevolence under the cloak of religion. *Verily, they have their reward.* But what is this but the bubble reputation, which death at least must burst, leaving the miserable performer to shame and everlasting disgrace.

3. This, therefore, being not the mode of doing good which is acceptable to the Lord, or truly beneficial to the performer, the Lord says to his disciples, *Therefore, when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.* This is doubtless a proverbial phrase, implying great secrecy; but when employed by the Lord it becomes significant likewise. All the organs on the right side of the body have, as we have seen (ch. v. 29, 30), relation, in the symbolic language of Scripture, to the principles of goodness; and those on the left to that of truth. These, with a good man, act in union; but not with a wicked man, or with one who does good only for the sake of appearance. The hand always signifies power or ability. To act, then, with the right hand denotes to act from a principle of truth grounded in goodness. But the left hand here denotes the power of truth separate from goodness: and to consult this, would be to act from the understanding alone, without regard to any concurrence on the part of the will—thus to do what truth dictates, but without any motive of goodness in the doing of it; in which case self-love or evil must be the moving principle, and the good outwardly done would be for the sake of appearance and character. Not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth is to do good from a principle of goodness itself, without any respect to any consideration not grounded in genuine goodness.

4. Good must be thus done that our alms may be in secret—that is, that our good deeds may proceed from the inmost recesses of the soul, and be kept separate from all external considerations. And for such good, *Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.* By which is meant, that the delight and blessedness inherent

in all genuine good, or in all good which is lived, will be communicated to us by the Lord, the only Source of all real good and of all true felicity. And when this is promised from the Lord as our Father, we are instructed that this reward will come from his fatherly love, the fountain of the purest bliss. How desirable to come into the possession of such a principle of goodness, and to be influenced by it alone in whatever we do! If we do good according to our abilities and opportunities, our heavenly Father himself will give us a reward—the reward which all pure love of good carries in its bosom, the delight and blessedness of heaven, not the heaven only which is without, but of that which is within us; for good itself is heaven, and in this our Father dwells.

5. From the subject of almsgiving the Lord passes on to that of prayer. This is a subject in which all are most deeply interested. Prayer is discourse with God. Love is the fire that burns perpetually upon the altar, and devoutness of spirit is unceasing worship. There are times and seasons, however, when the devout man pours out his soul to God in oral prayer. Nor can true piety exist without the exercise of outward devotion, any more than true holiness can exist without the practice of good works. Prayer is therefore introduced among the active virtues which the Lord enjoins in his sermon on the mount. As in the duty of almsgiving, so in the performance of devotion the Lord instructs us both negatively and positively. *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are.* We must not, as the word hypocrite implies, with our lips use words, or assume any outward appearance, of devotion or holiness, while our heart believes or thinks in opposition to the form of goodness assumed before the world. The Lord, it is plain, does not speak of the infirmities which may attend the performance of our acts of worship, such as accidental and unintentional wanderings of thought or distraction of mind, but of that studied simulation of a piety to which the heart is an utter stranger, and which it even abhors. The Lord explains what he means by the command to be not as the hypocrites, by proceeding to explain what such a hypocrite is: *for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.* The Lord does not in this discourage public worship. He himself worshipped in the synagogue. Social worship is not implied here. Synagogues were made in imitation of the temple. And the Lord represents the Pharisee and the publican going up into the temple to pray, and each as praying alone. The point of our Lord's exhortation, to avoid the example of the Pharisees, is in their praying in public

places, to be seen of men. And nothing, surely, can be a more profane mockery than seeking human praise by the very act of offering homage to God. All our Lord's description of the practice of the hypocrite is, in the spiritual sense, expressive of activity of the intellect, and, in this case, without the co-operative influence of the will. Standing is expressive of a state of the thought; the synagogue signifies doctrine; a street signifies truth or its opposite; and the corner of a street the ultimate where truth closes, and on which it rests. We thus pray when from the understanding alone we go through the forms which truth prescribes as the means of acquiring good, for the purpose of acquiring the reputation of goodness. We do it to be seen of men, that is, to deceive their understandings, which is meant by the sight, to make that seem good which in itself is evil. Of all such worshippers the Lord says, *Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.* Their present reward is to obtain a character for piety, and secure respect and credit with others. Their reward is of this life, and here it ends. Their reward in the other life is "shame and everlasting contempt."

6. Pharisaic worship is to be shunned by every true disciple of the Lord. He is to seek the favour of the Lord alone. No view to any merely external advantage is to be made the end of his devotions. He is to worship primarily from the internal man, and by internal worship give a spiritual and internal nature even to its outward expressions. Therefore the Lord says, *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* By the direction to enter into the closet is not meant that all worship is to be performed in solitude. The closet is here put to signify the interior recesses of the mind. We are to worship the Lord from the internal man, and thus from states of inward faith and love, and not from the external man and his natural desires. Therefore we are also commanded to shut the door, which means to exclude all the influences that arise from the body and the world—to shut out completely every suggestion and desire that arises from below, and to seek the blessing of our Father, that is, of the Lord as pure Divine Love, who is only to be approached in such states of interior affection and spiritual desire, and who has his residence in secret, in the inmost recesses of the purified soul. The blessings of which we shall be made partakers will, while here, be stored up in the interiors of the mind; but when we depart hence, we shall enter into their manifest enjoyment and full fruition. Our Father, who seeth in secret, and who notes every desire and aspiration truly directed to him, will, we may be assured, reward us

openly. But even in this world we shall not be entirely without our open reward. Heavenly graces will be drawn down from the Lord in the internal man into the external by every act of true worship, and we shall be made partakers more and more fully of our heavenly Father's love.

7, 8. Having entered into our closet, and shut the door, we must attend to the matter of the prayer we offer up to our Father in heaven. On this important point our Lord says, *But when ye pray use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.* As the word rendered "vain repetitions" occurs in no other passage in the New Testament, and, according to *Tholuck*, only once in any classical author, its precise meaning is not easily determined. The context, however, sufficiently shows its meaning. It evidently includes the idea of "much speaking," for which the heathen "think they shall be heard;" and it probably includes also the idea of asking many particular things; since one reason for our not being like the heathen in our prayers is, that *your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.* In both these particulars our Lord's own prayer, which he delivered to his disciples as an example, is instructive. Few things are asked in few words. Even in its simple literal sense it craves but one blessing for the body; all the others are for the soul. The Lord's prayer is no doubt to be our pattern, though its use does not exclude that of other suitable forms. In itself it includes all—all that we can think or ask; but this in its spiritual sense. It certainly most emphatically teaches us that we should not approach the Divine Being with long, unmeaning, or worldly-minded prayers. But these exhortations have some deeper meaning than that which the letter expresses. It will be observed that the Lord first warns us against the practices of the hypocrites, and then against that of the heathen. The hypocrites are those who do not pray, but only pretend to pray; the heathen pray, but are mistaken in the nature and objects of prayer. The hypocrites represent those who are in truth without good; and the heathen represent those who are in good without truth. This good is what is called spurious good. It is not false and deceitful like that of the hypocrites, but it is natural, and therefore impure and misdirected. Truth is that which purifies good and makes it spiritual. And by the good we here speak of we are to understand the good of well-disposed persons, who yet have not the truth which is necessary to direct their good dispositions to their proper objects, by the use of proper means. Such persons are liable to think they shall be heard for much speak-

ing, and who use vain repetition, and think more of the body in their prayers than of the soul. *Be not ye therefore like unto them.* Our prayers are not only to be sincere, but intelligent and spiritual; asking always to be supplied according to the Divine will and wisdom, and not according to our own, except so far as our own are in harmony with those of our heavenly Father. The divine prayer which he himself taught us we now come to consider.

9. *After this manner therefore pray ye:* OUR FATHER. What an inexpressible charm is included in this affecting and tender commencement, especially when it is borne in mind that it is the Lord himself who authorizes and prescribes the form of approaching him, and commands us to think of and address him as Our Father! What an evidence is there, and an example, in this instance alone, of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ—of the nearer and perceptibly kinder relation which the Infinite and Most Holy Creator assumed towards his creatures when he himself assumed humanity for their redemption! In the Old Testament there are a few instances of the Lord being spoken of as the Father of his people; but it is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ alone, in his Divine Humanity, that the Eternal Creator can be truly known as the Father of those who call upon him. The natural idea conveyed in the title of Father is, that he is the Author of our existence. This is the most general idea which is presented when we are instructed to call upon the Divine Being as Our Father. Yet every one of any feeling perceives that there is something involved in the epithet more than this, and associates with the title the notion of paternal tenderness and care. This arises from an obscure perception which all have of the spiritual sense of the term Father,—of the spiritual reality which answers by exact correspondence to the natural relationship of a Father. The Lord is called Our Father in reference to that primary constituent of his essence, the Divine Love. Divine Love is the universal parent. It was to satisfy the yearnings of divine love, and the intense desire inherent in it to impart itself to others, and to bless them from the infinite fountain of beatitude in itself, that all creation was produced. For all the natural creation is produced for the sake of man, or that man might have the means of existence. And man was produced that heaven might exist, to be peopled with human beings, exalted to all the perfection and blessedness of which a created nature is capable, and enjoying these blessings by conjunction with the Lord and the fruition of his love. That the Divine Love is what is specifically meant when he is called our Father is thus sufficiently obvious from

rational considerations ; and it is affirmed, almost in express terms, in the Holy Word. The psalmist says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;" where the word rendered "pitieth," is one which denotes the deepest tenderness and mercy, which are the feelings of the softest love. We are thus to look at him, to our inexpressible comfort, as actuated by these emotions towards us, when we are encouraged to address him in prayer as our Father.

But we are instructed to address the Object of our worship not only as our Father, but as our Father *who art in the heavens*. As with respect to the Lord, the inmost Divine Essence, which is the same as the Divine Love, is called the Father—the Divine Existence or manifestation, which is the same as the Divine Truth, is what is called the Son ; so the whole Divinity, only as existing in and manifested by the Divine Humanity of Jesus Christ, is "our Father," and only by communications of spiritual graces thence can we be sons of God ; as it is written, "To as many as received him, to them gave HE power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed in his name." This is expressly indicated when He whom we are to address is defined to be "our Father *who art in the heavens*." For the Father *in the heavens* is specifically the Divine Truth, the sphere of which fills all the heavens, and is the source of all the perfection and blessedness that the heavenly inhabitants enjoy. And it is only the Divine Humanity of the Lord which is thus *in the heavens*—which there is known, experienced, and worshipped, and which fills the inhabitants with their angelic endowments ; for the Essential Divine Principle, which Jesus Christ calls *his* Father, is utterly inapprehensible to angelic as well as to human minds.

But who is it that we are to address as our Father? What is the NAME by which he has been manifested to us, and in what person has he revealed himself to us, and evinced that he is actuated by a Father's tenderness? It is only when clothed with humanity that we can truly know him in this character; it was when he actually assumed humanity that he first instructed us to address him as our Father. When he is spoken of or addressed by this title in the Old Testament, it is done prophetically, and in the anticipation of his drawing near to man, by taking on him human nature and becoming a Redeemer. It is true, indeed, that he was the Father of his creatures from eternity, and it is because he was so that they were called into existence. Yet he could not be fully known in all the nearness and tenderness of this relationship till he had put on the humanity for

the purpose. "No man (says the Lord) knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." So when Philip desired to see the Father, Jesus referred him to himself, and said, "Have I been so long time with thee, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, Show us the Father?" Although, then, the divine principle specifically called the Son is not the same as that called the Father, yet when the union between the divinity and humanity was fully effected, that union was so complete that they formed but one person, and the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelt in the person of Jesus Christ. It is therefore a great error to suppose that he whom we are commanded to address in the Lord's prayer as our Father is any other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He, after his glorification, is the Father as well as the Son. Hence he speaks of himself (when he speaks without a parable) as the Father. So, when the prophet announces his expected birth, saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," he not only affirms that "the government shall be upon his shoulder," and gives him the titles, "Wonderful, Counsellor, and the Mighty God," but he declares him also to be "the everlasting Father." So when the same prophet addresses him as the Father it is when the Lord Jesus Christ is meant, because he is addressed at the same time as the Redeemer: "Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting." The NAME of the Father, which the Lord teaches his people to pray may be hallowed, is the humanity in which Jehovah appeared in the world, and in which he now dwells. The humanity is called the Divine *name*, because it was in it that God was manifested, or came forth to view. That in the supreme sense Jesus is meant by the NAME of Jehovah, is evident from his own words. "Jesus said, Father, glorify thy name: there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." In this form our Lord prayed for the glorification of his humanity, because this is truly the name of God, meaning by a name that by which God is known to angels and men. The Lord prayed that the Father's name might be glorified, and he requires us to pray that it may be hallowed. God glorified his name when he glorified his humanity; and we hallow his name when we acknowledge the sanctity and divinity of his humanity. And this acknowledgment is to be made for the sake of worship. It is the glory of the Christian religion that it enables us to worship a visible God. The Essential Divinity itself—that divine principle which Jesus Christ calls *his* Father—is utterly unapproachable by angelic as well as human minds.

The humanity is the name by which the otherwise incomprehensible Divinity is known and worshipped. The end of divine worship is, that we may be like the Object of our worship. For no other purpose does God require us to worship him. Our homage can add nothing to his glory: it is only useful as it sheds his glory upon us. How reasonable, on this ground, is the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ! Not only is he a visible and comprehensible Object, but he is the Pattern, as he is the Fountain, of all perfection—a perfection that has been manifested in a life such as that by which we are to serve him, and by which we are to worship him; for we worship him when we live to his glory, as truly as when we bow in the profoundest humiliation before him. As all the good and blessing with which the human soul can be recreated solely proceeds from the Divine Humanity of the Lord, and can only be given to those who are in the sincere acknowledgment of its divinity, therefore the devout veneration of the Lord's humanity must be the centre of all true and acceptable worship. It is the peculiar sentiment of the angels of the highest heavens, and to the inmost faculties of the regenerate human mind. Of every prayer that we can offer, this sentiment must form the soul, and, whether expressed in words or not, must have existence and life within, to give acceptableness and efficacy to all our petitions. Therefore the Lord's prayer opens *its* petitions with the expression of this sentiment, in the words *Hallowed be thy name*. And who can think of the mercy of the Lord in assuming human nature even to the uttermost, or as to the lowest principles in which it exists in man in the world, for the sake of accomplishing in it a work of redemption, and of making it the medium of communicating to us the qualities of the heart and mind, as to truth and goodness, in which is salvation, which is truly the giving to us the power to become the sons of God;—who can think of such blessings, of which the Lord Jesus Christ in his Divine Humanity is the Author, without most sincerely venerating and hallowing his blessed name!

10. The sentiment of devotion which follows next in order is the petition which, also, if rightly appreciated, should express the ardent desire of every feeling heart: *Thy kingdom come*. Every one sees that the kingdom of the Lord must denote, or at least include, his divine government. And if his government truly reigned in the hearts of all, it is no less evident that the most desirable blessings would prevail among mankind. For, looking to the natural sense of the phrase alone, as obvious to every one, the coming of his kingdom must mean the establishment of that kingdom on earth. And if it

were fully established, so that no corrupt passions might rebel in the breast of any one,—much less any individuals, or whole masses of men, set themselves in opposition to the merciful government of the Lord,—what blessings must that gracious government diffuse throughout the earth! How ardently, then, viewed only in this general way, should all desire, and how sincerely should they pray, that this blessed kingdom may come.

But a kingdom implies a king. And who is the king of this kingdom? The incontrovertible testimony of Scripture is, that the kingdom belongeth to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” His kingdom upon earth, in its peculiar sense, as spoken of in the New Testament, commenced with his assumption of humanity, and his beginning openly to manifest himself therein by his mighty works of divine love and his words of divine wisdom, which his intimate union with the Divine Essence enabled him to do and to utter. The kingdom of God having commenced with the manifestation of God in the flesh, it is truly the kingdom of him who thus showed himself to mankind. His kingdom is not *of* this world, though intended also to be established in the hearts of men *in* this world. For, as is announced respecting him by the prophet, “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

But with respect to the petition, *Thy kingdom come*, as well as all other specific terms and phrases used in the Word of God, there must also be a specific sense intended, besides that natural one which results from the common sense of the words in natural language. What then is the proper spiritual idea that belongs to the word kingdom? In what respect is the Lord spiritually denominated a king? All his Divine titles refer to some distinct attribute or essential principle in his nature; so, consequently, must the title of king. But how is it that a king on earth exercises his authority over his subjects? or how is every kingdom maintained in order as such? Every kingdom is a society of men bound together by the circumstance of their living under the same laws. Under every kind of government, the kingly, that is the sovereign power, is administered by means of laws; in fact, the essential sovereignty resides in the law. We have only to apply this to the Divine government to see in what respect the Lord is called a king, and what is meant in the spiritual sense by his kingdom. How does he exercise his government but by his divine laws? and what are these laws but the laws of his divine order? And what are these but the dictates of his divine truth?

These laws are the immutable appointments of infinite wisdom grounded in infinite love. Love being his essence, he cannot will anything but the purest good: and wisdom being in his essence, in perfect union with love, he cannot aim at the accomplishment of his purposes by any but the best and wisest means. And his love and wisdom being infinite, he sees from eternity to eternity what the best and the wisest means are. The consequence is, that his laws are as eternal and immutable as his own love and wisdom, or as himself. To be laws of his divine truth they cannot be otherwise; for truth itself can admit of no variation. As the Author, then, of the laws of eternal truth, and as administering the government of heaven and of his church, of the human race, and of the universe, according to them, the Lord is called a King; and his government,—the order and course of such administration, and the beings who are the subjects of it, are denominated his kingdom. In praying, then, *Thy kingdom come*, we particularly pray that the government of the Lord's divine truth, grounded as it is in divine goodness, may be established both in our own hearts and in the hearts of mankind at large. And as the aspiration, "Hallowed be thy name," is pre-eminently the sentiment of the celestial angels, and of the celestial degree of man's mind, so the petition, *Thy kingdom come*, is pre-eminently the sentiment of the spiritual angels, or of the spiritual degree of the mind. These spiritual angels are themselves called "kings," while the celestial are called "priests." The heaven in which the spiritual dwell is specifically the kingdom for whose coming we are taught to pray. To become the subjects of this kingdom every thought must be brought into obedience to the divine truth of the Lord, and he himself, by the laws of his order, which are the truths of his Word, must reign with unresisted authority throughout our souls. Not only so: his laws must be loved, and thence *willingly* obeyed. When obedience is thus yielded with affection, it is accompanied with delight. How devoutly, then, and with what earnestness of desire, ought we to offer the petition, *Thy kingdom come*, making it the habitual wish of our souls!

The next petition of the Divine prayer, *Thy will be done*, may appear much the same in import as the one we have just considered. Wherever the Lord's kingdom is established, there undoubtedly his will is done; wherever his will is done, there assuredly he reigns as King, and his government is established. Yet there must be a decided distinction between the purport of one petition and the other. In a divine composition there can be no real tautology.

That absence of sameness, amid the most admirable harmony, which is apparent in the works of the Creator, must be equally characteristic of his words. What has been already said about the sense of the petition, "Thy kingdom come," will show that there is nothing approaching to a "vain repetition" in the addition of the clause, *Thy will be done*. The Divine Truth, which is the principle of the Lord's government, in the true reception of which consists the establishment of his kingdom, is evidently the proper attribute of the Divine understanding; whereas the will of the Lord must relate to the other great essential of the Divine mind: comparatively as the mind of man, who was created according to the image and likeness of God, consists of the two universal faculties of will and understanding. But as the attribute of the infinite understanding of the Lord is Divine Truth or Divine Wisdom, so his infinite will is Divine Goodness or Love. To pray that the Lord's Divine will may be done, is to pray that the benevolent, the gracious, the merciful desires, the unbounded love of our heavenly Father may take effect in moulding the hearts of men according to its own nature, and in producing the fruits of goodness in their lives. The will of God can be nothing but pure love and mercy; and it prevails in us when we are animated by no other affections than those of love to him and charity towards our neighbour; and it properly is done by us when all our conduct is regulated in conformity with these blessed principles—when we do what they declare, and nothing but what they sanction.

But this petition is marked by the circumstance that it particularly desires that the Divine will may be done on earth as well as in heaven: *Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth*. This is the order according to which the words follow each other in the original, and according to which what is superior comes first, and what is inferior follows after. That the Divine will is done in heaven no one can doubt; that it ought to be done on earth, and that this ought to be our ardent desire, is no less obvious. But heaven also denotes not only the heaven without, but also the heaven within—the internal man—and consequently the earth denotes the external man; and it is the external man which requires to be brought into obedience, and conformed to the Lord's will, being by natural inheritance in a state of contrariety and rebellion. When the Lord's will is *thus* done on earth as it is in heaven, the regeneration of man is complete; and without it he is not qualified for any of the mansions of heaven. This petition seems, then, to contain the peculiar senti-

ment of those in the heavenly kingdom who occupy the lowest of the three general mansions assigned to the blest, and through which the Lord, and heaven in general, flow into the world and into men on earth. The angels of this heaven are particularly in the principle of obedience. Their especial life is in *doing* the Lord's will; and through them the conformity of the external man, in those who are regenerated, to the same holy determination is more especially carried on. In order that we may experience the Lord's saving operation, and be prepared for a place in his heavenly kingdom, our prayer must most devoutly be, *Thy will be done, as in heaven so upon the earth.* There is a principle of our internal man of which this is the proper sentiment. We must allow it to be opened, and must thence look continually to our Father in the heavens for the conformity of our external man to the spirit of the petition. We must, to this end, join determination to goodness in life and act with our aspirations towards heaven, never ceasing till the blessed fruit is experienced, and, doing the Lord's will on earth, we are prepared for that heaven where it is done spontaneously and unceasingly for ever.

11. The petition of the divine prayer which we are now to consider is one that expresses our constant dependence on the bounty of our heavenly Father. *Give us this day our daily bread.* This forms the middle petition of the Lord's prayer: above it, all relates to the Lord and his kingdom; below it, all relates to ourselves and the world. In the first three petitions we address our Father in heaven; we pray that his name may be hallowed, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as in heaven. In the last three petitions we pray for forgiveness, for protection against or support in temptation, and for deliverance from evil. In the first three petitions we look, as it were, above us to the Lord and heaven; in the last we look below us to the world and hell. The present petition—*Give us this day our daily bread*—occupies the middle place, as it appears to be of an intermediate character.

Now the reason of this change of strain, so to speak, in the varying petitions of the prayer—of its passing from the contemplation of the highest good and blessedness, by a regular gradation, to the lowest evil and misery, is because it is so framed as to be adapted to the whole nature, faculties, and composition of man, from first to last. It is the production of Him who knoweth how "fearfully and wonderfully we are made," and in whose "book all our members are written." It therefore expresses the sentiments both of

that part of our spiritual and mental constitution by virtue of which, if duly opened, we become inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom, and of that also by the abuse of which, when unreformed, we find our sad home in the realms of darkness. We have mentioned that the petitions of the first class contain in an especial manner the devotional sentiments of the various orders of angelic beings, and also of the corresponding provinces and powers of the mind of man, which are those that belong to what is called in theology the internal man. In the heavenly kingdom the Lord is all in all; and so also in everything belonging to the internal man. Therefore, in the class of petitions which we have already considered, there is such a direction of thought and affection to the Lord as prevents the appearance of any other idea. So in the last class of petitions we have the devotional sentiments, not certainly of the inhabitants of the infernal kingdom—for there no such sentiments can exist—but we have in those petitions the devotional feelings of the various faculties and provinces of the external man, as regenerated or regenerating, or the feelings of the man himself when contemplating this part of his nature, and the liabilities which he derives from it. For it is that part of man's nature, or mental frame, which is denominated, in the language of theology, the external man, which alone is subject to evils, is defiled with them, or is susceptible of them. Without it, a finite intelligent being, or accountable creature, could not have been produced; and having it, the necessity of obtaining the removal of its evils, and protection against the ruin to which it, and the man who makes it his all, is exposed, prevents us in our supplications at the throne of grace from abiding wholly in the contemplation of the Lord and his perfections, and obliges us to have respect also to our own deficiencies, infirmities, and dangers.

Distinct, however, from these last great constituents of the frame of human beings—the external and internal man—is the rational faculty or principle; or rather, it is an intermediate which partakes of both. This is the highest seat of man's conscious perception while he lives in the world; and it is given him, that by means of it, as a rational free agent, he may be capable of appropriating the things that belong to the internal man, and thus have his internal man opened and prepared for heaven, which takes place in proportion as the external man is taught obedience, and is made what the Scripture calls regenerate, by the removal of its evils. The rational faculty of man, then, ought to be in the perpetual desire to receive and appropriate good from the Lord, with every help requisite for these objects.

Here, then, our constant prayer must be, *Give us this day our daily bread*: which clause we are now particularly to consider.

The exact literal sense of this passage has been a subject of great controversy among the learned, the word here translated *daily* being formed by the evangelists themselves, and existing in no other work than the gospels, and in them only in this place, and in the corresponding passage in Luke. It is only, therefore, from the etymology of the term, and from the sense required by the context, that any conclusion can be formed as to its meaning. In the Latin Vulgate it is rendered super-substantial; but this is rather a spiritual than a literal sense. Others, with our translators, have rendered it daily, not that there is any direct reference to days in the original, but because no modern language can accurately express what the original term implies. The original term, according to what appears to be its most probable etymology, denotes that which is suited to, or required for, our substance or being; thus, when joined to bread, the phrase signifies, the bread which is for our substance, being, or subsistence. This is our necessary bread; and the idea of our necessary bread is not badly, though not literally conveyed by the phrase—*our daily bread*.

It is plain, that in praying for our daily bread, the word *bread* must have, even in the literal sense, a wider signification than one article of food. It is used figuratively to denote food in general, and indeed all that is necessary to the maintenance of life. Yet after all, this is not what is truly meant by the divine words. The whole purport of the divine exhortations which follow is to withdraw us from a regard to natural things, which are promised to be given freely where superior blessings are duly regarded. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Doubtless we ought to look to the Lord as the Author of all our natural comforts, to acknowledge with gratitude his mercy in bestowing them, and to look to him for their continuance. But what he wishes us to desire with earnestness, and to ask of him as an indispensable means of obtaining, is the good, and the spiritual gifts in general, which are requisite to our spiritual support—to the life and nourishment of our souls. This is the spiritual sense which the word "bread" contains throughout the whole of the Word of God. Its proper spiritual sense is good, or goodness. For as bread is that which nourishes the body, so real good from the Lord is the proper nourishment of the soul. And when, as here, bread in the natural sense signifies all food in general, and not only so, but everything

necessary for the support of bodily life, it denotes in the spiritual sense not good simply, but truth also, and these in all the varieties, and under every form, suited to our spiritual state. Hence we say, "Give us *this day* our daily bread:" for by days are signified, in the spiritual sense, states through which we pass, or in which we are. And when the idea of succession of days is involved in the natural expression—for we are to pray every day—the idea of eternity, of succession of states without end, is also included. What then we are earnestly to desire when we say to our heavenly Father, *Give us this day our daily bread*, is that he would bestow upon us every spiritual good and gift necessary, as our varying states require, to the support of our spiritual life, and to our well-being in and to eternity. Among other things, the regulation of our thoughts, the supplying us with profitable subjects of thought and affection, is particularly involved in the petition; for these constitute in a particular manner the food of the mind. The Lord continually gives the angels *what to think*; and thus do they receive from him their daily bread. When we offer up this form of words we should desire to partake of the same privilege. But in using this petition, what do we not pray for, when the Lord himself is the bread of life, the true bread that came down from heaven, to give life unto the world? He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. Daily should we look up to him as the source and the substance of all good for our needful supply. And knowing that he still comes down from heaven as the bread of life, that we may eat and not die, causing his love and truth to descend upon our hearts, as the manna descended upon the wilderness around the camp of Israel, let us gather it, and gather it daily, that we may go on by the strength of this angel's food in our journey to the promised land.

12. The petition which now demands our consideration is that in which we are directed to pray, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*. This, in more respects than one, may be regarded as one of the most remarkable of the whole series of sacred supplications. That every human being stands in need of forgiveness at the hands of his Divine Judge; or that no one can stand up and claim the rewards of eternal life as matter of right, pleading the unforfeited title of undeviating obedience and holiness; but that all must receive a favourable decision of their final lot as matter of grace and mercy, there can be few so blinded by self-love and self-conceit as not to be disposed most humbly to acknowledge. "There is no man that sinneth not—In many things we all offend—All have sinned and come short of the

glory of God," are declarations of the Old and New Testaments, to the truth of which every one must feelingly assent. And none can be humbled with the consciousness that he is thus a debtor—a sinner—without most earnestly desiring that his deficiencies and offences may not be brought against him, but may be covered over with the mantle of forgiveness. Without forgiveness for what we have done amiss, accorded from pure mercy, dark indeed were the prospect which we should have to look upon in eternity. Accordingly, in some form or other, supplications for forgiveness form a principal part in the devotional exercises, or religious worship, of every people, and of every individual that cherishes any feeling of religion whatever. "Forgive us our debts" is the humble supplication of all. But to this simple sentiment, however briefly or verbosely expressed, all petitions of merely human composition for the forgiveness of sins would, it may be presumed, be confined. Few persons, conscious of being sinners, would think of asking forgiveness on the ground that they had forgiven others. Forgiveness absolute, and in all respects unconditional, is what we should regard as most agreeable, and at the same time most suitable to our condition. In framing the petition for ourselves, our natural inclination would not lead us, and regard for our own interest would not suffer us, to say, "Forgive us our debts, *as we also forgive our debtors.*" Yet this is the form in which we are directed to prefer our entreaty in this divinely communicated prayer. Here, then, is a feature in the prayer, given for use by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, which is truly remarkable, and of most weighty consideration. A form of forgiveness which, if invented by ourselves, would be presumptuous, is by him enjoined as of indispensable necessity. Using it after his direction, all idea of presumption in it disappears. And how momentous is the instruction which remains in its stead. Forgiveness of our debts, upon condition of our forgiving our debtors, is still of free grace and mercy on the part of the Lord; for our disposition to forgive others is itself the fruit of divine grace. Conditional forgiveness is grace for grace. But though forgiveness of our sins is pure mercy on the Lord's part, even where a condition is annexed to it, how truly salutary is it calculated to be to us, that we should be reminded of the condition in a way the most likely to produce its proper effect on our minds. The condition annexed to forgiveness must, in the very nature of things, be an indispensable one; for how can it be possible that we can obtain forgiveness of our sins past, while we continue to make them sins present? To pray for forgiveness of our sins, without cherishing the full purpose of desisting from them, and seriously

endeavouring to do so, is mere mockery and vain babbling. The cherishing feelings of revenge against those who have injured us, is one of those sins which, while we continue to entertain and practise them, cannot be forgiven. But, plain as this is in itself, our self-love would here be very apt to blind us, and prevent us from making the discovery: it is, therefore, of mercy that the Lord makes the discovery, and reminds us of it continually, by continuing the acknowledgment of it with the very words of his prayer itself.

But what is the reason that our forgiveness of those who are deficient in the discharge of their duty to us, or who trespass against us, is made the condition on which alone we are encouraged to hope for forgiveness ourselves? And what is the proper meaning of the forgiveness of sins? The forgiveness of others is made, in the literal sense of the petition, the ground of our obtaining forgiveness, because no one can truly forgive those who injure him, so as to regard them with perfect complacency and kindness of heart, except in proportion as the love of self and the love of the world, which are the roots of all evil, have ceased to exercise a preponderating influence over him, and thus in proportion as evils in general are removed from his affections, and consequently from his practice. The Lord instructs us, in the beatitudes, that the merciful obtain mercy; and on the same principle we are here taught that the forgiving obtain forgiveness. This shows us what the nature of forgiveness truly is. It does not consist in the pronouncing of a pardon by the Lord. If this were sufficient to enable the sinner to enjoy the blessing intended, every child of man would receive it. Jesus Christ, who is mercy in its very essence, could refuse it to none. But how can sins be forgiven, so as to free us from their deplorable consequences, unless they are at the same time removed—removed from their seat in the affections, desisted from in the habit of our lives? The removal of evils is what we ought to think of when we pray for their forgiveness. As we, by Divine aid, desist from and remove them in desire and practice, they are truly remitted to us by the Lord, who then removes them also from our affections and thoughts. The desire for the Divine aid for this purpose is expressed when we say, "Forgive us our debts:" the acknowledgment of the necessity of our own fighting against and desisting from them is implied when we add, "as we also forgive our debtors." If this be our prayer and our practice, we shall assuredly obtain from the Lord the blessing of complete forgiveness.

13. The next petition of the Lord's prayer, *Lead us not into temptation*, is not free from difficulty. Many have found in it what appears

to contradict their apprehensions of the Divine nature and the economy of the Lord's dispensations in regard to men, while leading them through the wilderness of this world to their home in heaven. In the first place, the words seem to imply that when man falls into temptation the Lord is the author of it; when yet genuine doctrine informs us that God tempts no man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. Another apparent difficulty is, that, as no man that is saved can avoid undergoing temptation, and as even the Saviour himself, when engaged in the work of glorifying his humanity, was "in all points tempted as we are," it seems extraordinary that this prayer would seem to deprecate the idea of being exposed to temptations in any shape. A general and satisfactory answer will probably be given to both these difficulties when the remarkable peculiarity we have already noticed is kept in view—namely, that its various petitions have a specific reference to the various constituent principles of the human mind. Now, it is only through the medium of the lower principles of the natural man that we can be assailed with temptations strictly and properly so called. They originate from evil spirits, who delight in falsities grounded in evil lusts, and they are carried on, on their part, by the injection of false suggestions into the thoughts. But the part of the human mind which is liable to be thus influenced is that which, if separated from the higher principles, and made the chief seat of man's affections and thoughts, gives him a quality of the same gross and evil nature, and sinks him after death to the state of those who thus delight to destroy the soul. It is, in fact, the part of man that thinks according to the apprehension of the external senses which is the inlet by which temptations approach him; and the apprehensions of this, which may be properly called the sensual part of the mind, in regard to divine and spiritual subjects, are of themselves naturally imperfect and obscure. Hence, those whose minds are not elevated above the sphere of the senses, when they acknowledge and worship God, have but gross and defective notions respecting him. They regard him, indeed, as a Being of infinite power; but not having so clear an idea of his unmixed goodness, they suppose him to be the author of everything they experience—of evil and misery, as well as of good and happiness. And this idea, though not agreeable to the genuine truth, is yet useful to such persons, as leading them to think of the necessity of rendering such an all-powerful Being propitious, by attending to his commandments. Accordingly, the idea of God as thus the Author of all things, though not the true idea, yet being one of the natural apprehensions of the human mind, and, when

entertained in simplicity, adapted to produce beneficial effects, is what may be called an apparent truth, though not a genuine truth. According to such apparent truths, or according to the natural apprehensions of mankind, when their minds are not elevated above the sphere of the ideas suggested by the senses, many things are expressed in the literal sense of the word. Thus, in regard to this very subject of evil apparently coming from the Lord as well as good, we find the Lord himself saying, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things," (Isaiah xlv. 7.) Here the Lord speaks in the letter according to the apprehensions of the simple, the genuine truth being, not that darkness and evil come from the Lord, but that they cannot take place without his permission, which is conceded, not for the promotion of evil, but for its abatement and removal, and thus for the promotion of good. In severe trials it is scarcely possible to abstain from thinking according to the appearance: and the afflicted person is oppressed with the apprehension that the Lord takes part against him, and thus that the temptation is actually induced by him. Still, this is not the real truth; and this, in states of any degree of illustration, the mind perceives. Accordingly, in all ages, from the earliest times of Christianity, as is evinced by the writings of those called the fathers of the church, the true sense of this clause has been explained to be, "Suffer us not to be overcome by temptation."

It has sometimes appeared to us, from the mode of expression in the original, that the force of the words which we translate, "lead us not into," is nearly equivalent to that of "rescue us from." For in the original the term denoting *not* is in juxtaposition with that signifying *lead*, and precedes it, though the genius of our language does not permit us to put the words in the same order, and to say "Not lead us into temptation." Now it is remarked by critics, that in the idiom both of the Old and New Testaments the particle *not* often coalesces with the word that follows, so as to form one idea, and as it were one word, being the contrary of that which the other word would convey by itself: only this happens more frequently with nouns than with verbs. Thus the translators in the common version have very properly given the words of the Lord to Martha in this form: "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In the original it is, "shall not die for ever," being equivalent in sense to "never." If, then, we consider, in this part of the Lord's prayer, *not* as coalescing with *lead*, the sense of *not lead into* must be, *rescue from*. But this is offered with diffidence as a suggestion, it never, so far as we are

aware, having occurred to any one else. All agree that the true sense of the passage is to this effect, though they have not deduced it, in the same manner, from the very words. And if this be the true sense of the passage, whether literally expressed or not—if the idea intended by it, when viewed in the light of genuine truth, and above the veil of appearances, is, “rescue us from temptation,” the other objection also disappears, which is, that since temptations are both unavoidable and necessary to salvation, it seems strange that we should be directed to pray not to be exposed to them. Here, again, several of the literal commentators have seen that the words cannot, in their real design, be intended to deprecate all approach of temptation, but only to entreat that we may not be immersed in it, or swallowed up by it. And this, they say, is involved in the term *into*—that according to the peculiar force of this expression, as here used, to enter *into* temptation is to be overcome and carried away by it. Thus to pray, as Augustine of old expresses the sense of the petition, “Suffer us not to be led into temptation,” is quite different from what it would be if we were to say, “Suffer us not to be assailed by temptation;” yet it is through supposing these two phrases to be exactly synonymous that all the difficulty has arisen. The Lord does not direct us to pray not to be exposed to the assaults of temptation, because this would be the same thing as to pray not to be made regenerate, since without temptation regeneration cannot be accomplished; but we are most earnestly to pray not to be suffered to be led *into* temptation, because if we do come *into* it, in the Scripture sense of the phrase, we become a one with the tempting agency, by adopting the false and evil suggestions thence presented, and so confirming them that they cannot be removed. Such, assuredly, is the genuine idea intended to be produced by this mode of expression, though, doubtless, when suffering temptation, the mind is sufficiently ready to desire to have it removed, or to be spared the trial altogether. The only proper sense in which the prayer is authorized by the dictates of genuine truth is, “Suffer us not to be overcome in temptation,” or, “Rescue us from it by giving us the victory.”

We come now to the last petition of this divinely dictated prayer, *But deliver us from evil*. As the divine form of words delivered by the Lord, as a guide for the devotion of Christians, begins with the contemplation, attended with the veneration, of the supreme good, so does it, after passing through the whole series of intermediate sentiments in the most orderly progression, terminate with the contemplation, attended with the shuddering aversion, of the principle of evil.

As in its contemplation of the supreme good it elevates the mind to the Lord, even the Lord Jesus Christ, as being that supreme good, and excites our love for him by presenting him as the tender Father of our race, and the beneficent Author of all good to man; so, in adverting to the principle of evil, it regards it as one with the devil and with hell, and presents it as the more an object of dread and horror by identifying it with an existing being, or rather an innumerable assemblage of beings, the very principle of whose life consists in the love of destroying and doing hurt. As this prayer, in the commencement, desires that the Lord's name may be hallowed, which is the sentiment, in its most direct form, of the pure love of the Lord, so does it close with desiring to be delivered from the opposite of this principle—from evil in its deepest ground, which is the mere love of self. For it is only as self-love is removed, or ceases to exercise its baneful influence on the heart, that the love of the Lord, which is the love of pure goodness, can come into exercise and into actual existence.

Such, in a few words, is the purport of this concluding petition of the Lord's prayer, as placed in contrast or in parallelism with its first. We say, in contrast or parallelism; for the things prayed *against* in the latter clauses of the prayer are the exact opposites, respectively, of those prayed *for* in the clauses which precede; but the sentiments which breathe in these latter petitions themselves, and which deprecate the evil things adverted to, are the exact counterparts or parallels of those which rise towards the Lord, in direct aspirations for good in the former. Thus, as we have just seen, the evil prayed against in the last petition is the exact opposite of the good which is desired in the first aspiration; and thus the request, "Deliver us from evil," is the proper counterpart of the aspiration, "Hallowed be thy name." So the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," which expresses the desire to be rescued from the influence of false principles grounded in evil, is the exact counterpart of the aspiration, "Thy kingdom come," which denotes the desire for the establishment of the empire of truth grounded in goodness; just as falsity grounded in evil and truth grounded in goodness are the perfect opposites of each other. So, again, the petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors," is the proper counterpart of the aspiration, "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon the earth;" since debts and defalcations in regard to the performance of the Lord's will, or trespasses against it, are the exact opposites to the doing of it; and the sentiment which desires the forgiveness or remission of these debts is the

exact counterpart of that which desires that the Lord's will be done, or that good from him may prevail, in the external man as well as in the internal. The intermediate petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," has not another answering to it, because it is truly intermediate, partaking of the nature of both the other classes; since bread denotes everything whatever which is necessary for the support and preservation of spiritual life, and power to resist the evil by which it would be destroyed. Thus we see, further, what has been shown in explaining the several petitions, how this prayer applies to the wants and sentiments of every faculty and principle of the human mind, internal and external, from the highest to the lowest, including everything that can possibly be required for the establishing of the soul in good, and its withdrawal from evil, and thus for the highest exaltation of human nature; and is suitable for every state which man can experience in the whole process of his regeneration.

The petition now under consideration is not, like that which immediately precedes it, attended with any sort of difficulty, or liable to misapprehension; yet the particulars it involves may be set in a clearer light by explanation. First, if viewed in connection with the petition which precedes, and with which its connection is very close, "Lead us not into temptation," it tends powerfully to remove the obscurity with which this is attended, and to establish the view of its meaning which we have taken. For it is well known that it is customary in many parts of the Holy Word, particularly in those which consist of prayers or praises, to connect two clauses together in such a manner as to appear in the letter to be perfectly synonymous with each other, only expressing the same thing in other words; although such passages are in reality not synonymous, but one of them always expresses something that has relation to the principle of good, and the other to something relating to the principle of truth. To take one of a multitude—the Psalmist, addressing the Lord, says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). Though this sort of parallelism is not so observable in the Lord's prayer, the clauses of which do not run in pairs, yet it exists most perfectly in the clauses, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." *Lead us not into*, in the one clause, being exactly equivalent to *deliver us from*, in the other; whence we may conclude that the former phrase is more positive in its sense than the words as they stand in English might induce us to imagine, and that they amount in signification to *Rescue us from temptation*. So *temptation* in the one clause answers to *evil* in the other; whence, again,

we may conclude that it is not temptation, considered as a mere trial, that is the thing represented as so dreadful, but the consequence of falling in it, or being overcome by it. The *temptation* which we are to pray against coming *into* must be something equivalent to the *evil* which we pray to be delivered *from*; which would not be the case if entering *into* temptation, in Scripture phrase, meant no more than being assaulted by it. We must be assaulted by it, otherwise we can never overcome evil and falsity; and without overcoming them we can never be delivered from them. Without having our evils excited by temptation, we should be ignorant that we had any in our nature, and that which is not known cannot be removed.

But that which we specifically pray against in the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," is the power, dominion, and influence of falsity grounded in evil; but when we add, *but deliver us from evil*, we pray against the power, dominion, and influence of evil itself. This is going to the root of the tree. Evil is properly the delight and concupiscence of thinking and acting contrary to Divine order, the laws of which are summarily expressed in the precepts of the Decalogue. The seeds of all evils are inherent with every one in his natural or external man, so that the delight of them is natural to him; and if not withheld from acquiring the habit of yielding to them, he is in danger of confirming them, and becoming enslaved to their power. How ardently, then, should we pray, "Deliver us from evil!"

But, as already remarked, there is reason to believe that the idea of evil is here meant to be united with that of an evil being, or rather an assemblage of evil beings, whose very life is the love of destroying and doing hurt. The word here rendered *evil* is in a form which may equally mean the *evil one*. In the parable of the sower it is said of one class of recipients, "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart;" where the word rendered *wicked one* is the same as in the last petition of the Lord's prayer is simply rendered *evil*. The same occurs in the parable of the tares. In this petition, therefore, we pray also, "Deliver us from the evil one." In the spiritual idea evil and the devil, or what is the same thing, evil and hell, are a one; or, evil and the whole mass of evil spirits are a one, and they act as one for the destruction of the human soul. Such being the case, nothing but the divine power of the Lord can effect our deliverance. Yet we are not to suppose it is unnecessary or useless for us to attempt to use any resistance. The law of divine order is, that we resist evil or the devil, altogether as if we were able to do so of ourselves, yet heartily acknowledging that all the power of

resistance is given us from the Lord, and is the Lord in us. He who does this will not pray to be delivered from evil, or the evil one, in vain.

But, finally, evil in its deepest ground consists in self-love, which is the proper principle of man's selfhood, from which all other forms of evil have their rise and manifestation. Self-love consists essentially in the desire to rule over others—to make others subservient to ourselves; and it burns with revenge and hatred against all who do not submit. This is, in fact, the principle which reigns in the lowest hell, into which all descend who make it the ruling principle of their life here, and yield to it without check. Specifically this is the root of all evil which we pray against when we say, "Deliver us from evil." And he who completely overcomes it, and becomes regenerate even to this part of his external man, in which it has its seat, becomes after death a celestial angel, whose ruling love is the love of the Lord, and the predominant sentiment of whose heart, rising towards him, is expressed in the aspiration, "Hallowed be thy name." Such is the state of perfection and bliss which is consequent on the complete accomplishment of the prayer which entreats, "Deliver us from evil." Complete deliverance from evil, and the rejection of evil in its deepest ground, make one with exaltation into the highest angelic good and felicity.

As a close to the whole prayer are added, in the common Bible, the words, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.* But it is now the general opinion of those who have examined the subject, that this formed no part of the prayer as delivered by the Lord himself; but that it was added as a suitable expression of devotion in the liturgies of the early Christians, and was from thence taken into the text by some of the transcribers. Certain it is that the chief of the most ancient manuscripts and versions are without it; whence it was never generally received till after the Reformation. It is not contained in the Bibles used by the Roman Catholics to this day. But although the words are not, we may conclude, properly a part of the sacred formulary, the sentiments *intended* to be expressed by them ought to be that of every heart. All ought to acknowledge both that everything true, and everything good, and every blessing that we enjoy, comes from the Lord above, and to ascribe them to him in devout veneration and heartfelt gratitude.

14, 15. After delivering that divine prayer which has now been considered, the Lord returns to the subject of one of the petitions he had taught his disciples to address to the throne of mercy. The subject of that one is forgiveness. He had taught them to pray to their Father in

heaven to forgive them, as they forgave one another. He now assures them, *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Forgiveness is the only thing we are instructed to pray for conditionally. Our Lord tells us that unless we comply with the condition, our prayer will not be answered. How impressive is this lesson! There is perhaps no passion more powerful than revenge; no vice so common as unforgiveness. How quick are we to take offence—how ready to resent an injury. Yet this is the very evil our Lord singles out for reprobation, and forgiveness is the very virtue which he insists upon as the necessary channel of receiving forgiveness. “How often shall my brother offend me, and I forgive him? till seven times? I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.” We must cultivate a forgiving spirit. Forgiveness must not be an act merely, but a state—an abiding disposition to give to others that which we seek for ourselves.

16. Alms-giving and prayer are succeeded by fasting. *Moreover, when ye fast.* The Lord does not in his sermon teach his disciples to give alms, to pray, and to fast: he teaches them how to perform these necessary duties. Fasting was an institution of the Israelitish church; but no specific directions were given how to fast. We learn how they fasted. They rent their garments, and sprinkled ashes on their heads, and otherwise mortified their flesh. Yet even through their own prophets they are reproved for the manner in which they fasted, and are taught a better way. “Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Isaiah lviii. 5-7.) Even in the Old Testament we often see the spirit of the New. The Spirit looks at times through the cloud of ceremonies, and utters the broad and noble truth. The Lord’s fast is here declared to be indeed a divine institution. Not empty forms, but deeds full of charity, were the duties the Lord required of Israel in their fasts. And this is the character of fasting even under the sense of mortification. For what is the mortification which fasting implies? It is mortification of the mind, not of the body; the

abstaining from the delights of sin—from the gratification of selfish and worldly loves—from the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life. And the true sign of mortifying ourselves is in doing disinterested service to others. The mortification and the deeds of charity are indeed distinct, but they cannot be separated. We cannot do disinterested good to others without denying ourselves, and we cannot deny ourselves without doing good to others. For what is self-denial but the effort to be unselfish? Abstinence from evil in mind and practice, and thus the mortification of self and all its corrupt lusts, is what is spiritually meant by the fasting of which our Lord here speaks; and as this is always accompanied by a sense of our deficiency in ourselves, in regard to everything that is good, and by mourning and humiliation on that account, this also is included in the signification of fasting. Such fasting we are commanded not to perform *as the hypocrites* do. Indeed, such fasting cannot be performed by hypocrites at all, who only substitute something in its place for the sake of appearance. They are of *a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast.* They assume an outward appearance of mortification and austerity, being loud in the acknowledgment that they are sinners, and exhibiting such other features of external penitence as appear before the world. In the spiritual sense, the countenance and the face are the affections and thoughts of the mind, for these are expressed in them. Sadness is a state of the affections; disfigurement, of the thoughts. Assumed, not real states are here understood. Under the appearance of godly sorrow and self-abandonment they concealed callous hearts and contemptuous thoughts.

17. The true Christian is not to be like unto these hypocrites. He is to *anoint his head and wash his face.* He is to perform the duty of spiritual fasting with cheerfulness. The practice of anointing the head, common in ancient times, was representative of cheerful goodwill and social benevolence, because the oil with which it was done was a representative of all good, kindness, and love in general. And to wash the face was representative of interior purification, producing effects in a life of comeliness and order. The import of the direction is, that while practising abstinence from evils, and maintaining a constant guard against their influence, we are not to do this as a grievous requisition, rendering the mind melancholy from the opposition of the duty to its most cherished desires. We are to do it cheerfully and willingly, not with regret that we are obliged to surrender our darling evils, but only with sorrow that there should be anything in us that would plead for their retention.

18. We are not to *appear unto men to fast, but unto our Father which is in secret*. As already explained (v. 5, 6), we are not to act from truth in the external man, but from good in the internal; thus, not from self, but from the Lord. And while the hypocrite, who acts from and for the sake of self, has the poor and transient reward of a reputation for being what he is not, the true penitent will receive a reward of divine approval, and of inward peace and satisfaction. His heavenly Father, who sees what is within, will bless him with his grace. His sorrow for his evils will be within; and this cannot exist there at all in sincerity without producing a state capable of the reception of good from the Lord. The good thus appropriated, through the rejection of evil, will, after the trial is over, be productive of delight, which will be consummated in heaven, when the joy inherent in all good from the Lord will ever be communicated to him, together with the good itself from him. Thus again his happy experience will be, that his Father, *who seeth in secret, will reward him openly*.

19-21. The subject to which our Lord now directs the attention of his hearers is one that comes home to us in our every-day life, and enters into our habitual thoughts and feelings. *Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*. Every one has a general perception of what this language means, and of the lesson which the exhortation was intended to convey. The Lord teaches us that not temporal but eternal things should be the chief objects of our pursuit and affections. Those who have any real belief in their own immortality, and any sincere concern for their eternal state, must be aware of the importance of acting in conformity with this principle. The wealth of this world and the riches of heaven are to each other as the body is to the soul, and as time is to eternity. They have nothing in common. There is no proportion between them. They are connected only by correspondence. The lower was designed to be subservient to the higher. The treasures of this world are to be sought after and esteemed as things whose final cause is not on earth, but in heaven. It is true that natural things have a natural use; but this is not their only nor their principal use. Nothing that we love and pursue affects the body only, or terminates in this world. Our ends are in heaven or in hell; and there, where they begin, our works terminate, for everything returns to its origin. Nothing is better calculated than such reflections to regulate the desire and sanctify the use of temporal things, and at the same time to lead us to devote our best thoughts to the acquirement of heavenly

things, and make them the objects of our best affections. In themselves earthly treasures are corruptible and precarious. In some way the moth and the rust are ever at work upon them; and if some turn in the wheel of fortune do not rob us of them, yet death, when he comes as a thief in the night, will sweep them all away. Heavenly treasures are incorruptible and certain; and if we possess these, death, who at last deprives us of the temporal, will open the gate which introduces us into the full enjoyment of the true riches.

But there is a spiritual sense in the Lord's words. In the language of the correspondence between natural and spiritual things, riches is a term denoting the knowledge of goodness and truth, or all points of knowledge respecting spiritual subjects. The earth, in the same expressive language, denotes the external or natural man, and heaven, the internal or spiritual. Here, then, we are told how we are to proceed in regard to the knowledge of divine things with which we are brought acquainted from the Word, and from preaching, and other mediums of instruction derived from that source. We are not to lay such precious treasures up among ordinary matters accumulated in the memory of the external man, or merely to speculate upon them with the natural understanding. If we make no better use of our acquisitions than this, they are sure to be corrupted and perish, and to leave the mind as destitute of any advantage from their seeming possession as if they had never been known at all. *Moth and rust will corrupt, and thieves will break through and steal.* These denote the evil lusts and false persuasions which belong to the natural man separate from the spiritual; the tendency of which is to prevent, destroy, and render useless every acquisition of a spiritual nature which the mind may externally have obtained, to check its influence, to change or pervert its tendency, and at last completely to take it away. For whatever is merely deposited in the memory, and is not made matter of life and practice, never enters the spirit, or the man himself that lives after death. In this state the proper and natural state of the person, which is one of evil and falsity, is continually endeavouring to break through from without, as thieves are said to do, and to remove and abolish the knowledges respecting heaven and divine things, and every spiritual appearance which the mind had externally taken up, and had not truly appropriated by love and life. Nothing of the kind can be permanent, or can accompany man into eternity, which has thus been admitted into the outer chambers or the threshold of the mind. Every appearance, every possession, every apparent intellectual attainment, will then be abolished, and

the man will remain in eternity the mere subject of those unholy and purely earthly attachments which he had here supremely cherished. These treasures, therefore—those sacred and, as they are intended to be, saving knowledges—are to be *laid up in heaven*,—to be made truly the possessions of the internal man, or to be established in man's spirit, where no evil influence can come to hurt them, and where he will retain the enjoyment of them for ever. This is done by the good to which they point and lead being made the supreme object of regard. The *heart being in them*, or the will being conformed to them, will be elevated with them; and the life of heaven being established in the soul, man will live in heaven for ever. *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* How true is this! That only is a treasure in which the ruling affections of the heart are interested. How important is it to make spiritual things the chief objects of our affections, which we do when we lay them up in our inner man, and make them the delight and end of our life!

22, 23. From the heart the Lord comes to the eye. *The light of the body is the eye.* More properly, *The lamp of the body is the eye.* What a lamp is to a room, the eye is to the body. The eye is not itself luminous; it is only a recipient of light. Or it may, like the lamp, be considered as an instrument that may be the means of lighting up the body. But its power of lighting the body depends on the state of the organ. *If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* The term single, or simple, unmixed or uncompounded, as the word properly signifies, applied to the eye, means clear, pure, or perfect—free from anything that obstructs or distorts the vision. When the eye is thus adapted to the proper discharge of its functions, small as the organ is, it is all that is requisite to give the perfect enjoyment of light to the whole man: it is as if the body were all eye, so completely is he blessed with the perception of light, and all the beauties and glories that it reveals. *But if the eye be evil, the whole body shall be full of darkness.* If the eye be afflicted with any malady or malformation that deprives it of its functions, the whole body is plunged into darkness. *And if the light* (and here the word for light itself is used) *that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*—that is, naturally, if that in us which should be the perception of light be only a perception of darkness, great indeed is that darkness, for the whole body is full of darkness.

But what is its application?—what the true lesson conveyed by it to the soul? The sense of the whole depends upon the spiritual signification of the eye. And of this there is a common perception.

The eye is an obvious and natural symbol of the understanding. There is an exact correspondence between them. Sight is in a lower sphere what understanding is in a higher. As the eye is the lamp of the body, the understanding is the lamp of the mind; because, by another obvious correspondence, light, or anything that gives light, is to the natural world what truth is to the intellectual and moral world. Here then we see that the manner in which a person will enjoy the perception of truth will be according to the state of his faculty of understanding; just as a man's perception of light depends on the state of his eye. His understanding must be sound, or must be in the state which is most accurately described by singleness of eye. The understanding is single when, in all that it meditates, it has good as its end, and thus when the truth it knows and thinks is grounded in goodness in the will. According to this beautiful, plain, and obviously true meaning of the Lord's words, we are taught that the only way to have the mind filled with perceptions of divine truth, and to live in the cheering radiance of its heavenly light, is to maintain in the understanding, in all we think, and thence in all we say or do, a constant regard to the principle of goodness, of charity and love, instead of allowing our faith to be defiled by the contaminating influence of selfish and worldly love. Then our whole body will be full of light—the body here denoting the whole mind or the whole man. But if the eye be evil, if the understanding be perverted or disordered by the mixture of evil ends, there can be no true perception of divine things, no genuine enjoyment of the light of pure truth, but the mind will be occupied with false persuasions, regarded as true, and the truths that are known will be falsified and perverted, which is the worst darkness of all. This is the sort of darkness which is here alluded to, which is the reason of the solemn exclamation at the close, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" In these divine words of our Lord we are presented with the reason of all the darkness in respect to the things of his Word and kingdom which prevails among mankind; and the true ground is opened to us of all determined opposition to divine truth. When men truly love darkness rather than light, it is because their deeds are evil. On the other hand, the love of truth has its true ground in goodness. "A good understanding have all they that do his commandments."

24. The two preceding subjects, combined with the present, may be said to teach singleness of heart, singleness of eye, and singleness of choice and action. *No man can serve two masters.* Naturally it may

be possible, but this must be when the service required by one is not incompatible with that demanded by the other. In the present case the masters are two whom the metaphor regards as being opposite in their wills, and therefore in their commands. The two masters are the figures for God and mammon, who are opposite as light and darkness, as good and evil. These two no one man can serve at the same time. *For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.* There can be no compromise between the service required by the one and that demanded by the other. Some, indeed, are disposed to make the attempt; but it can only be intended to please men. There can be no true knowledge of the service that each requires where there is any idea or attempt to combine them. What we require to love in the one we require to hate in the other. The love of God and the love of the world are opposite and discordant. But the opposition and discordance are in these loves as ruling loves or ends of life. We cannot serve any spiritual master without loving him. But how can we *serve God* from the love of God, and at the same time *serve mammon* from the love of mammon? God and mammon are not indeed incompatible if we make mammon our servant instead of our master. Our Lord in another place instructs us to make unto ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. And this we do when we serve God, and make wealth subservient to the end which the service of God implies. All lingering between two objects and halting between two opinions is dangerous. If we attempt to unite two things, so destructive of each other, in our own minds, we attempt to unite light and darkness, heaven and earth; and the consequence must be the destruction of all true life in ourselves. Let us be warned, therefore, to serve that God who deserves as well as requires our service; and who will richly reward us for our singleness of life, flowing from singleness of will and understanding.

25. The exhortation with which our Lord follows up these instructive lessons, and with which he closes what may be called this branch of his discourse, is one of the most important, and one of the most beautiful and persuasive, to be found in the whole of revelation. *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?* It is impossible to expose in more striking and affecting terms than the Lord does in the exhortation of which these words are a part, the futility of those cares under the influence of which people rush into self-love and the

love of the world, and make external things the primary objects of their attachment: it is impossible, by more touching and beautiful considerations, to urge to a reliance on Divine Providence. But we are not hence to suppose that all thought about our future well-being in this world, and all provident foresight in the disposal of our temporal affairs, are hereby prohibited. To imagine so, and to act accordingly, would be to fall into fanaticism, and to go the directest way to incapacitate ourselves for the performance of uses in the world. All we are prohibited from doing is, to set our hearts upon worldly and external things, to give in to such anxieties as are incompatible with reliance on the Lord, and so to depend upon our own prudence as to disown and disregard the Divine Providence. It is not all thought and care whatever about things future that is forbidden, but all undue solicitude, all such anxiety as unavoidably arises when natural and worldly things are loved in the first place, and are made the primary objects of pursuit. And this, indeed, the Lord's exhortation literally expresses; for the word "thought," at the time our translation was made, meant "anxiety," which correctly expresses the sense of the original.

But the mind has, and needs, its provision as well as the body; and in the spiritual sense it is in regard to this provision that the Lord here speaks. For here, also, man may look too much to himself, and too little to the Lord, and may seek to obtain that by his own self-derived power and self-derived intelligence which is only to be received by gift from his all-provident Father. Every spiritual endowment and communication that man can have or enjoy, conducive to the life and well-being of his soul, and thus to his welfare in eternity, is a free gift to him from the Lord, and is by no means self-derived. All desire, then, to procure such things by one's own power, and all anxiety on that account, are here condemned in the spiritual sense of the natural images made use of. In this point of view we proceed to consider the subject.

Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? The life and the body are to be the chief objects of our concern, not the food by which the former is nourished, and the dress by which the latter is clothed. Yet obviously the life cannot be sustained without nourishment, nor the body without clothing. These, however, are to be given us from the Lord; whatever, for this purpose, we should take from self, would be destructive of the true life and well-being of both—yea, would deprive both, properly considered, of their very existence. The life is the life of the soul, as to its intellectual faculties, which can only be sustained by

principles of good affections and true faith and intelligence, which are the gifts of the Lord; and anything self-derived cannot be really either good or true. By the body is here specifically meant the good of love and of the will; and the clothing of the body is truth investing such good, or the sentiments as to spiritual subjects which spring out of and harmonize with it: these again are derived from the Lord alone; for if from man himself, they are founded in and compose the clothing of his own self-love, not of any love of goodness. These are provided and given freely to us by the Lord when we regard the life of the understanding itself, and the love of goodness, as the things to be chiefly cultivated and pursued, and when we look to the Lord for that purpose, applying ourselves to the use of the means which the Lord has provided—that is, to the practice of the commandments. This is all that we have to do—and it cannot be too often repeated—to look to the Lord and to keep his commandments. Doing this, we may safely leave all the rest to him, assured that our minds will be continually replenished with every affection of goodness, and every perception of truth suited to our states, while we abstain from the desire to draw anything of this sort from a self-derived origin, but live perpetually in the conviction that the life is more than meat and the body than raiment, and that he who has given the greater will also give the less, provided we thus depend upon him.

26. The Lord confirms the truth of this doctrine, and encourages us to rely upon him, by an argument (and a most affecting one it is) drawn from the case of the bird. *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?* Considered only as a natural image and comparison, this is truly beautiful, and most appropriate to the subject which it is introduced to illustrate; but when the spiritual import of it is seen, it becomes more beautiful still. Fowls, or birds, throughout the Word of God, are mentioned to describe things intellectual, such as the thoughts upon whatever subject—to which they answer by a beautiful and obvious analogy. They have the power of raising themselves towards heaven, and soaring aloft in the sky, as our thoughts have the power of rising above earthly and external things, and soaring into most exalted contemplations. They are affected in a wonderful manner by the light, so as to be in a state of life and activity, or of torpor and sleep, according to its presence or absence. And light, we have seen (v. 22), is the natural emblem of truth, which in some form or degree is what gives activity to the thoughts. Now, nothing is so irrepressible as the

thoughts. So long as we are alive and awake, our thoughts are incessantly in exercise. It is always something of love or affection, connected with the object of the thoughts at any particular time, that puts them into activity, and sustains them in their powers of flight. And this is never absent. We cannot, if we wished it, cease to think, because the love which animates us, whatever be its nature, cannot be withdrawn without death; and to suppress it is entirely beyond the reach of our power. The reason is, because the Lord, as being Love itself, is also Life itself; and he imparts life to us by imparting to us love; and by giving us love he continually supplies us with the food of thought. Thus our thoughts are entirely kept alive, without their doing anything themselves to cause it, by the fire of love with which they are nurtured by the Lord, as our heavenly Father feedeth the fowls of the air. It is true, indeed, that we are often influenced by love of an evil nature, which calls forth evil thoughts; and nothing of evil can have its origin in the Lord. But that love which flows forth from the Lord as the love of goodness and truth is perverted by man himself, when wicked, into its opposite: thus the love, considered abstractedly from its evil quality, is from the Lord; the evil form which it assumes is by perversion in the man. Thus it is from the Lord that every man derives the faculty of thought, and that this faculty is nourished and kept alive; the evil use that he makes of it alone is from himself. But the wonderful provision by which it is ordered that thought can never cease but with consciousness of existence, is purely from the Lord, who thus alone spiritually feedeth the fowls of the air, and maintains them in life and being. The fowls, therefore, as denoting the thoughts, are said not to sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns: by which images is meant, to provide for their own support by the acquisition of knowledge, the insemination of these in the mind, and the storing of them in the memory. These operations are necessary to afford materials for thinking, but not for the existence of thought itself; for thought, as already remarked, is in existence and activity from the first dawn of consciousness, purely by virtue of the principle of love which exists in every human being; and the matters of knowledge which the mind acquires in early life, first by the medium of the senses, and afterwards by instruction from others, are things on which thought are exercised, and are provided for the purpose, but are not the products of the thoughts themselves. If, then, the Lord provides for the constant existence of thought, will he not, as of still more importance, provide for his rational creatures, that look to him, everything necessary

to their support and well-being as spiritual and immortal existences? As such, are not men much superior to fowls? Are not the spiritual gifts, the endowments of spiritual love and wisdom, by which we properly are human creatures, better than the mere thoughts which we enjoy in a natural manner, independently of our character as to spiritual advantages? Should we not then rely that he who has so wonderfully provided that we should ever think, whether our thoughts be true or false, or good or evil, will equally provide for us all that can be necessary to the perfection of the higher endowments of our nature, and every good, both spiritual and natural, that we ever can stand in need of, if we place our life and good in the first place, and look to him for its support and preservation? And can it be supposed that since, by our own power alone, we can neither cause ourselves to think nor cease from thinking, we can derive from self anything that is truly good for us, and especially what is necessary for our spiritual welfare?

27. Such is the argument which the Lord urges, by his appeal to the case of the fowls of the air, when spiritually understood: with which he connects another strong appeal, expressed in the words, *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature.* By the stature is here spiritually meant our spiritual stature, or our state as to the things of love and wisdom of a heavenly nature, which every one sees is not to be increased in improvement by anxieties—by seeking any resources in ourselves, instead of drawing all from the care, mercy, and providence of the Lord, from whom alone all good can flow. As our spiritual stature is altogether according to the measure of excellent graces which we have received from the Lord, to think to add to it by any other means, and especially by such means as involve a casting away of all reliance on the Lord, from whom alone the growth can come, were absurdity indeed. The thing is manifestly impossible: so, if we are sincerely desirous to maintain a state of spiritual life, of heavenly intelligence, and of the will of goodness, we must look to the Lord for the proper nutriment, and rely on his providence to supply it to us.

28, 29. The Divine Instructor now takes up the subject respecting care and anxiety about raiment. *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* This passage owes its exquisite beauty, unparalleled in the whole circle of human composition, to the images used being correspondences of spiritual things, and communi-

cating with heaven. According to this correspondence of natural with spiritual things, raiment, or garments, throughout the Word of God are mentioned to denote, specifically, such principles of truth in the mind as flow from the state of good in which a man is principled, and which occasion such language and conduct as are the natural and spontaneous manifestations of the good within. This is the signification of raiment, or garments, in a genuine sense; for truth is that in which goodness manifests its existence and presence, as the affections of the will first come clearly to light to the man himself in the perceptions and thoughts of the understanding. Sometimes, however, garments are mentioned to denote the mere faith or profession of truth, separate from all proper connection with the will or affections of the wearer; and sometimes, like most other natural images employed in the Word, they are mentioned in an opposite sense, to denote principles of falsity grounded in evil. In their genuine sense they are attributed to the Lord himself: as when it is said that he covereth himself with light as with a garment. Here, because light is the most obvious symbol of truth, it is said to compose the garment of the Lord, as flowing forth from the body of his divine love, and truth being in him truth itself. From the same cause, when the Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured, not only did his face "shine as the sun," to express the ardour of his divine love, but his raiment became "white as the light," to represent the inexpressible beauty of his divine truth. It is impossible to desire more conclusive evidence to evince that garments, or raiment, in their most proper and genuine sense, denote truth flowing from and investing the principle of good, as garments invest the body.

If this be the case—if all truth, to be genuine, or, to belong properly to the man himself who makes profession of it, be grounded in a principle of good, must flow from the feelings of love and charity incorporated in his own mind—we see how truly the Lord says that the body, as denoting such a principle of good, must be more than raiment; as truly so, though in a case of immensely more importance, as the natural body is of more dignity and importance than the clothes that cover it. We see, also, how justly we are warned not to be anxious about raiment, since no spiritual raiment that we could procure by any anxiety of our own could be of that genuine kind which forms the proper investiture of the principle of goodness. Let this only be diligently attended to, and the other will follow of course, as a free gift from our heavenly Father. Therefore the Lord illustrates the doctrine by the case of the lillies of the field, which neither toil nor spin, be-

cause by these are represented such perceptions of truth as are of a celestial origin, or such as spring spontaneously in the mind of him who has attained what may be called the celestial degree in the regenerative process, so as to have his mind continually recreated with beautiful perceptions of truth and wisdom springing forth from the ever-varying play of celestial affections. To be able thus to see truth intuitively—to have its sweetest and most beautiful perceptions spontaneously opening in the mind—is a very different state from that of those who arrive at it first by the accumulation of facts as matters of knowledge and faith, and by the inferences of reason deduced from these facts. To express this difference, it is said of these lilies that they toil not, neither do they spin, because by toiling is spiritually meant the accumulation of truths merely as facts, or things known by study and learning; and by spinning is meant the composing of coherent systems of doctrine or opinion by reasonings from such facts. In this process there is much of man himself mixed up with the acquisitions he may have made; in the other, all is from the Lord. They differ also in intrinsic excellence and in genuine beauty, just as the works of man and the works of God. The works of man possess no other beauty than that which is exhibited on the surface. The most exquisite painting is inwardly nothing but a rude assemblage of earthy matters, having no correspondence to the beauty of form and colour which the artist's skill has portrayed upon the surface. The most perfect statue still has no beauty but that which is artificial, there being, again, no correspondence between the particles of stone or metal which compose its substance, and the exterior shape which, by the sculptor's genius, they have been made to assume. Not so the works of the Almighty hand. Here, from its inmost principles, there is a determination towards the form the plant or the animal exhibits to the eye, and there is nothing in it but what harmoniously conspires to the production of the form, and of no other; while even the utmost beauty that appears upon the surface is impressed by the wonderful adaptation of the interior parts by which its texture is composed. What an immense difference is there between the flower itself and the imitation of it by the artist, though to the eye, and at a sufficient distance, the resemblance may be perfect! But touch the leaf of a rose or any other flower—let the exquisite delicacy and softness of its texture be felt, and then let it be observed that these are produced by the harmonious arrangement of myriads of myriads of fibres and of threads of feathery pile, to which those of the finest velvet bears no comparison for delicacy—and the exquisite perfection of the works of the Divine hand is

seen to be admirable indeed. So it is, correspondently; with the perceptions which spontaneously arise in the minds of those who are in such a state of life as to enjoy what may be properly denominated perception indeed, as being, in a manner, immediate revelations from the Lord himself, and of which the lilies of the field, which in the East flourish in extraordinary splendour, where the lily is esteemed the queen of flowers, are here mentioned as the appropriate natural symbols.

Therefore it is said, *that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.* That no splendour of clothing manufactured by human skill can equal in intrinsic beauty and loveliness the delightful flowery products of the hand of Omnipotence, follows from the remarks just made upon the difference between the works of man and the works of God, so that it literally is true that neither Solomon nor the most powerful earthly prince that ever existed could boast of robes that equalled the clothing of the lily. But the comparison is made to express an important truth. Solomon, as king of Judah and Israel, represented, as all kings do, the spiritual principle properly so called, which is especially the principle of truth; and the clothing of this principle are all truths of intelligence and knowledge, or truths seen and understood. But this principle is separated by a discrete degree from the celestial principle, which is essentially the principle of love, the clothing of which are perceptions of wisdom, or truths felt and perceived. The spiritual truths belong to the understanding, considered as distinct by itself; the celestial belong to the will, even when they enter the understanding. Now, the highest degree of spiritual intelligence, though very beautiful and excellent, is inferior to the lowest degree of celestial wisdom, which is truly simple and altogether lovely; and these are what are signified respectively by the raiment of Solomon and of the lily. The difference is precisely as that between the gorgeous robes of a king and the delicate simplicity of a flower.

30. But the Lord immediately changes his terms in speaking of the flower: From naming the lily he adverts to the grass; and speaks of it as of little account. *If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.* He here calls it the grass of the field, to intimate that he is speaking of the lowest perceptions of celestial wisdom, but still of such as are truly celestial in their nature, or the immediate products of love. But where love or goodness is accounted as everything, nothing of truth, not even the highest perceptions of the most exalted mysteries, are regarded in themselves

as anything, except so far as they tend to fan the flame of love, and promote the perception and appropriation of those celestial affections which the man of this character feels as constituting his life, his all. Therefore the use of the grass of celestial perception is described to be, to be "cast into the oven"—that is, to feed the heat by which the support of man's life, the good, of which the products of the oven is the symbol, is prepared. By him who truly loves the Lord above all things, nothing of truth, even the most delightful perceptions with which his mind can be recreated, are at all prized for their own sake, but only for the sake of the good which is seen to be in them, and which they are adapted to nourish and keep alive. To this use he constantly applies them. Thus never abiding in truth by itself, but always applying it immediately to the purposes of life, and the exaltation of the flame of love, or of his affection for goodness, he is continually supplied with new stores of it from its Divine Author. His lilies toil not, neither do they spin: as the grass of the field, they are cast into the oven; but he knows that they will continually grow again in still more luxuriant abundance, being watered with the dew of heaven. As these perceptions of truth, communicated solely for the sake of good, are thus continually provided and taken care of by the Lord's bountiful hand, should not the man himself who lives continually intent upon the good which is thus essential be effectually provided for with every perception of truth that the welfare of his state may require at the hands of his heavenly Father? This is what the Lord teaches when he says, *Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* Assuredly we may rely upon his Word.

31, 32. Having, by the exquisitely beautiful and tenderly affecting comparisons and appeals which have now been considered, placed the subject of his admonition in the most striking and engaging manner before his hearers, the Divine Speaker repeats the proposition with which he set out, though now as a conclusion from the premises advanced, and in a somewhat different form, affirming the needlessness of the conduct condemned: *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* A double reason is assigned by the Lord why this conduct should not be pursued. First, a negative and deterring one: *for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.* A powerful reason certainly it ought to be to the spiritually minded, not to seek after those things which are sought by the natural minded, meant by the Gentiles, especially the positively

wicked, which the nations more particularly denote. This is the deterring reason. But a more affecting and convincing one is added: *for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* What tenderness is implied in this mode of stating the providential care of our heavenly Father! The Lord does not directly say that whatsoever we have need of shall be given us; but he conveys this delightful assurance in a way that makes it tenfold more affecting. He assumes this as a fact universally known, and which we cannot be so ignorant or so credulous as to doubt; and thence he argues, we may be assured, as the greater includes the less, or the whole the part, that he will supply to us freely, and without any anxiety on our part, those things which the natural man prizes so highly as to make them the objects of his exclusive regard. It is sufficient to assure us that he knows we have need of them, to assure us that we shall not be left without them.

33. But now he tells us, in direct terms, how we are to proceed to secure the attainment of all things that can be necessary for our real welfare, even of those which the natural man makes his exclusive goods. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* The kingdom of God, as we have seen, is a phrase which denotes the government of the Lord's divine truth both in heaven and on earth; and his righteousness is a term expressive of his divine goodness, or of such goodness as owns him for its Author. Applied to ourselves individually, the kingdom of God which we are to seek is the government of the Lord's truth in our understanding; and his righteousness, which we are also to seek, is the presence of his love or goodness in our wills. But how are we to *seek* these two great elements of all blessing? Not simply by asking God to bestow them upon us. We must indeed seek them by prayer, but we must also seek them by the still more practical means of self-denial and active virtue. To obtain the kingdom we must apply the divine truth to the government of our thoughts, with the view of bringing every thought under obedience to Christ; and to obtain the Lord's righteousness, we must cultivate the divine good in our affections and in the duties of a righteous life. But we are not only to *seek* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, but we are to seek them *first*. It is easily seen that the expression *first* refers to what is chief and primary. And nothing is chief and primary with us but what is regarded with overruling or governing love. To seek effectually the kingdom of God and his righteousness, we must seek them with the ruling determination of soul—to make them the objects

of the ruling or governing love and desire. To seek them first is to put them in the first place; to exalt the Lord's truth above all other kinds of truth, and the Lord's goodness above all other kinds of goodness; to give them the first place in our understandings and hearts, in our minds and lives. Then will all other things be added to us. Every kind and degree of truth and good will then be added to the supreme good and truth; because, according to right order, every other good descends and is derived from the First. So far from having to give up anything orderly that is inferior to the First, everything will come to be possessed in greater abundance, and enjoyed with greater zest. The spiritual does not abolish, but sanctifies the natural: and spiritual men glorify the Lord with their souls and with their bodies, which are his.

34. We come now to the closing words of this beautiful discourse, against indulging in anxious thoughts about meat, and drink, and clothing. *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* Looking at these words even in the most general manner, when the truth on which they are founded—the perpetual care of the Lord's divine providence, rendering human care respectively needless—is believed, how admirably adapted is the injunction conveyed in them to soothe the human breast. Man's proneness to torment himself with unavailing cares for futurity has always afforded a copious theme for the declamations or reasonings of the moralist and philosopher. No considerations can be of any real avail for its cure but those which rest on the doctrine of a Divine Providence; and these, again, cannot come with any power of conviction but when they proceed authoritatively from a divine source. It argues the knowledge of Omniscience as to the inmost wants of human nature, together with the benevolence of Infinite Goodness desiring to remove them, when the Lord Jesus Christ so positively declares, and so plainly demonstrates through the whole of this discourse, the existence of a Divine Providence over all human affairs—yea, over the whole creation, providing for the real necessities of all.

But they who have rightly learned the lesson inculcated in the words under consideration, and, in reliance on the Lord's Providence, have banished that care for the morrow which is here condemned, do not make this renunciation in the fanatical manner which a literal adherence to the Lord's words, as given in the common version, might seem to recommend. They know that to provide things

necessary for the morrow, both for themselves and their families, is not contrary to the order of the Lord's providence and will, provided such things are not made the primary objects of regard, are not pursued with anxiety, or with reliance on selfish prudence, nor in any way that would foster in the bosom the love of the world, a disposition to avarice or self-seeking. As a reason for not being anxious for the morrow, the Lord says, *for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself.* And he adds, as a further reason, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.* Considered as to the literal expression, these sentences contain truth which all experience of human life confirms. As mere matter of prudence, it is undoubtedly unwise to load the present moment with anxious cares about futurity, when every future day, when it comes, will bring cares of its own. And the evils or troubles which may be pressing upon us at the present moment are enough to bear of themselves, without being aggravated by the anticipation of ills to come. But spiritually, as well as naturally, the sentiments are most true, and the lesson they involve is most important. In every new state on which we may enter, spiritually signified by the morrow, there will be new trials or temptations, arising from the opposition made by the corrupt part of our nature, excited from an infernal source. From that part of us which is the seat of all anxiety and distrust of the Divine Providence, or from the influence of which it is that all such anxiety arises, there will be trials and temptations, thus occasioned, to be encountered. But we are not to fall into despondency by anticipating these. Sufficient for our present state is the evil which is therein to be experienced,—the opposition which selfish and worldly desires and appetites present to the establishment of the kingdom of God and his righteousness within us. It is enough for us to be steadily engaged in resisting evil which is present, and requires to be overcome at the present moment and in the present state, through the whole course of our pilgrimage. If we do this, we need not be anxious about what is to come upon us hereafter. Resisting evil whenever it is present, we may rely that the Lord will never suffer it to prevail against us. Just as we rely on him, and combat in his strength, we will prevail. But if we fall into doubts and anxieties, which always arise from the influence of our own selfhood, and yield to them, we shall not overcome. And the same renunciation of care for the morrow which will make all the occurrences of life acceptable to us, and prosperous for our real good, will have the same influence on our spiritual states. When we discover in ourselves what is evil and wrong, we shall not fight to retain

it, and so either sink downward with it, or bring upon ourselves a severer course of discipline to force it from us; but we shall let it go at once: putting ourselves herein in the stream of providence, and willingly going where that leads. Thus all things will truly concur for our well-being in time and in eternity. Setting, as we know the Lord does, eternal ends in view, we shall willingly part with what is incompatible with them, gladly complying with whatever will advance them, and so finally realize them to our inexpressible beatitude.

CHAPTER VII.

1. In continuing his sublime discourse the Lord comes to treat of judgment as exercised by men upon one another; and of the consequences of the judgment pronounced, not upon the person judged, but upon the person who judges. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* It is almost unnecessary to say that the Lord does not here intend to interdict all judgment. We know too well that society could not exist without the exercise of private judgment and of public judicature. Our Lord himself authorized judgment when he laid down a rule for its exercise: "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." But we are to reflect that our Lord always spoke with reference, not merely to the moral, but the spiritual states of men; and not to temporal, but eternal retribution. In this respect his words, "judge not," express a direct and positive prohibition. While it is necessary to judge men as to their moral character, it is not allowable to judge them as to their spiritual state; and while it is lawful and necessary to inflict temporal punishment for moral crimes, it is neither lawful nor necessary to punish for religious opinions, much less to pronounce upon "heretics" an eternal malediction. Both society and the church may judge, and in their own modes inflict penalties upon unworthy members; for their conduct lies open to public view, and to pass over immoral conduct would relax the bonds of civil and ecclesiastical law. But this is entirely different from judging the internal states of men. No eye but His which "looks upon the heart" can see the state of the interior mind, and none but the Judge of all the earth can pronounce upon the eternal condition of the soul a righteous judgment. It is a law of Divine Providence that the essential spiritual state of no one shall be known with certainty by another during his abode in the present world. Every human being is left in a state of freedom to form for

himself the character and destiny which are to be truly and eternally his own. To judge the outward conduct, and even the proximate motive, does not interfere with internal and essential freedom, but rather assists it, by keeping the external in some degree of order; but if the internal itself could be interfered with, spiritual reformation would be prevented, because human would usurp the place of divine authority. But although it is not permitted us to judge of the spiritual state of others absolutely, it is permitted us to judge of them conditionally. We may say of or to any one, that if he really is what he appears to be, he will be lost or saved; but we may not say that he is what he seems to be, therefore he will be lost or saved. There is a sense in which our Lord may be understood as unconditionally prohibiting judgment. That against which he warns us is condemnatory judgment. This appears more clearly from his words, as given by Luke—"Judge not, that ye be not judged; condemn not, that ye be not condemned." The judgment which is interdicted is the judgment of truth without good, or that of an enlightened understanding without a regenerated will. It is the function of the understanding to judge, and truths are the laws according to which judgment should proceed; but the judgments of the understanding are influenced by the inclinations of the will, and its decisions are just or unjust according as the higher faculty is under the influence of charity or uncharitableness. The judgment therefore which the Lord prohibits is that of justice without mercy. There is one other lesson we may learn from this solemn injunction. We are but too ready not only to judge, but to prejudge. One bad consequence is likely to follow from this. Having an interest in the success of our prejudgment, which is a sort of prediction, we may be either actively or passively instrumental in procuring its fulfilment. We should be careful, therefore, to avoid judging unfavourably of the future of any one; we should ever desire and hope the best; and then we shall have every motive to second our hopes by our prayers and efforts. In the higher sense, or abstractly considered, we are prohibited from judging, not persons but principles—as all judgment, in fact, resolves itself into this. We are required to "judge not," and therefore to "condemn not," the principles of goodness and truth, either as they are revealed in the Word or as they are acknowledged in the church and among men. It is lawful and necessary for us to judge for ourselves as to what is, or is not, the truth; but our judgment in this important matter cannot be just unless it be influenced by a sincere love of truth. And here it is necessary for us to "judge not according to the

appearance, but to judge righteous judgment." *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* This teaches us at once both the nature of the judgment interdicted and its consequence.

2. Our judgment, whatever it is, returns upon ourselves. *With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* This is of the same character, and is determined by the same law, as "the merciful shall obtain mercy." Those who judge, shall also be judged, without mercy. It is unnecessary to explain again the law by which this result is determined. It is enough to say, that it is not by any arbitrary or sovereign appointment of the Almighty, but flows from the laws of eternal order, which the Creator introduced into all his works, and which rule in all his dominions. It is not the Lord who judges without mercy; as men are judged, not by what is without, but by what is within them, they who have no mercy must be judged without any. But the measure of retribution is that which our Lord here speaks of. The measure of our reward, whether for good or evil, is determined by the capacity we have acquired in the world for happiness or misery. Goodness is the capacity for happiness, evil is the capacity for misery; and the measure of happiness or misery received in the other life is determined by the measure of good or evil we have acquired in this. God does not, by any sovereign appointment, fix either the nature or extent of our bliss or woe. This is fixed by a law of order, by which certain causes produce certain effects, and which measures our experience by our state and conduct. Every one who is either condemned or saved has a certain measure which is capable of being filled. This measure is filled in the other life; but with some it is more, with some less. It is procured in the world by the affections which are of love; for the more any one has loved what is evil and false, or what is good and true, so much the greater a measure has he procured for himself. That measure cannot in the other life be transcended, but may be filled. With those who have been in the affection of what is good and true, it is filled with goodnesses and truths; and with those who have been in the affection of what is evil and false, it is filled with evil and falsity. And as in heaven the apostolic principle of a community of goods is carried out in all its perfection, he who is raised into one of the mansions of the blest comes into the enjoyment of the common good by which its inhabitants are distinguished; so that the happiness of all becomes the happiness of each. And on the same principle, evil is strengthened and its misery is increased by the wicked assembling with their like in the kingdom of darkness.

3. Proceeding with his teaching as to the wrong and the right mode of dealing with our neighbour, the Lord says, *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* The idea which our Lord here presents is similar to that which he expressed when he told the Jewish moralists that they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel. On that occasion the conduct he censured was that which the Pharisees practised in regard to themselves. The same principle is here exemplified in relation to the neighbour—the hypocrite sees not the beam that is in his own eye, but detects the mote that is in his brother's. The Lord here introduces the term brother, because the subject relates to charity, which a brother denotes. A mote in the eye of a brother is a trifling error or false persuasion in the understanding of one who is, nevertheless, in the life of charity; while the beam in our own eye is an evil in the will intellectually confirmed, which perverts our vision. How just and necessary is the reproof conveyed in our Lord's words! Naturally and habitually we are too blind to our own faults, and too keenly perceptive of the faults of others. If we need anything beyond our own conscience and experience to convince us of this fact, we shall find it too abundantly exemplified in the world in which we live. The evil are the readiest to detect evil, the severest to judge it, the most unrelenting to punish it. The spiritual sense reveals the origin of this seeming inconsistency. The eye is the emblem of the understanding, the perceptive faculty of the mind; the mote is a symbol of error, and the beam of evil. When the understanding is under the dominion of an evil will, it is blind to its own evil, but is keenly perceptive of error or falsity in another, when these do not favour its own desires. The difference between the spiritual and the natural man supplies an answer to the Lord's question, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" The natural man looks outwards, and marks the faults of others; the spiritual man looks inwards, and observes his own. And he who examines himself and discerns his own evils and imperfections, will be less disposed to drag those of his neighbours into the light, or to judge them severely.

4, 5. Our Lord continues,—*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?* To see the mote is one thing, to cast it out is another. It is no doubt an act of charity to point out and assist in removing error from the mind of another. But this office cannot be performed by those who look at their neighbour's

errors and failings with an evil eye, and with whom there can be no true regard for their neighbour's welfare. How can one remove error from another's mind who has not even discovered the root of error in his own? What is to be expected from the labours of one who strives to convict his brother of error, rather than to convince him of the truth? To correct what is wrong in another requires moral principle as well as intellectual discernment. Take the case of a parent, who so often has occasion to correct faults in his child. It requires no great amount of intelligence to see a child's faults, but it requires great moral wisdom rightly to correct them. Gentleness, kindness, patience, with firmness, are essentially necessary to be possessed and exemplified by the parent who would be the real improver of his child. The parent whose temper is irritable or violent, who is harsh, unkind, impatient, infirm of purpose—how can he draw out from the young mind, delicate and sensitive as the eye in which is the mote, the errors and evils that are incident to it as that of a fallen and imperfect being? Just so is it in all the relations of life. The same qualities are required in the brother, the friend, the teacher, the pastor. Not only a clear sight, but a kind heart—not truth only, but goodness—must be employed in the work of correction and reformation. To cast the beam of evil out of our own eye is therefore the first and principal duty we have to perform, even to our neighbour, and the only means of enabling us to see clearly to remove the mote from his eye.

6. While the Divine Teacher warns us against acting from truth without goodness, he warns us also against acting from goodness without truth. Of these two opposite states one is about as defective in itself, and about as faulty in its consequences, as the other. As truth alone is all light and severity, good alone is all feeling and tenderness. So far as men are in good without truth, they give evil men the fruit of the tree of life for food, without applying its leaves to them for medicine. They would present the pure goods and truths of the Holy Word to the lustful and the sensual, who are disposed to profane and destroy them. Against this the Lord warns us when he says, *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.* Those are compared to dogs and swine who are the slaves of their passions and panderers to their senses. The goods of charity and the truths of faith, which are holy things, and the knowledge of truth and good from the Word, which are pearls, are not to be cast before such characters. These heavenly things, cast injudiciously before the grossly sensual, are more likely to exasperate and provoke than to reprove and

repress their evil lusts and appetites. They trample them under their feet—they scoff at them, degrade them beneath the very lowest of their own low thoughts and impure affections, and trample upon the holy principles they inculcate. And having subjected the spiritual principles of the Word to this treatment, they turn again and rend those who have dispensed them. The disciples whom they rend are, abstractly, the living principles of the Word which constitute the church, the dissipation and destruction of which is meant by rending. Our Lord was a pattern to all teachers. He accommodated himself not only to the capacities, but to the states of his hearers. To those who were without, he delivered his truth in parables; and he condescended to adapt his instruction to the infirmities of the disciples themselves, leading them by visions of glory suited to their external states, as when he promised as a reward for following him in the regeneration, that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In a more abstract sense these words teach us, that if the external man remains sensual, holy things that flow down from the internal, where they may have been received, into the sensual external, will there be perverted and profaned, and will only be the occasion of the external turning more fiercely against and rending the internal, and so destroying all spiritual life in both.

7. From the subject of giving, the Lord turns to that of asking. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* We are constantly taught that the grace of God, though freely offered, must yet be earnestly and actively sought to be obtained. There is a philosophy that harmonizes these seemingly discordant facts. Our prayers are not to induce God to give, but to fit us to receive. And to fit us to receive the gifts of God, all our faculties must be brought into activity. We must ask with the heart, seek with the understanding, knock with the life. All these are to be employed, and their operation continued, in order that we may receive. God delights to give. He waits to be gracious. All that is required on our part is to be earnest in our desire and efforts to receive.

8. The promise of receiving is as certain as the duty of asking is imperative, and is as significantly expressed. *Every one that asketh receiveth*: for asking and receiving, which are the briefest and directest modes of communication, express the desire for good from God, and its reception by the will. *And he that seeketh findeth*: for the understanding searches and seeks for the means of salvation, and finds the object of its search in the riches of wisdom and knowledge. *And to*

him that knocketh it shall be opened : for the bringing of the principles of the will and the understanding into the life and conversation opens the door of communication between the Lord and man, and between the spiritual and natural degrees of man's own mind, and not only brings them into communion, but into conjunction with each other.

9-11. It is worthy of remark that, in teaching us the character of our Father in heaven, and his dealings with his children, the Lord does not employ abstract terms or use the arguments of reason, but simply appeals to those affections of our nature which he himself has implanted, and which, being possessed alike by all, are the ground of universal perception. He appeals to our instincts, rather than to our reason, in proof of his Fatherly tenderness and beneficence. And this appeal will be seen to be the more appropriate when we reflect that the love of parents for their children is an offshoot from his own love for his children of the human race, and is implanted in all human hearts, notwithstanding their hereditary corruption, as it is in the nature of all the inferior creatures, the fiercest as well as the gentlest. The Lord does not therefore refer us to those parents who are regenerate and holy, and in whom the image of their Father has been restored, but to the fallen race of men without distinction. If this simple fact had been always kept in view, how much obscurity would have been avoided and controversy prevented respecting the character and dealings of God. The universality and unchangeableness of the Divine Love could not have been for a moment doubted. What encouragement does this give us to come to the Lord in all our necessities, in the confidence that he will listen to us not only with all a father's love, but that he will supply our wants with all a father's wisdom. Let us see what his language involves.

9, 10. *What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?* What parent, indeed, would thus mock the wants and abuse the confidence of his hungry and pleading child? The force of this appeal as a comparison consists in the fact, that natural affection is sufficient to prompt a father to supply the natural wants of his son, when those wants are expressed. But these words have a spiritual meaning. Like the loaves and fishes with which the Lord fed the multitude, the bread and fish are symbolical of the two essential principles of goodness and truth, which sustain the voluntary and intellectual life of the soul. So we read in the Word of "bread that strengtheneth man's heart" (Ps. civ. 14); for the heart is the symbol of the will,

and good, which is specifically meant by bread, is that principle by which the life of the will is sustained. The will, thus sustained, is called a heart of flesh, which is the living goodness into which the appropriated bread of life is turned. But while in the Word we read of a heart of flesh, we read also of a heart of stone (Ezek. xi. 19). These are not mere figures to express penitence and impenitence of heart, but are real correspondences. And as the heart of flesh denotes a will renewed by the reception of principles of goodness, the stony heart is the unrenewed will, hardened by unbelief and its resulting evil, as is expressed in Zechariah,—“They have made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law” (vii. 12). To give a stone to a son who asks bread would therefore be to give him a false good for a true one, and so turn the will into a heart of stone. So in regard to the fish, which signifies truth that nourishes the understanding and forms a true faith. A serpent is the emblem of sensual truth. But these things are here evidently to be understood in a sense opposite to that of their genuine meaning—the stone of what is false grounded in evil, and the serpent of self-derived prudence. These given for bread and fish torment and destroy spiritual life. But before a son can desire, and a father can give spiritual food, which is the knowledge of spiritual things, they must themselves be to some extent spiritually-minded: and then they are the emblems of the Lord and his children. We are the children of our heavenly Father when we desire that he will feed our hungering souls with heavenly goodness and truth, as while on earth he fed the bodies of the fainting multitude with loaves and fishes.

11. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?* It is the result and evidence of a merciful Providence that, notwithstanding man's state of moral evil, he is endowed with natural affection for his offspring, which prompts him to love them tenderly, and anxiously supply their natural wants, and in every possible way to provide for their temporal welfare. This, it is true, is an affection common to man and animals; yet it is inspired by the Author of nature, and is given alike to the mild and ferocious among animals, and to the best and worst among men. The fact, therefore, that men, being evil, yet know how to give good gifts to their children—gifts that are good as natural means for a natural end—is a proof and assurance to us that God will much more give good things to them that ask him. It is not possible that he who is goodness itself can withhold any good thing from any one who

sincerely asks him. As he has implanted natural affection in all human hearts, both good and evil, so has he bountifully provided for all men's natural wants, without respect of persons, and without solicitation. Those things which God requires to be asked before he gives are spiritual things, such as are necessary for sustaining the life of good in the soul, and securing its spiritual and eternal welfare. These are not given unasked—that is, undesired and unsought for; because desire is to the soul what hunger is to the body, and the desire for heavenly good must exist before that good can be supplied. The mind has an inherent desire for food as well as the body; but here the moral condition of the mind determines the nature of the desire, and consequently of the kind of good which is craved. Those who have become conscious of their spiritual wants, and desire the spiritual good which is necessary to supply them, will find the Lord, as their heavenly Father, infinitely more ready to give the good things which are necessary for sustaining the true life of the soul than any earthly parent can be to give temporal gifts unto his children.

12. The Lord concludes this series of lessons on mutual benefits between man and man by laying down this grand principle,—*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.* This has been called the “Golden rule;” yet it belongs rather to the silver than to the golden age. The celestial principle prompts men to love others better than themselves; the spiritual principle prompts them to love others as themselves. Even in these days we see the higher principle emulated, if not exemplified, by parental and filial love, and imitated in the forms of ordinary politeness. But this may be done from natural affection and conventional usage, without any of the spirit of religion. Such acts may proceed from selfish as well as from disinterested affection. The principle which our Lord lays down does not require disinterested love for its recognition and application. It is to be considered in connection with what the Lord had just said, that men, being evil, knew how to give good gifts unto their children. The law which he now lays down is for the natural man as well as for the spiritual. It appeals not only to every man's sense of right, but to his self-love, and requires only to be honestly applied to make every one a law of equity unto himself. What God has revealed through Moses and the prophets is intended, therefore, the changing a natural law into a religious obligation, in order to give men a conscience to do what their own judgment may tell them is their duty. Every man can see, and can be brought to admit, that he ought to do to another as

he would that another should do to him. Before he acts towards another, he has only to consider how he would wish or expect another to act towards him under the circumstances. In all our intercourse and transactions with others—in all the duties and relations of life, we have only to reverse the position in which we stand to another, to know what we ought to render to him, and what we ought to expect from him. And what we would consider it right to do or expect, if our case were his, we must see it is our duty to do. It is not necessary to cite instances, for no case is exempt from the law. Its application is universal and invariable. “*All things whatsoever ye would that man should do to you, do ye even so to them.*” But although there is no need for illustration, there is some need for explanation. It is thought by some that the law requires not only that you put yourself in the other’s place, you must put yourself also in his state. Not so. This would be to change not your place only, but your identity with another, which would make things precisely as they were. If such could be done, every one would of course act precisely as the other acts, and judge as he judges.

The law requires us only to take another’s place, and to consider what our principles would require us to do under the other’s circumstances. If one is a seller, he is to consider what, if he were a buyer, he would consider it right that a seller should do; if he is a master, what, if a servant, he would expect a master to do. By thus placing ourselves in the position of those with whom we have to do, we learn to be more just and merciful—to demand less and give more—in a word, to be more equitable. What a different world it would be if this great law were, in any considerable measure, the rule of conduct! And not only would it affect the state and condition of men and nations in this world, but, what is of infinitely more consequence, it would affect the state and condition of men in the world to come. The law of equity is the practical form of the law of love to the neighbour: practically to love our neighbour as ourselves is to do to him as we would that he should do to us. This is the law of heaven. In heaven, therefore, all are united in the bond of mutual love and service. Unless we cultivate love to the neighbour, how can we live in that kingdom where this law universally prevails?

13. Our Lord proceeds to show how this law of equity is to be carried out, and how we are to act, so as to bring ourselves under its government. *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,*

which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. The strait gate can only be entered by self-denial, and the narrow way can only be walked in by circumspection and perseverance. In Luke, therefore, we read, "Strive to enter." The gate of life has become strait by that which has made the gate of death wide—our natural aversion to good and our natural aptitude for evil. That which is delightful is easy; that which is undelightful is difficult. And that which is difficult is strait, and that which is easy is wide. Straitness, in a moral sense, is anxiety, anguish, difficulty. The gate of life can only be entered through straitness of spirit—striving with the devil, the world, and the flesh, being the agonistic conflict through which the passage lies to victory. On the other hand, the gate of destruction is wide, because no striving is required to enter it. So far from self-resistance being necessary for entrance into the way that leads to destruction, self-indulgence opens the gate; and the more we indulge, the wider the gate and the broader the way become. But where and what are these gates and ways? They are in our own minds. In that rational faculty that stands midway between the spiritual and the natural mind there is a gate that opens, and a way that leads upward to heaven, and another gate that opens, and a way that leads downwards to the world and hell. During the early part of life these gates are not open, and yet are not shut. That is to say, the thoughts and affections are not determinately bent in either direction previous to the mind's deliberately and practically choosing good or evil as a principle of life. There is in every one a hereditary tendency to the downward road; but the Lord in his mercy provides that the gate that leads to destruction shall not be actually opened, nor the gate that leads to life be actually closed, till man, as a free agent, shall knowingly and deliberately open one and close the other. To open and enter into the gate that leads to destruction is easy, because congenial to man's fallen nature; but the Lord gives him aids and means, and inspires him with motives, and supplies grace sufficient to enable him, if he is willing, to enter the strait gate and walk in the narrow way which lead to life. We enter the gate of life by repentance, and advance in the way of life by persistent holiness. We enter the gate of death by impenitence, and walk in the road to destruction by persistent sinfulness. If there are literally many that enter the wide, and few that find the strait gate, it is not from necessity, but from choice. All walk more or less in the downward road. While the Lord provides against our being betrayed unwarily into any confirmed state of evil, his grace so abounds, that

whenever we sincerely desire to return from our evil ways, and enter into the right path, all things will work together in our favour. But although it may be literally true that at the time our Lord spoke, and even now, more may enter the wide than the strait gate, the Lord's declaration does not teach that it is a necessary state of things. On the principle that numbers in the Word spiritually express quality, and not quantity, *few* signify those who are in the faith of charity; and *many* signify those who are in faith without charity.

15. That we may enter into the strait, and avoid the wide gate, we must be careful what counsel we take or listen to. We must *beware of false prophets*. Personally, these are false teachers; abstractly, they are false principles. Care to avoid these last is the more necessary, because we may be our own teachers; and prejudice or inclination may lead us to adopt and follow the false, as if it were the true. We ought, indeed, to cultivate the faculty of distinguishing between the false and the true, without respect of the persons who utter them; to accept truth and reject error, whoever may teach them. It is the more necessary to beware of false prophets since they *come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves*. False prophets are hypocritical teachers, who conceal a devouring selfishness under an appearance of disinterested kindness. But abstractly they are false principles that seem outwardly to teach charity, but inwardly are as destructive of it as the wolf is of the sheep. All errors in religion avow as their object, "Glory to God in the highest, good will towards men;" for no one teaches or adopts what is false as falsehood, but as truth, much less as leading to evil, but to good. It is important, therefore, to beware of false prophets; for though they come under the aspect of charity, they in their very nature are cruel and destructive.

16. But the question comes, How are we to know false prophets? Our Lord gives the answer,—*Ye shall know them by their fruits*. This is the moral test. The Word gives another,—"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." It may be difficult to detect individual teachers of falsity, or hypocritical teachers of truth, by their outward lives. As a general test it is an entirely true and certain one. The natural, and therefore the general, result of falsity is evil, and the natural and general result of truth is goodness. Life is, without doubt, the great test; and it is one that every person may apply and judge by. Yet it is more important to be able to test principles than persons. And the question with each of us is, What fruits do certain

principles produce in ourselves? We can know our own principles by their fruits, because we can see our inward as well as our outward life. The inward life is more especially meant by the grapes, and the outward life by the figs; for grapes are the goods of charity proceeding from the internal man, and figs are the goods of obedience. But, *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* If the falsities of concupiscence, which are the thorn and the thistle, are rooted in the mind, there can be no genuine good produced in the life. The appearance may be put on, as the wolf may appear in sheep's clothing, but the reality cannot be there. Such principles cannot produce the inward fruit of peace and goodwill to our neighbour, nor the outward fruit of consistent and disinterested goodness.

17, 18. But whatever outward similarity there may be between the actions of a good and those of an evil man, their deeds, viewed from within, by means of spiritual light, are essentially different. *Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.* This is absolutely true. The fruit must correspond to the tree. Good principles cannot produce bad practice; and evil principles cannot produce good practice. A good man, it is true, may do some evil, and an evil man may do some good; but the reason of this is, that, in this world, there is no man so good as to be entirely free from evil or error, and no man so evil as to be entirely destitute of goodness and truth. But good itself, as a principle in the mind, must of necessity produce good; and evil, as a principle, must produce evil. This is as much a law of mind as that a vine must produce grapes is a law of nature. Our Lord declares this to be the case. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* "To will evil and to do good are in their nature opposite to each other, for evil is derived from hatred towards our neighbour, and good from love towards him; in other words, evil is our neighbour's enemy, and good is his friend, which two cannot possibly exist together in the same mind: evil cannot exist in the internal and good in the external. In such circumstances man is like a tree whose root is decayed through age, but which yet produces fruit that appears outwardly like fruit rich in flavour and fit for use, but which inwardly is unsavoury and useless." The good which a man does from evil—that is, from a selfish motive—is not good, but evil; for the end determines the quality of the deed. This may not be seen clearly by men in this world; but when men enter the spiritual world, the quality of men's works is obvious to all. And as our Lord spoke eternal, and therefore spiritual, truth—truth for

the spiritual world—this is the essential truth which he taught in these words.

19. The lesson we may derive from the necessary connection between the internal and the external is most important. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* On this declaration, which is a repetition of one made by John the Baptist (ch. iii. 10), it is sufficient here to remark, that if we allow evil and false principles to take root in our hearts while we live in this world, the tree which has grown up and produced its evil fruits cannot be changed in the other life, but must be hewn down and cast into the fire. The evil man himself is such a tree: for such as a man's ruling principles are, such is his whole being; The good which a man does in the body proceeds from his spirit, or from the internal man, this being his spirit which lives after death; consequently, when man casts off his body, which constituted his external man, he is then wholly immersed in the evils of his life, and takes delight in them; while he holds good in aversion, as being offensive to his life.

20. Our Lord concludes by repeating the principle he had already laid down. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* To know the fruit is to know its quality, not merely its appearance. If we thus know the fruit, we know the tree. It is our duty, therefore, to look to results; and as far as we can know these truly, we shall be able to judge correctly of the principles that produce them. We may regard this exhortation of our Lord as designed to correct the tendency to judge our brother by his opinions, and look at the mote in his eye rather than at the blemish in his life.

21, 22. The Divine Speaker brings this subject of sinning and living home to us most powerfully by carrying us by anticipation into the scene of our final judgment. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* The time of decision will indeed show the difference between saying and doing, between profession and practice. It is plain that the contrast the Lord here makes is between those who have lived in the mere profession and those who have lived in the practice of his religion. Nor are the professed disciples those only who have named themselves by the name of Christ, but those who have been zealous in his cause—for they say, *Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* What more, apparently, could they have done to commend themselves to his favour? One thing have they lacked—sincerity. All these things have they done.

for to be seen of men. They have not done the will of their Father who is in heaven. The Father's will is, that they should be perfect even as he is perfect: that they should love him above all things, and their neighbour as themselves, manifesting that love in all manner of good works. Instead of this, they have rendered to the Lord a lip service, in formal and ostentatious prayers, thus saying, Lord, Lord: they have taught the Word and the doctrines derived from it, and it may be with eloquent persuasiveness, thus prophesying in the name of Christ: they have liberated other minds from errors of religion, thus casting out demons: they have effected numerous conversions, thus doing many wonderful works. But this they have done, not for the Lord's sake, nor for the salvation of souls, but for the sake of themselves and the world. Those who are of this character are in what may be called persuasive faith. They have no inward perception of truth, and no inward faith in it, or love for it, but adopt a creed, and confirm it by reasons grounded in self-interest, as a means by which they may obtain reputation, wealth, and honours. The worst of men may have this persuasive faith, and maintain it with zeal, condemning all who differ from them without regard to the good which they exhibit in their lives. Many of the wonderful works of party zeal have no doubt this origin and character.

23. The Lord therefore says, *Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.* He never knew them as his own. His saving knowledge was not in them. They are not his children. He knows them not. He *never* knew them: their whole life has been a deception. Can any other conclusion be expected from such a life of hollow pretence than that expressed in the Lord's words, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity?* They have wrought iniquity. Whatever good they may have done for others, they have done none for themselves. Their motive has been evil, because selfish; and an evil tree cannot produce good fruit. The Lord's sentence upon them to depart expresses the necessary result of their real state. His love is not in them; there is no mutual sympathy between him and them: his truth is not in them; there is no mutual knowledge. Separation is the inevitable consequence. The evil and the false must depart from him who is goodness itself and truth itself. This is the cause of removal from the presence and exclusion from the kingdom of God. He does not cast them out: their own state of contrariety to his holy nature excludes them. They gravitate to their own centre, which is the kingdom of evil, and fall into the abyss, not because justice demands, but because mercy cannot prevent, their ruin.

24. Having in his sermon enunciated the great principles of his church and kingdom, the Lord concludes his sublime discourse by a most striking description of the two opposite results which his teaching would have with the multitude whom he addressed, and with all future generations of men, according as they use or abuse the mercies of the gospel of righteousness and peace. *Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man; and every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, I will liken him unto a foolish man.* The whole difference between the wise and the foolish, and between the eternal consequences of wisdom and folly, consists in one thing, and is described by one word, and that one word is **DOETH**. This word holds a most prominent place in the whole of the Scriptures of truth, and an all-important place in the economy of the religious life. To do or not to do decides the question of order and disorder, of weakness and power, of salvation and condemnation, of life and death. Doing is the use and end of religion. Hearing the Lord's sayings, which includes knowing and understanding them, is but a means to an end, and that end is to do them. To do what we hear is wisdom; to hear and not do is folly. Wisdom and folly in Scripture do not mean intellectual, but moral states. Wisdom is not knowledge, but the right use of it; folly is not the absence of knowledge, but its abuse. He that heareth these sayings of mine, *and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man.* Let us see what this man did as an evidence of his wisdom. *He built his house upon a rock.* The expressive word edification means building up, and has been borrowed to express the idea of practical education, as a building up of the mind in knowledge and virtue. In this sense it is used in Scripture. The only difference is, that the materials here are spiritual, and the building is not for time but for eternity. Every one builds in this world the house in which he shall live for ever. The materials of this house are the truths of the Word, and these may be built up by practical wisdom into a holy habitation, in which grace and truth may dwell together—yea, in which the Lord himself, by his love and wisdom, may take up his abode, according to his own divine promise: "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." But the stability of the house depends on the foundation on which it is built. The wise man builds his house upon a *rock*. This rock is eminently the Lord himself. A rock, in Scripture is the symbol of truth; and the Lord is called a rock, as being the truth itself; and he is especially the Rock of Ages as the truth manifested—the Word made

flesh. Faith in this Truth—or this Truth held in faith—is the rock on which the wise man builds his house. It is that of which the Lord declared to Peter,—after his ever-memorable confession, “Thou art the Christ,”—“On this rock I will build my church.” And the house which the Christian builds upon this foundation is the church in him.

25. The advantage of building the house upon a rock our Lord describes by expressive figures. *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.* The power of resisting trials and temptations is the great advantage which results from a faith which rests on the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no regeneration without temptation. Temptation is the trial of our faith. Temptation confirms a true faith and overturns a false one. A true faith is not only a faith in the truth, but a faith that is true—sincere. A true faith is one that is of the thought from affection, and a false faith is one that is of the thought without affection. A true faith, therefore, not only resists in temptation, but is increased and confirmed by it. The temptations to which faith is subjected are described by the storm that fell upon the house. And no images could more expressively depict the danger to which the mind is exposed by the trials and temptations of life than that which threatens the house by the combined action upon it of the rain, the flood, and the wind. The temptation arising from false suggestions are meant by the rain; for rain, when it falls upon the earth in gentle and fructifying showers, is the expressive symbol of truth; when it beats upon the house, and threatens it with destruction, is the equally expressive symbol of falsity. And as the subject of the Lord's words is the foundation of a true faith, the temptations come from what is opposite to, and tends directly to invalidate the truth, and destroy faith in it. But not only does the rain descend, but the floods come. Rain is that kind of temptation that comes in gradually-increasing torrents of false suggestions; but floods are those temptations that arise from the accumulation of such false suggestions, and when they come in a body, like an inundation of waters, bear down everything that is not capable of the greatest resistance. The wind indicates that kind of temptation that flows into the thoughts—for wind is more subtle than water—and are the stormy winds that sweep over the mind like a tornado, and threaten to root up and cast down everything before it. But there is one object that resists them all—the house that is founded upon a rock. The church of the Lord that is built in the human mind upon the rock of a living faith—

against it the very gates of hell shall not prevail. And these temptations of which our Lord here speaks are induced by the powers of darkness, and are the means which the spirits of darkness employ for the purpose of effecting their purpose of destroying the soul, by pulling down what the Saviour has built up. But the assurance which the Saviour gives to his faithful ones is, that having built their faith upon him as its foundation, all the combined powers of the kingdom of darkness, in the severest temptations, will not be able to overturn it. *And it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*

26. The Divine Speaker contrasts with these wise ones the persons who build on an unstable foundation. *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.* The description of these is simply the reverse of the others. The mere hearer of the Lord's words builds a house, but he builds it on the sand. We commonly speak of those building in the air who place their hopes of happiness on visionary or unpractical schemes. Answering to them are those who build their hopes of eternal happiness on their being hearers of the words of Jesus Christ. They build upon the sand. Considered simply as a figure, it is sufficiently suggestive of the baselessness of the fabric of a mere verbal and persuasive faith.

But the sense obtained by correspondence is more specific and instructive. While a rock and a stone signify truth as a principle, sand signifies knowledge as a simple acquirement. The sand is to the rock as the dry bones that lay scattered in the valley of Jehoshaphat were to the exceeding great army that the prophet's voice raised up from them. Religious facts and opinions laid up in the memory, or even in the natural understanding, are mere shifting sands, on which no rational hope can be placed. A faith of the intellect, which is not at the same time of the heart, is dead, and can avail nothing in the day of trial. Our Lord tells us, therefore, that when the storms assailed the house built upon the sand *it fell, and great was the fall of it.* The house which the religious professor builds becomes a ruin, however fair it may have been. So will the faith of every hearer of the Word who does it not; and a ruin complete, according to the pains that have been taken to make it great and admirable in the eyes of men. The fall of those who have known and professed the truth is great compared with that of those who have known and assumed less. We may learn from this similitude how important it is to be doers of the words of Divine Wisdom, and especially of those heavenly prin-

ciples which our blessed Lord delivered in his ever-memorable sermon on the mount.

28. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine.* Those who had been accustomed to the superficial, trifling, and lifeless addresses of the Jewish scribes might well be astonished at the doctrine which they had just heard from the lips of Jesus. But the word expresses something more, or rather something other than astonishment: it means that the people were inwardly moved or affected. The teaching of Jesus did not play upon the outside, but penetrated into the inmost depths of their being. He taught them as one having authority—more properly, as one having power, not the power of authority only, but the power of convincing the understanding and moving the heart. Supposing the law had been taught by the scribes in its original simplicity and purity, the spirituality which Jesus showed it to possess, and which he so clearly and practically set forth, must have presented it to every well-disposed mind in a new light of unspeakable beauty, and with a force that must have brought it home to every conscience. But when we reflect that the Jewish teachers had made the commandments of none effect by their traditions, the Lord's enforcement and exposition of the law must have produced on the minds of his sincere and earnest hearers a wonderful impression indeed, such as that which led his mercenary hearers to exclaim, "Never man spake like this man."

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Having finished his sermon on the mount, Jesus now comes down to exemplify in works of mercy and benevolence the spiritual principles he had enunciated as those of the kingdom he had come to establish upon earth. His coming down from the mountain does not mean descent from a more to a less perfect state, but the bringing down of his holy principles into beneficent acts, and enforcing by example what he had taught by precept. This also is the order of individual experience. The Lord first implants the principles of righteousness in the mind, and then causes them to come down into the actions of a holy life, that the external may be an image of the internal, and both together form the regenerate or new man. No wonder that when the Lord came down *great multitudes followed him.* The multitudes that gathered about the Lord—the common people who heard him gladly—are types of the common affections and

thoughts of our nature that give us a sense and perception of natural justice and truth, and which, when unbiassed by interest or unawed by authority, can see and admire religious truth when presented to them in its own light and power. Those who had been astonished at his doctrine could not now be less astonished at his works. And as the works which the Lord performed, beneficent and marvellous as they were, are to be regarded as but the natural types of spiritual operations, which he is ever performing in the souls of the penitent and believing, we have a deeper interest in them than those who beheld them with their eyes and experienced them in the restoration to health and strength of their diseased and enfeebled frames.

2. When Jesus came down from the mountain, *behold, there came a leper and worshipped him.* Leprosy was one of the most dreadful and loathsome diseases with which the Jews were afflicted. Under that representative dispensation evils in the mind produced corresponding diseases in the body. The disposition of the people to depart from the worship of the Lord and the ordinances of the law, to worship false gods and observe their unholy rites, led them into acts of profanation, which brought upon them the disease of leprosy. Leprosy therefore represents profanation—the mixing of the holy and the impure. Of this greatest of sins there are two kinds—the profanation of truth and profanation of good. These are expressed in the New Testament by a word against the Son of Man and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We are guilty of the first sin when we profane or pervert the letter of the Word; we are guilty of the second when we violate its spirit. The first is pardonable, like the leprosy which could be cured; the second is unpardonable, like the leprosy which cleaved to its victim for ever. The leper who came to Jesus represented one who has been guilty of the milder degree of profanation. He came to him with the prayer to be made clean. This, spiritually, is the confession of sin, and an active desire for its removal. Every such prayer implies a knowledge and sense of sin, and the acknowledgment that the Divine power alone can remove it. That is true penitence and true worship which produces the prostration of self, the exaltation of the Lord, and the submission of the human to the divine will. The new creature is born, not of the will of man, but of the will of God. So the leper says to Jesus, “If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” Blessed is the state when the suppliant for divine aid confides solely in the Lord’s will.

3. In answer to the leper’s prayer, *Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.* The Lord’s hand is the

symbol of his power, especially as it now operates upon men from or through the Divine humanity; and the Lord's will is his love in union with his wisdom. The will and the power of the Lord are one. Whatever the Lord wills he can do. Yet there are some things that he wills that are not done. He wills that all men should be saved, yet all are not saved. He wills that all should be saved; but he wills that they should be saved by their own consent, and cannot will that they should be forced—therefore cannot exert his power to force them. For the Lord to force men to accept salvation would be to contradict himself, which is impossible. He bestowed freewill upon man, and preserves him in possession of it every moment of his life; how, then, can he at once preserve freedom and employ force? The Lord is both willing and able to save to the uttermost, but he must save in accordance with the laws of his divine order, which are the laws his wisdom inscribes upon his love, and according to which his love ever acts. If all are not saved, it is because all do not desire and will not accept salvation. To those only whose will accords with his own can the Lord's hand be extended to cure them of their spiritual maladies. His hand is put forth when his power, ever present in the inmost of their souls, above the seat of their consciousness, is allowed to come forth into the thoughts and affections of their minds, and thence into the actions of their lives. It is then that the divine hand "touches," that is, affects them, communicating to them the power and virtue of his humanity, in which his love and truth are brought near to save them. When the Lord's will and his power are thus unitedly active within the soul their action must be effective. When Jesus can at once put forth his hand and touch the leper, and say, "I will, be thou clean," the effect follows—*immediately his leprosy was cleansed*. To show the miraculous nature of the Lord's cures it was necessary that they should be instantaneous. Had they been gradual, those who saw the beginning of a miracle might never see its end, nor might they be able to distinguish between a miraculous and an ordinary cure. But those instantaneous cures do not represent instantaneous salvation. What is instantaneous in regard to time represents what is certain in regard to state; for the soul is not subject to time. For "immediately" we have only to read "certainly," and we have the assurance which the spiritual language of revelation expresses, that to those who sincerely desire it, and co-operate with the Lord to receive it, his salvation is sure.

4. After the leper was cleansed Jesus laid on him a double injunction. *See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest.*

There is something peculiar in the first command. It has been supposed that the man was only required not to tell any one till he had shown himself to the priest. But the same command was given when no such condition existed (ch. ix. 30; Mark v. 43). It appears from the record of the same miracle in Mark (i. 40) that there was a reason entirely separate from this. We there find that the cleansed leper, like others on whom silence had been enjoined, "went out, and began to publish it much, and blaze abroad the matter," the result of which was, "that Jesus could no more enter into the city, but was without in desert places." It appears, therefore, that it was to prevent the necessity of his withdrawing himself from the chosen scene of his labours that Jesus wished these works of his not to be publicly known.

But how could the public knowledge of a miracle have the effect of driving him, so to speak, from the city into the desert? It would seem that two causes conspired to produce this effect. A report of the miraculous cure would excite the opposition of the rulers on the one hand, and throng him with supplicants for similar favours on the other. It is easy to see how the first of these circumstances might operate as a cause, but the second does not at first sight appear likely to act in the same manner; it would rather, it might seem, have an opposite tendency. We are to remember, however, that these works were not the primary, but the secondary object of the Lord's ministry. His first object was to teach, his second to cure. Miracles did not produce faith, but faith was necessary to the production of miracles; and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. It was therefore, it would appear, contrary to order for the miracle to be proclaimed by man before the gospel of the kingdom had been preached by the Lord. John, who was the forerunner of the Lord, did no miracle, doubtless to teach us that instruction must precede regeneration. We may therefore suppose the Lord addressing each cleansed sinner thus: "Go thy way. Live according to the truth. Speak not to men, but act towards God. Turn not thy thoughts earthward, but thy steps heavenward. Before thou go into the world, enter into the sanctuary; give thy heart to the Lord before thou give thy experience to men." Another reason for silence is given in this Gospel (ch. xii. 17), which we shall consider in its place—that it was to fulfil a prophecy. But the second command which the Lord gave to the leper will still further explain the first: "Show thyself to the priest." In this command the Lord, as our Prophet, directs us to himself as our Priest—as the Truth he leads us to himself as the Good; as the Human to the Divine. To show ourselves to the Lord as our Priest is to see ourselves as he

sees us, and to see his truth from good. As our Priest, the Lord sees us savingly when he gives us to know that he dwells in us, and we in him, by the love we have received from him; for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. He sees and pronounces us clean when he whispers to us through our conscience that the plague of sin no longer cleaves to us. When the conscience is purified from dead works, we can offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. The gifts and offerings commanded in the Levitical law were types of the purified thoughts and affections that are offered to God, in gratitude for deliverances experienced and mercies received, and which become sanctified to the worshipper by being dedicated to the service of him who gave them. The offering of the cleansed leper consisted of lambs without blemish, fine flour, and oil—symbols of innocence, charity, and love: innocence unblemished by conscious guilt, charity that envieth not, love that is without dissimulation. These are the gifts which the purified soul offers as a testimony to the Lord as the Author of all good, and which are the means of effecting conjunction of life with him as the supreme good.

5, 6. The Lord, having cleansed an Israelite, is now besought to cure a Gentile. *When Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.* A servant signifies the natural or external part of the mind, because this serves the internal, as a servant his lord. The word here used is not that which means a bond-servant. In Luke vii. 2 this servant is said to be dear to his master—a fact which may be inferred from his solicitude for his recovery. But this loved servant was sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. Palsy represents a state where there is the will, but not the power to do. The will to do is from good; but good has no power of acting but by truth. Truth is in the mind what the muscular system is in the body: Good can no more act spiritually without the ministry of truths, than the will can act naturally without the concurrence of the muscles. Paralysis is the symbol of that state of the mind when, from some opposing influence, truth refuses to obey the behests of goodness; or, what is the same, when the external is unable to do what the internal wills to be done. Such a state is described by the apostle, where he says: "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. vii. 18). Such a condition of mind is attended with torment; for what can be more afflictive to one who desires to do good than to find that evil is present with him? How pathetically

does the apostle lament this state when he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24.)

7. The state which this case represents and the apostle describes is one that is not without hope. There is a physician in Israel to whose healing power every disease must yield. So knew the apostle when, turning his thoughts from his own feeble and wretched condition to a powerful and blessed One in whom there was help, he said, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The centurion had learnt where to look for help in his time of need; and this help he found. His prayer was answered before it was expressed. To his simple declaration that his servant was sick, the Lord responded, *I will come and heal him.* He comes by influx and revelation, and heals by reformation and regeneration. The Lord comes by a knowledge of his truth, and restores by obedience to it.

8. But *the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* A sense of unworthiness is a sign of worth. It is one of the first results of distinguishing in ourselves between what is from the Lord and what is from self; and this feeling deepens as the distinction is more perfectly perceived. This is the ground of true humility. The highest angels are the most humble. Those who are in the deepest humiliation are in the highest exaltation. Those who are farthest from self are nearest to the Lord. Yet true humility among men, as arising not only from a sense of evil and nothingness, but from a conviction of sin, rather deprecates than craves the Lord's intimate and immediate presence. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," was the prayer of Peter, on a signal manifestation of the Lord's power, contrasted with his own unavailing labour; and a sudden sense of the Lord's loving condescension made the centurion feel and declare his unworthiness to receive Jesus under his roof. The mind that has a deep sense of the Lord's goodness has, at the same time, a deep sense of its own unworthiness: the one is proportioned to the other. It feels itself too mean for such a guest—too disorderly, dark, and impure to endure the presence of him who is order and light and purity itself. *Speak the word only,* is its language, *and my servant shall be healed.* Unworthy to receive, and unable to bear thy immediate presence and power, give me thy mediate presence and operation. Come to me through thy Word, out of which virtue goes to heal all manner of sickness and disease.

9. The centurion's humility and faith were enhanced by his posi-

tion. *I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* The centurion representing the rational man, or the rational faculty, his hundred soldiers are rational truths, existing in adequate fulness, in orderly arrangement, and in due subordination to the ruling principle of the mind. As soldiers, they signify also truths combating, not only, as is too much the case with the natural rational man, against error in others, but against doubt and unbelief in himself. The subordination of all the principles of the mind, born of the will, the understanding, and the outward life, is meant by this one going, another coming, and the servant doing. Faith becomes conspicuous in the submission of the mind, with all its powers and possessions, to the Lord.

10. It was when the centurion, after his entreaty, had made this statement of his condition, that the Lord *marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* We are not of course to imagine that the Lord was taken by surprise. He who knew what was in man, knew all the centurion told him before he uttered a word. His was an expression of admiration. It expresses the sympathy which existed between the spiritual truth of the Lord and the rational truth in the mind which acknowledges and is desirous to receive the higher light. The Lord's saying to them that followed him, that he had not found so great faith in Israel, was literally to express to them how much more believing and receptive he found this Gentile than he had found any among the Jews, and how much better disposed towards him were those beyond than those within the pale of the church.

11, 12. From the case of the Gentile centurion whose faith surpassed any he had found in Israel, the Lord proceeds to speak of the state of the Gentile world, as compared with that of the Jews. *And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* The subject is not limited to any particular people or time. The contrast is between those who are in good without truth, and those who are in truth without good. The first are spiritually meant in the Word by the Gentiles, and may be found within as well as out of the church ; the second is the state of all who have been unfaithful to the knowledge they possessed. Of those spiritual Gentiles it is said that " many shall come from the east

and west," because east and west signify states of good, as south and north signify states of truth. East is a state of interior good, as it begins in the heart; and west is a state of exterior good, where it ends in the life. East and west, therefore, are expressive of all states of good, internal and external. But these are states of natural good, having in it, like all sincere good, the desire to receive truth, by which it becomes spiritual. This truth is meant by the term "kingdom;" for a kingdom is under the government of laws, and these laws are truths. But that here spoken of is the kingdom of heaven, which is heavenly or spiritual truth. For Gentiles to come into the kingdom of heaven, therefore, is for those who are in natural good to come into spiritual truth. This, in fact, is the same as coming into heaven itself. All who are principled in good, who live and die without the truth, receive it in the other life, and so enter heaven; nor can they come into heaven till their good receives and is united to truth; for heaven is the conjunction of good and truth. But heaven is a state as well as a place; and being in man, it can exist in this world as well as in the other. All true members of the church are in the kingdom of heaven while they yet live on earth. The Lord, therefore, taught, and commanded his disciples to teach, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. All the good, when they receive the truth, enter the church, and all who enter the church enter the kingdom of heaven. But it is said of those who come from the east and from the west, that they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. There are three degrees of perfection to which the good are capable of attaining, which are called celestial, spiritual, and natural; and there are three heavens formed respectively of those who are in these states. These are meant in the Word by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who represented the Lord himself as he is present with men and angels in his Divine Humanity. To sit down with these patriarchs is to sit down with the Lord in his kingdom, as he accommodates his attributes to the states of his people. To sit, we have seen, is expressive of a confirmed and permanent state of life, and includes the idea of serenity and peace. Such is the blessed end of those who cherish affections of goodness, however they may be deficient in the knowledge of the truth.

The children of the kingdom are those who have been born and nurtured in the church, but who have sinned against the light of truth. These shall be cast out into outer darkness. As truth is the symbol of light, darkness is the symbol of falsity. The degree of falsity into which the evil ultimately come is proportioned to the degree of truth against which they have sinned. Outer darkness is expressive of that

degree of falsity which is opposed to the clearest light of truth; and those who are cast, or whose evils cast them into it, are such as have extinguished all truth in their minds, and confirmed themselves in that falsity which is grounded in evil. The weeping and gnashing of teeth which prevail in the region into which they are cast are no doubt expressive of the misery they endure; but they also signify active states of the affections and thoughts, weeping being expressive of the absence of all true satisfaction of heart, and gnashing of teeth, of sensual reasonings and disputations, by which they confirm themselves in the evils they love.

13. When the Lord had concluded his address to those who followed him, he said unto the centurion, *Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* This often-repeated command, "Go thy way," is an injunction to live as the Lord directs—to order our lives according to the dictates of his truth. Thus our faith becomes practical, being exemplified in our life and conversation. When we have thus believed, so will it be done unto us. Although salvation is in goodness, it comes through truth; although it is in love, it is received through faith,—not through faith alone, which is dead, but through faith in conjunction with love, which is living. Faith is the medium through which the Lord's power becomes operative; for truth is the power by which the Lord works, and truth is the object of faith. Therefore faith was a common condition of salvation, and of the Lord's miraculous cures, which represented it. According to our faith in the Lord as the Saviour, so is the saving virtue we receive from him. Such was the centurion's faith that his servant was healed without the Lord's personal presence, and in the moment of his declaring the cure. *The self-same hour* in which the cure was effected was symbolical of the state of the centurion's faith, which secured the blessing, for time is the symbol of state.

14, 15. A third miraculous cure was that performed on Peter's wife's mother. *And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.* The Lord's coming into Capernaum represented his presence with man in doctrine, which a city signifies; his coming into Peter's house represented a further progression, and his presence with man in the good of faith; for Peter represented faith, and a house signifies good, and Peter's house, the good in which faith dwells. As Peter represented faith, his wife signifies the affection of faith, which is charity, or neighbourly love. The mother of Peter's wife represented the affection of love to the Lord; for love to the Lord is the parent of love to the neighbour. But

Peter's wife's mother was laid, and sick of a fever. A fever is expressive of the burning lust of evil. The evil of self-love is the opposite of love to the Lord; and a state like that of a burning fever is produced in the mind when the evil of self-love rises up in the heart in opposition to the good of love to the Lord. The state here described is not one in which the evil of self-love predominates in the mind, but is one in which that hereditary affection is excited by evil spirits, giving rise to a state of temptation. The two expressions "laid" and "sick" indicate the operation of this temptation as active both in the will and the understanding. When the Lord saw her, *he touched her hand, and the fever left her.* This teaches us not only that the Lord's divine power is that by which deliverance from the influence of evil love is effected, and love to him is restored to health and established in its supremacy in the heart, but also how this deliverance is effected. The hand is the emblem of power, because it is that member of the body by which power is manifested. The hand also signifies, therefore, the natural principle, which is the instrument by which the spiritual acts. The Lord's touching the hand was emblematical of his power flowing into and restoring to order the natural principle, so that the spiritual could act in an orderly manner through it. The natural mind is the seat of evil; and when the evil that resides therein is excited into activity, the natural mind reacts against the spiritual, which produces spiritual disorder and disease, one form of which is here meant by a fever. When Jesus touched her hand the fever left her. Here again was an instantaneous cure, intended to teach us the certainty of restoration when the Lord's power is invoked or received. The completeness of the cure is indicated by the circumstance that *she arose, and ministered unto them*—indicating the return of complete health and strength. But this represents that when opposing lusts are removed, the oppressed and diseased affection of love to the Lord is elevated to a still higher place in the heart, and thence proceeds into act in ministering to the Lord and men in works of piety, charity, and mercy.

16. After the Lord had performed these three miracles on individual persons, *When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.* The demoniacal possessions so common at the time of our Lord's manifestation in the flesh were the result of the dominion which the kingdom of darkness had then acquired over mankind,—a dominion so complete that evil spirits ruled not only the minds but the bodies of men. And had not the Lord in this crisis

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come into the world, by assuming our nature and receiving the assaults of evil spirits into his own humanity, and by overcoming in temptation, conquered the hells, no flesh could have been saved. His casting out demons was a part of his work of redemption. But these deliverances of men from external possessions represented deliverance from internal possessions, to which all men are subject. For evil spirits still dwell in our impure affections, and possess our souls as truly as demons then possessed the bodies of men. It is said that they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils. The many here mentioned are spiritually the numerous affections of the natural mind or external man, and those who brought them are the affections and perceptions of the spiritual mind or internal man. When the Lord gives us internally to see the real state of the natural mind as it is by nature, and to know him as our Saviour, we may draw near to him with our sufferings and sorrows, with the hope and even the certainty of having them removed. When the possessed ones were brought to him, *he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick*. How does he cast out with his Word the evils in our minds, in which evil spirits dwell? By his Word, which is divine truth, being received by us and loved and obeyed. No word of the Lord can deliver us except by our active co-operation with it in affection and thought, by word and deed. In all who become workers together with him the Lord works effectually in casting out the spirits of evil from our hearts, and healing all the sicknesses of our understandings.

These last miracles were done when even was come, both to indicate an obscure state of the mind, and to mark completion of the general state of the regenerate mind, meant by the day in which the several works were performed, of which these were the last.

17. These last works were performed, that it *might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*. This important prophecy has been interpreted to mean that Jesus, as our surety and substitute, assumed the guilt of our moral infirmities, and suffered the punishment due to our sins. In the practical exposition which the evangelist gives of this prediction no such idea is expressed, or even alluded to. It is a great truth delivered by the prophet, where he says, "The Lord hath laid on him (or, as expressed in the margin, hath made to meet on him) the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). But how did our iniquities meet upon him? Not certainly by God imputing to him the guilt of our sins, and punishing him in our stead, but by his taking upon himself our

fallen nature, with all its hereditary evils, or its moral infirmities and sicknesses.

The Lord took our evils upon him, that he might have in his humanity the common ground of human temptation, and be able, by overcoming those temptations, to subdue the powers of darkness, and glorify his humanity. Thence he is able to succour us in our temptations, and to effect our regeneration. The casting out of devils from the minds and bodies of others was the result of his having first overcome them in their attempts to possess humanity as he had taken it upon himself. The Gospel, therefore, in this case gives an instance of the effect of the Lord's work of glorification, and of his having himself taken our infirmities and borne our sicknesses.

18. *Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.* This commandment indicates a purpose to extend his saving operations to another sphere of the human mind, one which may be understood by the place to which he proposed to repair. The other side of the sea of Galilee was out of Palestine, being on "the other side Jordan." In the original settlement of the Israelites two tribes and a half received their inheritance on the farther side of the river. Under this division Canaan represented the internal man, and the land beyond the river the external. The tribes that dwelt in Canaan represented the spiritual principles that reside in the internal man, and those beyond the river represented the natural principles that reside in the external man; while the tribe of Manasseh, half of which dwelt on either side the river, represented the principle of goodness which unites them. The Lord's commandment to depart unto the other side expresses his desire to proceed from the internal to the external of the mind, that he may there manifest the power of his truth to deliver, and the virtue of his love to save, even unto the uttermost.

19, 20. But this purpose operates as a test and trial in two ways. First, it brings to a decision what affections in the mind are disposed to adhere to and follow the Lord through the self-denying labours of the Christian life—what good affections and thoughts, which his teaching has awakened and his works have strengthened, are ready to leave the things that are behind, and press onward to the things that are before. One comes to the Lord with the noble profession,—*Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* And now the Lord discloses to him the kind of experience that awaits every one who undertakes so serious a duty. *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay HIS HEAD.* True as

this was naturally at the time, not less true will every one find it spiritually who follows the Lord in the regeneration. The natural mind of man, in its yet unregenerate state, is the den of every wild beast, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Its affections and thoughts are only evil, and that continually. But not only are evils there by nature, which no one can help, but that which is to be mourned over is, that they are more or less cherished in every heart and mind. Here the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, where they live in security and increase. The foxes are the types of all evil affections, the birds of all false thoughts. And when these are cherished, to the exclusion of good affection and right thoughts, the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. The Lord's sacred head should be pillowed on every heart—his truth should find a place in our best affections. We lament the state of the world that produced the necessity for the Lord's declaration, and sympathize with the Son of man. Let us look within; and then may we remedy, if we will, the corresponding state in ourselves, and so render our sorrow and sympathy practical and availing.

But the point of this declaration consists in its being addressed to a would-be-disciple, as a test of his sincerity, whether he was disposed to follow a Master who had nothing in the meantime to promise but hardship and privation. Though this test may no longer exist naturally, it still exists spiritually; for the disciple must follow his Lord "whithersoever he goeth"—through privation and suffering, as well as in doing.

21, 22. When the Lord had addressed these words to the first who offered to follow him, another of his disciples said unto him, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.* But Jesus said unto him, *Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.* This is one of those passages which Christians intuitively perceive have a deeper sense than that which lies on the surface. This they perceive from the Lord's answer, rather than from the man's request. For there seems nothing either extraordinary or unreasonable in the desire which the disciple expressed; and some objectors have assumed that the request was more humane than the answer. But we are to reflect that the soul and eternity, not the body and the world, were ever in the Lord's thoughts, and were really the subjects of his discourse on all occasions, the temporal events of which others spoke being made by him images and the vehicles of corresponding spiritual truths. Thus in the Lord's mind the body was an image of the soul, and natural were images of spiritual death and burial. In the spiritual

sense, a father signifies, in relation to man in his natural state, the principle of self-love, this being the origin of the affections of our unrenewed nature; and this is the father we are required in the gospel to leave and hate. But when this love dies within us, why should it be wrong to desire to bury it? One reason is, burial signifies resurrection, or rising again into new life. The disciple's request to be allowed to bury his father involved the existence of a lingering desire to restore, rather than to reject, this principle of self-love, now dead within him. And this was more especially the case as he desired to "go" and do it, which was spiritually a desire to turn away from the living to the dead. The singular phrase, "let the dead bury their dead," is instructive; for Jesus never spake without a solemn and important meaning. In the work of regeneration evil spirits are made the instruments of removing evil. They excite evil in the human mind, and when their assaults are resisted, and the temptation is overcome, the evil is removed along with those who excited it. Nay, they themselves remove it. The spirits of darkness cling to the evil which they excite in our hearts, and they never leave us till we let the evil go. Then they go with it to their own dark abode, and become the dead that bury the dead. When, therefore, the Lord said, "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead," he inculcated the Divine lesson, that it is the duty of the disciple to walk onward with Him who is the life, and not turn back to dead principles and works, but leave them to return to the regions of darkness from whence they came.

23, 24. There are trials before us in the onward path of regeneration which require the energies we are often disposed to waste on things and states that are past. The incident we now come to consider teaches us this. *And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.* A ship signifies the knowledge of goodness and truth: for knowledge is not truth, much less is it in itself goodness, but is only the vessel which contains them, and conveys them to the understanding, and thence to the will, of the mind. The Lord's entering into a ship, and his disciples following him, represented his entering into, and his presence in, the knowledge of good and truth which we have derived outwardly from his Word. The sea on which the Lord and his disciples were now embarked was an expansion of the Jordan, through which Israel passed on their way to Canaan, and has a similar signification. In relation to man, both signify the natural mind, or more strictly, perhaps, the natural rational, which is intermediate between the spiritual and natural degrees of the mind, as

Jordan and the sea were between Canaan and the region on the east. Here the disciples experienced tribulation, which is the symbol of temptation. For, *behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea.* The tempest produced by the stormy wind was a type of the tumult of evil passions excited in the natural mind by influx from the kingdom of darkness. But in the midst of all this agitation and alarm Jesus is asleep,—in a state of tranquil and peaceful repose while the tempest rages. So in the mind of the tempted one there is inward peace while there is outward tribulation; for the Lord is in the inmost of the soul as its peace and security. We may be unconscious for the moment of the inward secret peace which we possess. These tribulations arise partly from our too great attention to and immersion in outward things, so that the inward principle is laid asleep, and seems as if it were not. A natural state of the mind is also called sleep, compared with a spiritual state, which is called wakefulness. This of course is still more the case when we fall into tribulation, which indeed can only happen when the spiritual principle is less active than the natural. But these tribulations are permitted in order to lead us to a sense of our danger and of our weakness, and to prompt us to flee for succour to Him who only has power to control and subdue the angry passions of the human heart, and to awaken within us the Divine love and truth that our own carelessness and carnality have cast into a deep sleep. The disciples, when they awoke the Lord, exclaimed, *Lord, save us; we perish.* It is only when we feel ourselves to be perishing sinners that we truly feel the need of a Saviour. It is not that we are without the Saviour's presence; but these times of peril awaken up the slumbering consciousness of his indwelling life into activity, and bring the preciousness of his mercy home to our hearts. So is it with us in regard to every object of our love. In ordinary circumstances there may be little sensible emotion in regard to our most loved ones; but bring us into the fear of losing them, and the deepest solicitude is excited for securing what we now doubly feel we so greatly prize and cherish. Yet our fear originates in a want of faith. Every temptation indicates the weakness of our principles, and the use of the trial is to strengthen them. Temptation is an overshadowing of our convictions, a deadening of our love. It is the temporary ascendancy of the natural over the spiritual principles within us. Fear is the offspring of doubt—the want of perfect confidence in or reliance on the Lord's providence. *Why are ye fearful?* is a question the Saviour asks every trembling heart. Were we in every time of trial able confidently to say, "The Lord is my strength," we should be able also to say,

“Of whom shall I be afraid?” The Lord, who asked the question, gave the answer when he said, *O ye of little faith*. Yet the threatening of the tempest gave distinctness and direction to the faith of the disciples, since it led them to Jesus, to allay the storm which their lack of faith had produced, and which it disclosed. *Then the Lord arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea*. How sublime is this spectacle of Jesus speaking peace to the raging elements, manifested in the result—and *there was a great calm!* We should let no occasion pass of recognizing the wonder-working power of the Divine Saviour. And hardly any one more strikingly presents evidences of his superhuman power than the rebuking of the storm, and causing the raging tempest to subside at once into a profound calm. But great as that work undoubtedly was, still greater and infinitely more blessed in its results is the power which the Lord exercises over the spirit of man when tossed upon a sea of spiritual trouble, when the tempest and the whirlwind are such as threaten to engulf the soul in spiritual evils, and finally in hell itself. The rebuking the wind and the calming of the storm in the soul is the result, not only of the Lord’s awaking, but of his arising—that is, his elevation in our hearts and minds, by which he acquires the power to bring the lower thoughts and affections into subordination and submission to himself, and thereby into the tranquillity of spiritual repose. That which our Lord produced was called a great calm, because greatness is predicated of a state of love and goodness, from which all true peace exists.

27. When the Lord had quelled the tempest, *the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!* And must not spiritual deliverance from such tribulation and peril lead the devout mind to marvel and say, What manner of man is this? Must he not be a divine man? To be a divine man, his manhood must be divine; for in no other way can divinity be possessed by a man than by his being divine as man. Every act of his saving mercy and power which we experience should lead us to adore the Lord in his divine humanity; for it is by his humanity being divine, and having been made divine through tribulation, that he is able to enter into our human trials and tribulations, and bring us out of them with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. It is by this also that he can rule the kingdom of darkness, and that he can tranquillize the mind in its greatest temptations. Even the winds and the sea obey him. The thoughts and affections of the mind, although, when excited by the influence of evil spirits, they may be beyond our own control, are completely under the

power of him who rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

28-34. *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, &c.* This is so extraordinary a case of demoniacal possession, and discloses so much the nature of the connection between the spiritual and the natural worlds, that it deserves a few words in its simply historical sense. The spiritual and the natural worlds are as closely connected with each other as the soul and the body. The ordinary connection of men with the inhabitants of the spiritual world, though intimate, is not, however, sensible. The two worlds, like the spiritual and the material parts of man, have nothing in common: they are united by correspondence; and such a union, however close, is not sensible either to men or to spirits. The only circumstance that was peculiar in the possessions mentioned in the New Testament was, that the ordinary laws of spiritual intercourse were overborne, and spirits entered not only into the affections of men's minds, but into the sensories and organs of their bodies. This arose from the prevalence of evil in the world, and the grossly sensual state into which men had fallen, which enabled wicked and sensual spirits to descend into the very ultimates of human nature. Such was evidently the case in the possession here recorded. The men did not speak as free agents under the influence of the evil spirits, but the evil spirits spoke through the men as passive instruments, showing that they had possession of their physical organs, and used them at their pleasure. But this singular narrative shows that spirits were not only able to possess human beings, but the inferior creatures. Animals as well as men live by virtue of their connection with the spiritual world; for the souls of beasts are spiritual, though not immortal, and they are capable, like men, of being the subjects of an extraordinary as well as of an ordinary influx from the spiritual world, or through it from the Divine and only Fountain of life. Animals and the animal nature of man are, by the ordinary laws, governed by a common or general influx from the spiritual world. Gentle and clean animals, like regenerate men, receive their life through heaven, while ferocious and unclean animals, like wicked men, receive their life through hell. In the present instance it is evident that the swine became the subjects of an extraordinary spiritual influx, the devils being permitted to possess them and use them as the involuntary instruments of their will.

It is remarkable that these evil spirits knew and acknowledged

Jesus to be the Son of God and the Redeemer, at a time when even his disciples had but an obscure perception of his true character, and of his object in becoming incarnate. This is not surprising. The nature and purpose of the Incarnation were, at that particular time, better known in the spiritual than in the natural world. The Lord's redeeming work had more immediate relation to the spiritual than to the natural world. Redemption consisted in the subjugation of hell, and in the performance of a judgment in the world of spirits, or intermediate state, on those who had lived in the world from the time of the Noetic dispensation, as well as in the establishment of a new church on earth. Subjugation and judgment in the spiritual world were even then in progress; and therefore spirits knew more of the Lord and of his work than men upon earth as yet knew. The language of these spirits bespeaks some knowledge and dread of the approaching day of decision. Judgment is effected by the Lord's more immediate presence, or by an extraordinary influx of his divine truth, which lays open the interior states of those who are subjected to it, and which, by divesting them, or rather by inducing them to divest themselves, of everything that is opposite or extraneous to their true character, consigns them to their final and everlasting abode. To the evil this is attendant with torment; not because it is the nature of the Lord's truth, or the will of the Lord himself, to cause pain or misery even to the worst of devils, but because their corrupt and perverted state is in direct opposition to the purity and order of his truth, which acts upon their deranged spiritual organism as light does upon a diseased eye. Such was the torment which these demons experienced from the presence and words of Jesus. This teaches us the important truth, that those only whose state of life is in harmony with the Divine life, which is pure love, can enjoy happiness in his presence, and that to those whose ruling love is opposite to his, the Lord's presence can only be productive of torment.

We now come to consider this miracle according to its spiritual meaning.

28. *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.* In this simple relation we have a true but awful picture of the state of man as to his natural mind, signified by Gergesenes, at the time our Lord came into the world, and at the time of his first coming to every man as his Redeemer and Saviour. The two possessed with devils are the will and the understanding of the natural mind, as, in every unre-

generate man, they are possessed and ruled by evils, and by the false persuasions connected with them. Although at this day evil spirits do not possess the bodies of men, they possess their minds; and in this way they may possess and rule men as completely as they did at the time of the Lord's incarnation. This kind of possession makes men even more culpable than the demoniacs of old. The possessed with devils, like lunatics, ceased for the time to be responsible beings; but those who give their minds to demons, while they retain their liberty and reason, are responsible for their actions. According to the ordinary law, spirits dwell in the affections of men. They are not allowed to enter directly into men's thoughts, and can only influence their thoughts through their affections; so that every man is left free to think, and therefore to decide and choose between good and evil. Although less obvious, possessions at this day are not less real or deplorable than they were of old. Every evil man is possessed with devils; nay, every evil passion in every man is a body which some wicked spirit inhabits, and every depraved appetite is a tomb in which some unclean spirit dwells. Every evil man inwardly cherishes hatred and breathes destruction against all who are not his slaves; and is exceeding fierce, so that no man may safely pass by the way, or cross the path of his interest or ambition. But in the spiritual sense, "man" is the expression of what is truly human, which is the image of God in man; and the fierce hatred against men by these dwellers in the tombs is expressive of the direful hatred that is in all evil against what is truly human, or what is good and true, whether in themselves or in others. This hatred against men must have been still more intense against Jesus, as Man in the highest and holiest sense. But he came to moderate the fierce hatred of evil spirits against mankind, or at least to deprive them of the power to possess and destroy them. His great and beneficent power was exemplified on the present occasion. The men, under the control of the devils who possessed them, came out of the tombs when Jesus approached them, and, according to Mark v. 6, ran and worshipped him. This abject submission of the demons to the power of Jesus exemplifies the complete subjugation of the powers of darkness by the Lord as man's Redeemer. Redemption itself, as the great work of the Lord in the flesh, is well represented in this case. The Lord redeemed mankind by delivering them from the overwhelming power of hell, and restoring them to a state of spiritual freedom. Such was then the ascendancy of the power of hell over the power of heaven, that men were in a state of bondage, which deprived them of

spiritual liberty. They had, like the demoniacs, become to some extent the involuntary subjects of demoniacal power. It was not to cast off all communication between men and evil spirits that the Lord entered into conflict with the powers of darkness, but only to remove their ascendancy over mankind, which deprived them of their freewill, and to restore the equilibrium between heaven and hell, on which the freedom of the human will depends.

29. When Jesus came near these demoniacs, *behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* This cry, though uttered by the men, was really that of the devils who possessed them. But the words are attributed to the possessed, to describe spiritually the exquisite torment experienced by those who are being regenerated, when the Divine and the diabolic power come into actual conflict within them. Evil spirits suffer torment on such occasions, but their torment is communicated to those in whose evils they dwell, and which they defend with all their power. The kind of temptation is also indicated by the names of those engaged in it. The demoniacs address the Lord as "Jesus, thou Son of God." Both these divine names are expressive, not only of the Lord in his humanity, by which he is our Saviour, but specifically of the Lord in respect to his essential attribute of goodness, as the Son of Man is expressive of the Lord, not only as the Word, but in respect to his essential attribute of truth. The principle of evil, and the class of infernal spirits that are directly opposed to the Lord's goodness, are also expressed in the Word by the devil, the name by which the evil spirits who possessed the men are designated; while false principles, and spirits that are directly opposed to the Lord's truth, are named Satan. Temptation conflicts between good and evil are attended with much greater torment than those between truth and falsity; as all mental trials which have relation to love are more afflictive than those which have relation to faith: for truth and faith are means, and belong to the understanding, but goodness and love are ends, and belong to the will. In addressing Jesus the demoniacs say, "art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Time signifies state; and the state here alluded to, as the anticipated time of torment, is the climax of temptation, when suffering is so direful that it induces something of despair as to the result. It was when looking to the extremity of his temptation, in the passion of the cross, that Jesus prayed that the cup might pass from him, and that, when the hour of his conflict came, he uttered the despairing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou for-

saken me!" The cry of the demoniacs was of the same character, though far inferior in degree, to that of the Lord himself. To consider the subject more precisely. "Before," in regard to time, means principal in regard to state. Torment before the time signifies, therefore, suffering arising from temptation as it acts upon the principal or ruling affections of the mind, and not on those of an inferior degree; and the more interior temptation is, the more exquisite is the torment with which it is attended.

30. *And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.* As, in the spiritual sense, the relation has reference to one person, and to every person in a particular stage of the regenerate life, the "men" represent the rational, and the "swine" the sensual part or principle of man's nature. The sensual part of man's nature being the lowest and grossest, it is "a good way off" from the rational, which, though not a spiritual, is an interior natural principle. The sensual affections and appetites, with all the impressions and ideas that have been acquired through the medium of the senses, which form the sensual principle, are "many," and form a "herd," being drawn and held together by a common bond that is rather animal than human. But the swine were feeding at the time the devils entreated to be sent away, or suffered to go into them; for the state here described is one in which man is as yet living in the indulgence of his sensual appetites. We cannot but call to mind in this connection that beautifully expressive description of the sinner's descent into the lowest state of spiritual degradation, in the prodigal's being reduced to the last degree of destitution, when he hired himself to a citizen of the far country in which he had wasted his substance with riotous living, and who sent him into his fields to feed swine. It was here, however, that the prodigal came to himself, and resolved to return as a penitent to his father. It is here, too, in the spiritual sense of the present narrative, that the men's deliverance from demoniacal possession was effected, the swine serving as the channels, so to speak, through which the devils were sent to their own congenial abodes.

31, 32. *So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine.* When evil spirits are expelled from the inner or rational part of the mind, they still seek and find a refuge in the lower or sensual part. Their own desire, and the divine permission, though diametrically opposite in end and purpose, nevertheless work together to produce the same

beneficent result. The spirits of darkness can only operate upon man by Divine permission. But we must remember that, in the government of the Divine Providence, the permission of evil is regulated by this principle, that the Lord only permits a less evil to prevent a greater, and, as far as possible, to bring ultimately some good out of the evil permitted. Evil spirits are allowed to enter into men's evil affections, not only because man in his present state could not live and act as a free agent without connection with the spirits of hell as well as with the angels of heaven, but because evil spirits excite men's evils, so as to bring them to his knowledge, as a necessary means of his being induced and led to remove them, or rather to consent to their removal. When we consider that evil spirits are permitted to enter into man's evils that they may excite them, and so be made the negative instruments of removing them, we can see the divine wisdom and goodness of the Lord in suffering the devils to go away into the herd of swine when cast out from the men they had so completely possessed. Regeneration, too, proceeds from higher to lower. The interior of the mind is first regenerated, and the exterior afterwards and through it. The lower evils are therefore excited last; and when these are removed regeneration is completed. With this purpose and order of the Lord's saving operation the very inclinations and purposes of the spirits of darkness are made to conspire, to work out the final cause of temptation. The tenacity with which evil spirits cling to the lusts and phantasies of the human mind is such, that they never relinquish their hold, and can only be cast out by the evil itself, in which they dwell, being renounced and removed. Thus are the evils of the human heart and mind removed by the evil spirits who dwelt within them, and carried away to the kingdom of darkness, to which they belong. This kingdom is meant by the sea, in the waters of which the swine perished. The whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, to express the downward inclination of evil and evil spirits, and the avidity with which they plunge into the lowest depths of iniquity, and, as a consequence, into the abyss where all evil has its ultimate and endless abode. Those who live and die in a state of impenitence are dragged, with their cherished evils, down into the regions of eternal woe. The penitent have a far different end. Repentance and amendment separate their evils and evil spirits from them, so that what is intended and expected to be their destruction proves their salvation; for the devils carry away their evils, while they themselves, delivered by the Lord's power, are restored to their right mind, and after having witnessed the Lord's mercy

and goodness here, enter into his kingdom of peace and blessedness hereafter.

33. When the herd of swine had rushed into the sea, and perished in the waters, *they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.* It is not said of these, as it is of the prodigal, that they fed the swine, but that they kept them. The swine-herds, too, although terror-stricken at the catastrophe, were awed into wonder by the miracle. They fled from the scene of the disaster; but they entered the city in a calmer mood, and were not so entirely occupied with their own loss as to forget to relate what had befallen to the possessed of the devils. Spiritually understood, the possessors and the keepers of these unclean animals are related to each other as affection and thought. It is the affections that possess, and the thoughts that keep watch over the mind's possessions, whatever they may be. When man is merely sensual, his affections are lusts, and his thoughts are devices to secure the means of their gratification. This is not exactly the state described in the present narrative. It represents man as alive, indeed, to sensual gratification, but not dead to a sense of higher things. It describes the state of one whose thoughts have been directed to the Lord as the Redeemer, come to destroy the works of the devil by the subjugation of hell, not only as it is in itself, but as it is in man, thereby restoring the rational mind to a sound state. The conveyance of this to the affections is meant by the keepers relating everything, and that which had befallen to the possessed of the devils, to those in the city.

34. On hearing the tidings, *behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.* The citizens, like their informants, seem to have regarded Jesus with mingled feelings of fear and wonder. Although they desired him to depart from their coasts, they did not offer to employ force, but used entreaty. They quailed before one who had given them so severe a proof of his power; but there was no manifestation of rage or enmity. The Lord also complied with their petition, and departed. Personally, they represent those who see in the Lord a Being of power rather than of goodness, and who worship him from fear, rather than from love, and are more distressed than comforted by the idea of his near presence. This is characteristic of those who are in an external state in regard to religion. They see in God, even as revealed in the Word, an angry and vindictive Being, and tremble at his presence, believing that no man can see him and live. In a

more particular sense, the circumstances describe a state in which the whole affections, suddenly brought under a powerful Divine influence, are moved to separate themselves from the dogmas of their sensuous faith to meet the Lord at his coming. Yet this very state, which brings man's evils more vividly to his mind, makes him unable to bear the nearer presence of the Lord, or makes the clear light of truth terrible to him. The case and the language of these Gentiles may be compared with those of the Gentile woman whose son died while she nourished Elijah, and who said unto him, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son" (1 Ki. xvii. 18).

CHAPTER IX.

1. When Jesus, in compliance with the Gergesenes, departed out of their coasts, *he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.* Capernaum is now called the Lord's own city, and was during his public ministry what Nazareth had been during his private life. As a city signifies doctrine, the Lord's own city is the doctrine which relates personally and immediately to him, and which teaches that he is God manifest, and that in his Divine humanity he is the Redeemer and Saviour of men. This heavenly doctrine in us is the Lord's own city of habitation, from which he goes forth to carry his saving virtue into every faculty and affection of the mind, and to which he returns with renewed strength, to proceed again and again on his mission of salvation. The Lord can only dwell with man in that which is his own. Divine good can only dwell in divine truth; genuine good must have genuine doctrine for its place of abode. When the Lord's power brings deliverance to the good, and inspires terror into the evil of the external man, he returns into the internal, where there are purer affections and truer thoughts, that can bear his presence, and can recognize him as a benefactor.

2. When he had entered into his own city, *they brought to him a man sick of the palsy.* This disease represented, as we have seen (viii. 6), the state of one who has the will but not the power to do good, or in whose external there is such a want of conformity and correspondence with the internal as to prevent him from manifesting in and by it the thoughts and intentions of the heart. This man was *lying on a bed.* A bed signifies the particular religious doctrine or persuasion in which a man confides, and in which he seeks rest for

his weary soul. So the Psalmist exhorts, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" (Ps. iv. 4); and declares for himself, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips: when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate upon thee in the night-watches" (Ps. lxiii. 5, 6). The wicked, on the contrary, "deviseth mischief upon his bed" (Ps. xxxvi. 4). And so the Lord, to teach us that it is not any one's religious doctrine or persuasion that saves him, tells us that in the last days of the church "there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left" (Luke xvii. 34). Two may be in one doctrine, and while to one it may be a living faith, to the other it may be lifeless persuasion. The sick of the palsy was brought on his bed of languishing to Jesus by his friends. The best affections of our hearts prompt us to come, and the best thoughts of our understandings bring us to Jesus, for the removal of our spiritual maladies and our restoration to health. *And Jesus, seeing their faith* (the faith no doubt both of the paralytic and his friends), *said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee.* The man sought health for his body, and the Lord gave him salvation for his soul. This, however, was but preparatory to the restoration of his body also. From this we may learn that there is a connection between sin and disease. We must be careful rightly to understand this doctrine. We must not, like the Jews at the time of our Lord's incarnation, suppose that every man's particular maladies are the results of his particular sins. Disease is the general effect of general corruption, but not always the effect of particular sin. The Lord, who sees the connection between causes and effects, knows when a particular natural disease proceeds from a particular spiritual cause; and when this is the case, the removal of the sin is the way to cure the disease. This may have been the case in the present instance. But when we understand the diseases of the body to be types of diseases of the mind, we can see that spiritual disease is invariably the result of spiritual evil. In the spiritual body outward disease is always the effect of inward corruption. Diseased action is the effect of corrupt motive. When these co-exist as cause and effect, the removal of the first is preparatory to the cure of the second. When the Lord, therefore, desired the man to be "of good cheer," and declared his sins to be forgiven, he uttered words of comfort and assurance to every humble and penitent supplicant for his mercy, that a true and sincere faith is that through which the Lord inspires confidence and gives pardon.

3, 4. In forgiving the sins of this man, *certain of the scribes*, knowing that none can forgive sins but God only, *said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.* The Lord gave these objectors what they ought to have accepted as a proof of his possessing the divinity and power they denied him. *Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?* In telling them their unuttered thoughts the Lord gave them a proof of his power to forgive sins, and of being God, who only, according to their own faith, could claim the power of forgiveness. But he condescended to give them another proof, in the cure of the disease with which the man was afflicted.

5. Before performing this miracle the Lord demanded of the scribes, *Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?* The Lord received no answer, and required none. His question implies that he who, with a word, could instantly restore an impotent man to sound and vigorous health, could cure the maladies of the soul, and restore it to a state of righteousness. It was no doubt equally easy to say the words that Jesus uttered, but he showed that it was equally easy to do the works which his words expressed. But in the spiritual sense the connection of these two acts is still more obvious. The spiritual connection between the forgiveness of the man's sins and his rising up and walking is so intimate, that, although distinct, they are not separate or isolated acts, but form two parts of the same divine work. The forgiveness of sins does not consist in pronouncing them pardoned, but in removing from the heart the inclination to commit them. When the Lord said to the palsied man, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," he intimated the removal of the sinful inclination from the heart, and the communication to it of the love of goodness; and when he further said, "Arise, and walk," he intimated the deliverance of the external life from the effects of inward evil, and the descent into it of the life and activity of the love of goodness, which had been inspired into the inner man. Thus the Lord first brought the internal into a state of order, and then, as a consequence, restored the external to a state of correspondence with it; so that, in the best sense, the man might have a sound mind in a sound body.

6, 7. The Lord, still addressing the scribes, continues: *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house.* We cannot well conceive that such a miracle as this could produce any effect but awe on the minds of impartial spectators. To see a man

entirely palsied rise at once from his couch, and stand before them in all the vigour of health, and take up the bed on which, but a moment before, he lay utterly prostrate, and depart with it to his own house, were surely enough to awe men into holy fear, and cause them to bow down in profound reverence before him who had performed so mighty a work. There is no record to tell that these scribes, though utterly silenced, were at all convinced; on the contrary, the relation leaves it to be inferred that they continued in the obduracy of sinful and determined unbelief.

One purpose the Lord had in performing this miracle was, that those who heard him pronounce the man's sins forgiven might know, by beholding his work, that the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins. There is a great and consolatory truth involved in this fact. The Lord assumed human nature, and thus became the Son of man, or Divine Truth in its ultimate degree, that he might deliver man from evils which his Divine Truth, such as it was in relation to man on earth, could not reach before the incarnation. Divine Love exercises its saving power by means of Divine Truth; but love has power by truth only so far as it is accommodated to the states of the human mind. The Word, which in the beginning was with God,—Eternal Wisdom, as it dwelt in the bosom of Eternal Love,—was all-sufficient for the spiritual generation of unfallen man; but man's fall rendered it necessary that the Word should be made flesh, and so come down to his level, and accommodate itself to his altered state of affection and perception. By this means the Son of man had power on earth to forgive or to remove sin. But this language expresses still more. For earth, in the purely spiritual sense, means the earthly or natural mind of man. This region of the mind is the seat of all man's evils. And as the Lord by incarnation took this earthly mind, or this part of man's organization, upon himself, he thereby brought his Divine Truth down into it, and so dwelt among us as Man among men. And not less, but even more, is he among us now as the Son of man who has been lifted up, or glorified, that he may draw all men unto him. And this he does by removing from our natural man, or earthly mind, the sins which separate us from him as our God.

8. *But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.* The simple, less spoiled through vain philosophy, and less influenced by intellectual pride, were more ready to draw the proper conclusion which the evidence of their senses justified, and even demanded. They did not, it is true,

recognize in Jesus the Supreme Being, clothed, though not entirely concealed, by the frail garment of humanity. They marvelled, or, as some read, were afraid, and glorified God; but they glorified him because he had given such power unto men. They regarded Jesus as a man, but as one who had his power to do these wonderful works immediately from God; and were therefore much better than the scribes and Pharisees, who ascribed the Lord's power, when they could not deny it, not to the Most High, but to Beelzebub. The science, falsely so called, which leads men to ascribe everything to nature, and the pride of intellect, which persuades them that they can see in secondary causes the beginnings of things, blind them to the perception of the truth, which simplicity of mind, though it be that of comparative ignorance, disposes and prepares men to receive and reverence. 'Singleness of mind can alone see the Divine in the human of the Lord, which is truly and spiritually to glorify God that gives such power unto men. The Divine gives its power to the human, and that power is manifested by it in the salvation of man. The union of the Divine and the human in the person of the Lord is the source of his saving power.

9. *And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.* The calling of the twelve apostles, like the birth of the twelve patriarchs, represented the order in which the regenerate acquire the graces of religion. The calling of the first four, as recorded in chap. iv., has already been considered. Peter, we have seen, signifies faith in the understanding, and Andrew, his brother, signifies faith in the will; James signifies charity or love to the neighbour, and John, his brother, signifies love to the Lord,—but love as a practical principle, such as the Lord describes it when he says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (John xiv. 21). As we shall see, when we come to the enumeration of the apostles on their being sent forth to preach the Gospel, as recorded in chap. x., the apostles form three groups of four members each. Matthew belongs to the second group. The first four were fishermen, whose worldly occupation corresponded to the spiritual function they were to exercise—that of being fishers of men. Matthew's occupation at the time of his call was different from that of the four we have named; but, no doubt, had as close an analogy to the special use he was intended to perform as he himself had to the grace he represented. He was a publican, or collector of the tax which the Romans levied

on the Jews, which was felt as an oppressive burden; and, what rendered it still more obnoxious, was an undeniable badge of their subjection to a foreign yoke. The Roman power represented the natural rational principle, and the taxes which they levied from the Jews symbolized the making of spiritual knowledge subservient to the ends of man's natural reason. The Lord himself recognized it as a duty to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; but he declared it at the same time to be a no less imperative duty to render unto God the things which are God's. When, to avoid giving offence, Jesus consented to pay the Roman poll-tax, he so ordered it that the money should be obtained from the mouth of a fish in the sea, to represent that the natural, but not the spiritual principle, should be subject to the rational—that scientific, but not intellectual truth, should be subservient to its uses. When the Lord called Matthew from the service of Cæsar to his own, he did representatively what he does spiritually, when he delivers the spiritual principle in man from the dominion of the rational, and brings it into immediate connection with himself. Matthew was obedient to the call: he rose up, and followed Jesus. To obey the Lord when he calls us is a dutiful act, and shows a desire to do his will and make it our own. There is one act recorded of Matthew which teaches us the secret of the willingness of all whom he represented to follow the Lord. "He rose up," and followed him. If, when we are called, we raise our affections from worldly to heavenly things, and from temporal to eternal ends, we, too, will, with readiness and cheerfulness, follow the Lord wherever he is pleased to lead us.

10. Jesus, after he had called Matthew, entered into his house. *And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.* No part of the Lord's character stands out in more beautiful relief from that of the Pharisees of those and of all other times, than the tender regard he manifested for the despised and rejected among men, and his readiness to mix with them even in their feasts. But this compassionate tenderness and divine condescension was one of the very things for which the Pharisees accused and contemned him. The merit of the Lord's condescension consisted, of course, in the beneficent end he had in view; but this the Pharisees were unable to comprehend. Religion with them was a thing of mere ceremony and ostentation, and in their estimation it would only have been degraded by being brought down to the condition of the poor and miserable. But the religion which the Lord came to establish and to exemplify

among men, was one whose very object it was to save the degraded and lost. Jesus, therefore, mingled with men in every condition, and entered into their houses as the means of entering into their hearts. Such was his purpose in coming into the house of Matthew. But to regard this subject spiritually: a house is an emblem of the mind; and Jesus is spoken of as having sat down there, to express the interior reception, by the obedient mind, of the Lord as the truth and the life. His entertainer sat with him, to indicate community of state, which is necessary to make the Lord truly the guest of the humble but willing mind. The Lord sat at meat in the house; because meat for the body is typical of food for the mind, especially of the principle of good, which constitutes man's spiritual meat. And the Lord sitting at meat is expressive of the Lord's communion through good with man, and with all the affections and thoughts of his mind. The spiritual affections which the Lord introduces into the mind are meant by his disciples, who (Mark ii. 15) entered and sat down in the house with him. But besides these spiritual affections which the Lord introduces, there are other and natural affections which belong to man. These are the "many publicans and sinners that came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples." The name sinners is not, we may remark, always used in the New Testament in a moral sense, but frequently indicates no more than that those to whom it was applied were lax in their observance of the numerous ceremonials which the Pharisees had added to the law. The disrepute, too, in which the publicans were held, had no necessary reference to their moral character, but only to their office as tax-gatherers, whom the Jews regarded with extreme abhorrence. Those, therefore, who came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples may have been morally better than the Pharisees who despised them. The publicans represented affections or inclinations of the will—thus the affections and thoughts that belong to the natural mind of man. Spiritually, these are evil in every one by inheritance, for in this respect all men are alike; but when the heart and mind are turned heavenward, these are disposed to meet the Lord as an instructor and a Saviour. They come and sit down with Jesus and his disciples; they are inclined to come under his influence and receive his teaching, that they may be brought into conformity with the laws of his divine truth, as the principles of his kingdom, and have the same mind in them which is also in him.

11. *And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?* The self-righteous

man shuns "sinners" from contempt; the man of the world for the sake of reputation; the sensual man enters their company for gratification; the spiritual man only as a means of doing them good. Our Lord was a perfect pattern of what every minister of the Word, and every Christian in private life should be. The Christian should seek to save souls, by drawing men away from sin, which he can do only by imitating the Lord in hating the sin and loving the sinner. This the self-righteous do not. Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? is still the demand of the Pharisee. The Lord himself, as we shall see, answers the question. Here we only attend to the spiritual idea in his eating with them. To eat with any one is to enter into communion with him by the reciprocation of goodness. This is expressed by the Lord himself where he says, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. iii. 20). The Lord at all times is urgent to enter the hearts, as he was willing to enter the homes, of publicans and sinners, to accept their good and impart his own. Not that men have any good self-derived; but in whatever mind there is anything good which the Lord has already implanted, he desires to draw it forth, and make it the channel of conveying to the mind good of a still higher and purer kind. There is no salvation without reciprocation. If men could be saved by the Lord operating in them and upon them, all would be saved; for he desires the salvation of all. Man's co-operation is that which brings him salvation. The Lord is in every man, but every man is not in the Lord. In order to be saved, not only must the Lord dwell in us, but we must dwell in him. This is the reason that, in the days of his flesh, the Lord condescended to eat with publicans and sinners. To the spiritual Pharisee this is still a cause of offence. He denies the necessity for man's co-operation in the business of salvation, and deems it only consistent with the majesty and omnipotence of God that sinners should be saved by irresistible grace, or left by justice as vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. To all such we may say, Hear what the Lord saith.

12. *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.* No answer could better meet such an objection. That which the Pharisees blindly considered a reason why Jesus should avoid sinners, was the very reason he had for eating with them. *They were sick—he was a physician.* They were the objects of whom he was in search, the persons he had come to seek and to save. Do we sufficiently reflect upon this as eminently

the work of the Divine Saviour, and of the Christian's mission? If we despise, or neglect, or shun our degraded brethren of the human race, do we not practically make the same accusing demand as the Pharisees? What we ourselves think it a degradation to do, we must think it a degradation for the Lord to have done. If, on the other hand, we have the Lord's spirit dwelling within us, we will desire and act towards sinners as the Lord himself acted, and as he still acts, towards them. The whole family of fallen man are included in the number of the sick who need a physician. Yet our Lord speaks as if there were some who are not in this condition. As we shall see in explaining the words which follow, the distinction is to be understood, not as applicable to fallen men in any age, but to humanity in its primeval and present state.

13. The Lord further exhorts the Pharisees, saying, *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* Naturally understood, sacrifice is worship offered to God, and mercy is good done to man. The Lord wills mercy, and not sacrifice. Divine worship was instituted not as an end, but as a means. The end of worship is to make the worshipper like the Object of his worship—to make him good and just, merciful and forgiving. These are the things that the Lord wills. Not only does he will mercy in preference to sacrifice, but mercy is the only thing in sacrifice which he either wills or accepts. He can receive nothing from man. The homage he asks is only intended as a means for conveying the riches of his grace to the mind of the worshipper, and to inspire him with and keep him in the desire of doing mercy to his fellow-creatures. The Lord gives a reason for addressing to the Pharisees what had been written in the Word,—for his requiring mercy, and not sacrifice. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He therefore, as man, and the pattern for men, did what the Divine will desires. He showed mercy, and freely admitted into his presence, and entered into communion with, sinners who required it. Mercy is love grieving and forgiving; sacrifice is truth demanding and exacting. Had man not fallen, God would not have required mercy. Man would have been the subject and the object of divine love, and would have rendered to the Lord the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise, and spontaneously paid his vows unto the Most High. But man's state is changed, and with it the divine economy in relation to him. The men of the first or celestial church are meant by the whole, who need not a physician—the righteous, whom the Lord came

not to call. The spiritual, who lived after the time of the primeval church, are the sick whom the Lord came to heal, the sinners whom he came to call to repentance, the lost whom he came to save. When the celestial church ended, a spiritual church began. A miraculous change was then effected in the mental condition of men,—the intellect was separated from the will, and conscience was substituted for perception. A lower standard of duty was consequently introduced. The Lord does not require from his imperfect creatures all that the laws of eternal order required of him in his unfallen state; but he deals with him in conformity with the merciful accommodation of his truth to his fallen condition. That the law teaches more than man can ever realize, is true; that it demands perfect obedience, or the death of the sinner, is not. Nor is it a truth that Jesus came to live a life of holiness, and to offer himself as a sacrifice for sin, in our stead. Jesus came to fulfil the law, as a means of enabling us to fulfil it; and now, with all the aid that a Saviour, perfected through suffering, can give us, what we are required to render, the Lord gives us power to perform. We are required to come up to the standard as it is set up in our conscience, formed by the truths contained in the divine law, but the Divine mercy and justice require no more. The Lord will have mercy, and not sacrifice: he desires that men should be not only the objects but the subjects of his mercy, receiving his mercy into their hearts, and exhibiting it in their lives in deeds of mercy and charity to each other.

14. After the Lord had thus gently rebuked and instructed the Pharisees, *Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?* John's disciples, strict observers of the ritual law, agreed with the Pharisees on the subject of fasting, and were scandalized at the idea of Jesus and his disciples neglecting to fast. Looking at the subject spiritually, this question contains a deeper meaning. John represented the written Word, especially as to its literal sense, while the Lord was the Word itself, as the Divine Wisdom from which the written Word proceeded, and which it contains. John's great mission was to preach repentance, as the means of preparing the way of the Lord. His followers are therefore disciples of the letter, and as such are preparing the way, by self-denial, for the Lord's entrance into their hearts and minds. This work of self-denial is signified in the Word by fasting; and with those who are in this preparatory stage of the regenerate life, spiritual fasting is not only a necessary, but seems to them a paramount duty. The Lord's work, as succeeding that of

John, represented the doing of good rather than the ceasing to do evil,—the supplying of the mind with the principles of goodness and truth, for which fasting from everything evil and false has prepared it.

15. In answer to the disciples of John, *Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.* The Lord does not say that the children of the bridechamber do not mourn, but that they cannot mourn so long as the bridegroom is with them. He does not therefore say that his disciples do not fast; he only says that their time of fasting had not yet come, but that, when it did arrive, it would be more severe than that which John's disciples practised. The Lord delivered his lesson to John's disciples in a parable beautifully expressive of the truth he intended to convey to them, and to those whom they represented. The heavenly marriage in the Christian mind, which is the union of goodness and truth, is that which is everywhere meant in the Word by nuptials, in the genuine sense, and as a true internal union. The marriage of the Lord and the church is also included in its signification; but the church consists of those only in whom the marriage of good and truth exists. The children of the bridechamber are those who are in the affection of goodness and truth, and who receive into these affections the joys and delights of love and truth from the Lord's presence with them. In the state here spoken of, the Lord is with his disciples as a bridegroom, which indicates a state preparatory to marriage, or to the complete and confirmed union of the principles of goodness and truth. But even in this preparatory state the children of the bridechamber cannot mourn, for the bridegroom is with them. They are in the bridechamber, or in the internal affection of truth, and the bridegroom is with them in that affection as the principle of good. Yet this itself is but a state of preparation. The actual conjunction of goodness and truth cannot be effected in the mind without trial and temptation. The bridegroom in whom they now rejoice must be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. This taking away of the bridegroom, in reference to the Lord's disciples, literally refers to his being taken away from them by the death of the cross, which blasted all their cherished hopes of his restoring Israel as a temporal kingdom. But every Christian disciple passes through states corresponding to those which the Lord's first disciples underwent. Between the joyful reception and the happy union of goodness and truth there is an intervening state of

trial and sorrow, in which the Lord seems to be taken away, and in which the disciple fasts indeed. This fast is of a different character, and of much greater severity, than that of the disciples of John; it is not a voluntary abstinence from sinful gratifications, but an involuntary deprivation of the delights of goodness, which the soul has come to esteem as its life. But as the Lord, after his crucifixion, rose in greater glory than that in which he had previously appeared, so is this trial succeeded by a state of higher perfection and greater joy than any which the disciple had previously experienced.

16, 17. The Lord proceeds by another parable to instruct the disciples of John why his disciples, unlike them and the Pharisees, did not then fast. *No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.* The old garment is Judaism, the new piece is Christianity; the old bottles are the rituals of the Jewish church, the new wine is the truth of the Christian dispensation. The entire system of Judaism was alien to the spirit of the Christian religion. The moral law is indeed the same; but what was peculiar to the Jewish church was incapable of being combined with the principles of Christianity. These parables have, however, reference to the church in our day as well as to that which existed when they were first uttered. The principles of the new church cannot be grafted on the doctrines of the old, as they now are. "The imputation of the former church does not correspond with the new church, not as to the twentieth part." The name of the Christian doctrines remains, but the reality has ceased to be. But there is a still more practical lesson for us contained in these words of the Lord. It is possible for those who know the true doctrines of the church to fail in the duty which the Lord intended to teach them. The old garment is the righteousness of the old and unregenerate nature—the moral vesture which men put on to cover their spiritual corruption. We cannot become religious by merely inserting a piece of the new into the old, in order to repair this world-made vesture; but we must buy of the Lord new raiment, that the shame of our spiritual nakedness may not appear; we must put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, the white robe, which is the righteousness of saints. Nor must we put the new wine of spiritual truth into the old maxims of moral expediency and worldly prudence; but we must put our new principles into their only suitable receptacles

—honesty, integrity, and sincerity—under the conviction, that only by doing so can we have either true morality or true religion, and that only when both are new can both be preserved. But there is an idea expressed in the Lord's similitudes that we must attend to. The new piece properly means cloth that has come from the loom, but has not yet passed through the hands of the fuller, and symbolizes a righteousness which has been acquired, but is not yet perfected by trial and temptation. It is this kind of righteousness which, when put unto the old garment, takes from it, and makes the rent worse. The other similitude includes the same idea. The danger to old bottles from filling them with new wine arose from the wine fermenting, and so exerting a pressure on the old skin receptacles which they were unable to bear. Fulling and fermenting signify temptation, by which man is purified and perfected. By these two expressive parables we are instructed that temptation tests the soundness of our principles, and that unless our external is made new, and thus a suitable vesture and receptacle of new internal principles, we cannot stand in the day of trial.

18. *While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.* This man is an honourable exception to the general class of Jewish dignitaries. Though not so distinguished for his faith as the Roman centurion, he had confidence in the Lord's power to prevent death, if not to restore life. For although, as appears from Mark vi. 23, the ruler's daughter was not then actually dead, but was only dying, the case may be regarded as nearly the same. Regarded spiritually, a daughter is a type of an affection for good, as a son is a type of an affection for truth. Thus understood, the dying out of such an affection in the mind, and the apprehension of its total loss, is that which the feeling of this father for the dreaded loss of his daughter is intended to express. But it may be asked, how can a cherished affection die out of the heart? or if it is suffered to die out, how can this be a cause of distress, and how can there be such solicitude for its restoration? In the cases recorded in the Gospel, of disease and death, and of solicitude and prayers to the Lord for their recovery and restoration, two states of mind are represented. Either the mind has become diseased and dead in regard to spiritual things, and has been awakened to a sense of its disordered and lost condition, or it has become the subject of spiritual tribulation, in which state evils and falsities invade the affections and thoughts, and sometimes to such an extent as to cause

everything good and true in the mind to languish or die. These conflicts take place in the natural mind, where evils and falsities reside, and where evil and false spirits excite them into opposition to what is good and true. The faith which, in such states, turns to the Lord as the Saviour, is the faith of the inner man, where the Lord himself dwells in the heavenly goods and truths which he has there implanted. Faith, as a living principle, confides in the Lord's power, and is that through which his power is manifested. The faith of the ruler enabled him to say to Jesus, "Come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." The Lord's hand is the symbol of the power which resides in his humanity, and when laid upon and received by any one, heals spiritual infirmities and restores spiritual life.

19. *And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.* Spiritually, Jesus arising is the elevation of his divine love in the heart and its affections. But when Jesus arose, he and his disciples followed the ruler. Jesus and his disciples are, spiritually, the Lord's divine love and the truths derived from it. The Lord's following the ruler signifies his descent, by the influx of his divine love and truth, into the inferior or natural degree of the mind, where the evil which is to be removed resides.

20, 21. But while Jesus was on his way, before he came to the ruler's house, *Behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.* This case is extremely interesting, not so much from the nature of the woman's disease, as from her confidence that so great was the healing virtue which proceeded from the person of Jesus that she had only to touch the hem of his garment to be made whole. The issue of blood, with which she had so long been afflicted, signifies natural love separate from spiritual love, and a degree of profanation as the result. The spiritual signification of the disease may be known from its nature, considered in the light of the Scriptures. In the Word the blood is called the life or the soul of the flesh, being the vital fluid from which the substance of the body is derived, and by which it is constantly renewed. The blood therefore signifies truth pervaded by the life of love, from which the good that constitutes the very spiritual body is derived and constantly renewed. A diseased condition of the blood, or a drain of that stream of life, is symbolical of a deficiency of the love which is the life of truth, and a consequent perversion and dissipation of the truth itself by which the soul lives. The period of twelve years, during which the woman

was afflicted, is expressive of a full state in relation to the truths of faith,—in the present instance, a habitual condition of the mind in opposition to the truths of faith. But it may again be naturally asked, how it is that such a condition of mind is consistent with the undoubting faith which this woman displayed? The whole of the cases of disease recorded in the Gospel, as brought to the Lord to cure, are intended to show the deplorable state of human nature, as it is in itself, and more or less in all by practice, and also, and principally, to impress upon us this great truth, that mere human power is utterly unavailing for the removal of diseases of the soul, and that the Lord alone is able to cure them, what is impossible with man being possible with God. All things, it is true, are possible to him that believeth; but the possible with man is from the power of the Lord, acting through his faith, and delivering him from evil, and gifting him with good, according to the measure of his belief. But that which is peculiar in the present case is the manner of the cure. The woman's disease was cured simply by her touching the hem of the Lord's garment. Virtue went out of the Lord and restored her to health. As the woman's disease was the type of a spiritual malady, so was the Lord's garment, as the means of her cure, representative of a divine medium of salvation. When the Lord appeared before John the Revelator, he was clothed with a garment down to the feet; and when he was transfigured, he appeared in raiment white as light. This garment with which the Lord, as the Word, clothes himself, is its literal sense, and the hem of this garment is the extremity or lowest part of the letter of the Word—its simplest truths of faith and plainest precepts of life. What, then, do we learn from the present beautiful incident? That he who takes hold of the lowest truths of the Word, if his faith in its divinity be sincere, shall, through that holy medium, receive from the Lord, who dwells within it, saving virtue sufficient to restore him to health and bless him with happiness.

22. After the woman was cured of her disease by touching the hem of his garment, *Jesus turned him about*. The woman came behind the Lord to touch the hem of his garment. The back signifies the external, and the face the internal. The back also signifies the will, and the face the understanding; because in the head, the lesser brain, which is the organ of the will, is behind, and the larger brain, which is the organ of the understanding, is before. In relation to the Lord, the back and the face signify the Divine will and understanding, which are infinite love and wisdom. The woman's

coming behind Jesus is spiritually expressive of a deep sense of unworthiness, and of a feeling that the mind admits of no more than an external and obscure perception of the Lord through his Word. Coming behind the Lord signifies also a desire to come into his presence rather as the object of his love and mercy than of his wisdom and omniscience—of his love, which covers, rather than of his wisdom which discovers our sins. This, however, is a state which is preparatory to another and more perfect one. When the woman had touched the Lord, and virtue had gone out of him to heal her, he turned himself toward her,—she received internally what she had previously received externally; and to the influence of the Lord's love on her heart was now added the perception of his wisdom in her understanding; for the Lord not only turned himself to her, but saw her; and when the Scriptures speak of the Lord's seeing any one, they spiritually mean that his wisdom or truth enters into the understanding, and gives an internal perception of the good which his love had inspired. An interesting instance of this occurs in Revelation (i. 10). John heard a voice behind him, and he turned to see the voice that spake to him; by which we are instructed that when the Lord's love, which flows into the will, is heard or obeyed, it turns the understanding to the Lord, to receive a perception of his wisdom. The same truth is expressed in the Lord turning to man, or in man turning to him, and in the present case, of Jesus turning himself about and seeing the woman. When the Lord saw her, he said, *Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole.* This endearing salutation contains within it the blessed assurance of being born of God. The Lord's sons and daughters are they who have become his children by regeneration. The reception of his love gives joy of heart and comfort after affliction, and the reception of his truth into the understanding becomes, through faith, the power of saving health. The actual existence of this state is the hour of restoration, and which is that mentioned by the evangelist: *And the woman was made whole from that hour.*

23, 24. The history now returns to the ruler's daughter. We are not to regard the account of the cure of the issue of blood as an interruption to the history of the restoring to life of the ruler's daughter, or to view it as an incidental and isolated circumstance; for in the spiritual sense everything is connected and in series. And this connection will be seen in the present instance, if we consider the subject in relation to one mind, of which the woman with the issue is an internal affection, and the ruler's daughter an external affection.

The obstruction to the Divine influx being removed by the cure he had performed on his way to the ruler's house, the life of his love and truth can now descend into the external, to restore life to the affection of good which is therein. *And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, he said unto them, Give place.* The house is a symbol of the mind—in the present case, of the natural mind, to which the affection of good which Jesus had come to restore to life belongs. The minstrels and the people making a noise, whom the Lord saw when he entered the house, and who were the professional mourners, piping their requiem over the dead maiden, and the crowd of professional wailers and others who attended on such occasions, represent the crowd of natural and worldly affections and thoughts that obstruct the operation of the divine life of love and truth in the soul. The Lord's seeing them denotes the discovery by the mind itself, from the light of divine truth, of the true character of such affections and thoughts, and the necessity of their being removed before his divine life can be received into the good affection thus surrounded and obscured. When the Lord commanded the crowd to give place, he gave as a reason, *for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.* We need hardly say that the distinction which the Lord makes between death and sleep is for the sake of a higher than the literal sense. It is evident from what Jesus said to his disciples respecting Lazarus—first intimating that he was asleep, and then telling them plainly that he was dead—that by sleep he meant death. But there are two kinds or degrees of spiritual death,—the extinction of the life of faith and the extinction of the life of love; or, what is the same, the extinction of the affection of truth in the understanding and the extinction of the affection of good in the will. The first is meant by the sleep of death, the second by death itself. The first is like suspended animation, when, though the lungs no longer move, the heart continues to beat; the second is like the complete cessation of life, when the motion of both these organs has ceased. What, therefore, the Lord calls sleep is a more external and less confirmed state than that which he calls death. He did not therefore mean that the maid was not dead, but that her state represented a spiritual death which has not entirely extinguished the life of love in the soul—that the affection itself of good in the heart is not dead, but asleep. When the Lord had said to the crowd that the maid was not dead, but asleep, they laughed him to scorn—implying that the mere natural and worldly affections and thoughts not only deny, but deride the declarations of divine wisdom, and reject both

the idea and the hope of resurrection. For the merely natural affections, while they mourn over the death of better affections in the mind, do not desire their resuscitation into a newer and higher life.

25. *But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.* The putting forth of the people is the removal of those tumultuous and worldly feelings that indispose the mind for the reception of the peaceful influences of the Lord's spirit, with its restoring and renewing power. That these merely natural affections and worldly thoughts occupy a lower place in the mind than the affection of spiritual good, represented by the maid, appears from the relation itself; for when the people were put forth, the Lord went in: having removed the crowd from the outer apartment, he went into the inner room where the maiden lay. He then took her by the hand, indicating again the communication from the Lord of new life by the power of his Divine Humanity, in which all saving virtue dwells. And this virtue is communicated through the hand of the maiden, which signifies the ultimate degree of the mind, where its faculties manifest themselves in power. The efficacy of this mode of operation arises from the circumstance that the influx of the Lord's love and truth from his Humanity is his divine life accommodated or brought down to the lowest degree of the human mind. Life and action were the result of the Lord's touch. The maid arose. This does not imply merely that the spiritually dead are raised by the Lord to their former life, but to a new and higher one. They arise, as the Lord himself rose, into a degree of perfection and glory far exceeding all they had previously known, or that had entered into their heart to conceive.

26. *And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.* The fame of the Lord's wonderful work goes abroad into all the land when the whole mind is brought under his influence, and acknowledges his goodness and power in raising up into new and spiritual life the affection of good in the will, and the consequent perception of truth in the understanding, which had, by the prevalence of those evils and errors that belong to the corrupt selfhood, been cast into a dead sleep. Considered in reference to the regenerate, this death, like that of the body, is not to be considered as anything more than an apparent evil; for it represents, in their case, the putting off of something that is old, preparatory to the putting on of something that is new,—the laying down of their life, that they may take it again; giving up a lower and viler life for one higher and more glorious.

27. From the raising of the dead to life, the Lord next proceeds to

restore the blind to sight. *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us.* Mental, or rather spiritual blindness, is that which is spoken of in the Scripture in reference to men as immortal beings. There are, however, several kinds and degrees of spiritual blindness,—as the blindness of ignorance, the blindness of error, and the blindness of falsity. The blindness of ignorance is represented by that with which these two men were afflicted. Simple ignorance is without sin; but in those who have reached mature years, ignorance is never unaccompanied with error, and with evil as a consequence. As there are two distinct objects of knowledge, ignorance is twofold—ignorance of truth and ignorance of good. These were represented by the two blind men. Considered in connection with the previous miracle, the opening of the understanding to the perception of truth, after the awakening of the affection of good in the will, is represented by this opening of the eyes of the blind. This miracle was an exhibition, in a representative form, of one of the great objects for which the Lord came into the world—to give man power to understand spiritual truth. By the prevalence of evil, the human understanding had been closed to the perception of Divine truth, as their hearts had become closed to the reception of his Divine love; and the Lord's coming was to unseal the eyes as well as to open the hearts of men. Those mighty works which the Lord performed on the bodies of men were but the outworks and the symbols of still mightier and more beneficent works which he, as the Saviour, performed, and will continue to perform, in the souls of all who come to him. Truth is to the intellect what light is to the eye; and the bestowal of spiritual sight is a blessing as much greater than the giving of natural sight, than eternal life is greater than temporal.

In the account of this miracle there are some particulars that demand our attention. The blind men follow the Lord, which spiritually means to follow his teaching and example. The perseverance of these men proved the means of their obtaining the object of their prayer, and teaches us the necessity of following on to do the Lord's will, that we may know of his doctrine, or have a knowledge and perception of his truth. While they followed the Lord, they kept crying, and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." Crying is expressive of affection, and saying of thought, teaching us that both must be directed to the Lord when we desire his mercy. Their addressing the Lord as the Son of David shows that they acknowledged him as the Messiah; but in the spiritual sense the Son of David signifies the

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Lord as Divine Truth; and the blind appropriately address him by this name, it being their desire to receive from him the power of seeing, that is, of understanding. They crave his mercy, for mercy is love grieving and brought down to the aid of the fallen and helpless. The celestial ask for mercy, the spiritual for grace; thus the prayer for mercy is expressive of a deeper sense of imperfection and a stronger desire for the needed salvation.

28. *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him.* It would appear that the Lord did not comply with the blind men's petition; nor does it seem that he even attended to it while he was on the way. Although the Lord generally granted the prayers of the afflicted at once, yet on several occasions he either seemed unwilling to listen to their petitions or delayed compliance with them. We cannot suppose that this arose from any want of compassionate tenderness towards these suffering and helpless supplicants, much less from anything like disregard to their wants and entreaties. Such cases teach us an important lesson. The Lord's seeming neglect of our petitions, or his slowness to grant them, does not proceed from his unwillingness to give, but from our unpreparedness to receive. How many of those who follow the Lord, confessing their blindness and praying him in mercy to open their eyes, would be startled by the question, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* If they were required to answer it in the presence of him who knows the heart, how few would be able to say, with the blind men, *Yea, Lord.* The purpose of the Lord's inquiry is to enable us to know whether we are able, in the sincerity of our hearts, to make this affirmation before him. If we do not receive an answer to our prayer for enlightenment—to have our eyes opened to see the wondrous things contained in his Divine law, and to see him as the Divine Lawgiver—it is because we do not truly believe that he is able to do this for us and in us. But it was not till Jesus came into the house, and the blind came to him there, that the question was asked, and was affirmatively answered. The Lord's coming into the house with us is his coming into the mind, and specifically into the will, or into the good which has its dwelling there; and our coming to him is our entering into communion with him through the good in which he is present with us.

29, 30. *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.* The Lord's touching their eyes signifies his communicating the power of understanding and seeing the truth. If the giving of natural sight opens the gate-

way that admits the blessed light of this world, which reveals so many scenes of beauty and sources of instruction and delight, unknown and therefore unappreciated before, how immeasurably greater the beauty, instruction, and delight that are disclosed to us by the opening of the understanding to admit the light of spiritual and eternal truth! How impressive and even sublime are the words, "And their eyes were opened!" The natural sublimity of the command, "Let there be light," has often been dwelt upon. These words express the same spiritual idea, and describe the same spiritual state, as the less striking words in which is described the restoration of sight to the two blind men. When he had opened their eyes, *Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.* Here, again, the Lord imposes silence on those on whom he had bestowed one of his most precious blessings. We have already (ch. viii. 4) considered the sense and meaning of this often-repeated command. There is, however, we confess, some obscurity in it, or rather in our apprehension of its spiritual meaning. Why the injunction should have been laid upon some, and not upon others—why persons, on whom silence had been solemnly enjoined by one who had conferred on them so great a boon, should, *when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country,*—and why this should be recorded by the evangelist without any expression of disapproval, are points that do not appear to us perfectly clear. We can well understand how strong the impulse to publish the matter must have been in the hearts of those who had received such extraordinary cures, and how it must have contributed to the fame of Jesus as a healer in Israel. We can comprehend also how the experience of his divine mercy, in the cure of our spiritual maladies, should incite us to extend, through our whole hearts and minds, with all their affections and thoughts, the fame of his great goodness.

32. After the Lord restored the blind to sight, *As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.* Dumbness is usually the result of deafness. In the New Testament cases are mentioned of persons being deprived of the power of speech, apparently without their hearing being taken away; and this appears to be one of these. Whether they are found together or separately, there is a distinction between deafness and dumbness, which it is important to attend to as the symbols of spiritual conditions of mind. Deafness closes the channel of influx, dumbness closes the channel of efflux. Receiving and giving are the two great functions of life. One cannot exist in perfection without the other. Dumbness signifies a state of

obstructed efflux, in which the understanding is prevented from going forth in the performance of its use, in glorifying God and imparting of its gifts to men. This dumb man was possessed with a devil, who seems to have been what is called elsewhere a dumb spirit, which is indeed plainly declared in Luke ii. 14, where the same miracle is recorded. This case is appropriately recorded after the case of the blind men. Nor is it without a meaning that the blind men followed Jesus into the house, where they were restored to sight, and that this man was brought to him, and that he cured him as he went out of the house; for this cure restored that faculty by which man is enabled to give utterance to the thoughts of his heart, and was symbolical of the casting out of the dumb spirit which sometimes possesses us, under the pressure of some severe trial or temptation; a state described so accurately by the Psalmist: "I was dumb with silence; I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth: because thou didst it" (Ps. xxxix. 2, 9). Zacharias was made dumb because he believed not the words of Gabriel, when the angel promised him a son in his old age, and remained so till the promise had been fulfilled; for how can we praise God; and proclaim the power of his name, when we disbelieve his sacred promises on our behalf? Therefore it was that, in the time of the Lord's natural presence, faith was so essential a condition of deliverance even from physical ills. How much more so for the cure of spiritual evils!

33. But how is spiritual dumbness to be cured? By the Lord casting out the spirit which had produced it. *And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake.* But how does the Lord cast him out? His alone is the power to deliver from this and every other spiritual affliction; but our free will and active concurrence are indispensably necessary to bring his power to work effectually for our deliverance. We only require to come with our afflictions to him, having faith in his mercy and omnipotence, and nothing will prevent his casting out the spirit of evil from our hearts. And then shall we experience the benefit of our restoration to a sound condition of mind, as expressed in the present case—*the dumb spake.* If, with the Psalmist, we pray, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise" (Ps. li. 15), our prayer shall be answered, and we shall be enabled to praise the Lord with joyful lips. Like Zacharias, too, when his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, we will speak, and praise God. The spirit of unbelief and distrust being cast out, the Holy Spirit will enter into us, and prompt us to show forth the good-

ness of the Lord, and to rejoice in the power of blessing and serving him. Another result of such a manifestation of the power of our Saviour is expressed in that which followed the dumb being enabled to speak: *and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.* This, spiritually, is expressive of the recognition and acknowledgment of the Lord's wonder-working power by the whole of the affections and thoughts of the natural mind, now brought under the influence of the Divine Love, and gifted with a perception of his wisdom, as exhibited in the superior faculties of the mind being restored to order. The declaration of the marvelling multitude, that "it was never so seen in Israel," teaches also a spiritual lesson. The Lord came to do in his spiritual Israel what had never been done before. He came to open the blind eyes, to unstop the ears of the deaf, and cause the dumb to shout for joy. In his humanity he brought his saving power down to men, and it was to them nearer than, in their fallen and marred condition, it had ever been or could be brought before. And the same may be said now of and from individual experience. Never before could the Lord's regenerating power be manifested so fully and beneficently as since his incarnation. And never was spiritual truth itself so enlightening as now, when the light of the moon has become as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun has become sevenfold, as the light of seven days.

34. But there is a dark side to this picture. This ready and hearty acknowledgment of the Lord's marvellous and benevolent works by the multitude was met by the Pharisees saying, *He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.* It may not be unjust to class with this Pharisaical theory of a demoniacal origin of the Lord's miracles the philosophical one of tracing them to natural causes. The natural man avails himself of any argument to evade their force, and enable him to deny their divinity, and to bring the most marvellous operations of Divine power down to the level of ordinary natural phenomena, that the claim of Jesus to divine, or even to supernatural power, may be rejected, and his religion deprived of its high claims and of its beneficent character. While the learned are often, on these high questions, spoiled through vain philosophy, the multitude, who judge of plain facts and simple testimony by common sense, are often right. No answer of the Lord to this accusation is here mentioned; but on another occasion he refuted it by simply saying, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?" But this objection, as a suggestion from Satan, may enter into our own hearts; for the Pharisees have their representatives

there. And whenever a heavenly influence awakens our good affections to an acknowledgment of the Lord's power and goodness, an opposite influence from the kingdom of darkness is sure to excite some suggestions against it.

35. After this *Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.* We cannot realize an idea of this simple fact without a deep sense of our Saviour's love for his creatures, which prompted him to come to seek and to save that which was lost. The Divine Author of their existence himself labouring to turn them from sin unto righteousness; and healing every malady to which their frail bodies had become subject, as a symbol and promise of the spiritual health that he above all things desired to impart to their souls, is truly a matter of wonder and admiration. Spiritually significant and instructive as these circumstances are, they are not on that account less deserving of our devout attention and adoring gratitude as simple historical facts. This reverence for the historical circumstances helps us to enter more profitably into their spiritual meaning, which again sheds its purer light back upon the great facts of the letter.

The Lord, in this higher sense, is still going into all our towns and villages preaching the gospel. He is still spreading, by his Spirit and through his Word, throughout every receptive mind, the glad tidings of his great salvation. He goes about our cities and villages, when divine truth, proceeding immediately from himself, enters into the truths, both internal and external, which we have acquired from the literal sense of the Word, and built up into systems of doctrine; and he enters into our synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, when his divine truth flows into the truths we have acquired from the Word, and have understood with some degree of spiritual light, and communicates through them a perception of the gospel of the kingdom, which is the good of spiritual and heavenly truth—thus bringing to the mind glad tidings of great joy. When the Lord, as the Saviour, has thus been received into the things that are in some degree of order in the interior of the mind, he can, with his divine truth, flow down into, and bring into order the things that are in disorder in the exterior of the mind—thus healing every sickness and every disease among the people, or removing everything evil and false, as the cause of spiritual disease, from the more external and common affections and thoughts meant by the people, especially those of an intellectual kind.

36. But wherever the Lord went there was a numerous class of objects to whom his mercy was intensely directed. *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

The multitudes are descriptive of man himself as to his natural state and condition; and more particularly still, they denote the innumerable principles of affection and thought, all confused and unarranged, which occupy his will and understanding. This their unarranged and disordered state is expressed by their "fainting"—more strictly unloosed—"and scattered abroad." In the spiritual sense the first has reference more particularly to the affections of the will, and the second to the persuasions thence derived in the understanding: thus they imply, that while man remains yet in his natural state, regardless of divine things, and unsolicitous of obtaining conjunction of life with the great Source of life and love of a spiritual and truly human nature, his affections and desires, unloosed from any connection with eternal goodness as their proper object, wander at random, in dissolution and disorder, towards anything, however unworthy, that offers them gratification, whilst his opinions and thoughts, underived from eternal truth as their proper source, are in like manner scattered abroad, and espouse every idle fallacy that the senses suggest. Still, we are capable of better things. Even in our natural state we are capable of feelings of humanity and some regard for others, the fault being, not that we are wholly insensible to such emotions, but that they are not strong enough to act with sufficient force to counteract the impulses of our selfish propensities, the good dispositions only making themselves attended to when the selfish are for the moment asleep, and in all cases yielding when these require it. It is on this account that we are here compared to sheep; for sheep in the Word properly signify the principle of charity, or love to our neighbour; but when, as here, the sheep are presented as undirected by a shepherd, they signify the good natural affections which, for want of being united with genuine principles of truth, are not yet in connection with their proper centre, and are easily perverted and led astray. But we find, for our consolation, that notwithstanding, in our natural state, we are loosed and scattered abroad, if we are desirous to escape from the defilements of our selfhood, and to become the real subjects of the Lord's kingdom, his divine compassion, by which such desire is first implanted, immediately becomes operative in our behalf. The proper exciting cause of compassion is wretchedness; and whenever we become sensible of our wretched condition, the Divine compassion is

excited, not towards us, but in us. This state is what is here described by its being said that the Lord was moved with compassion: for he who is compassion itself cannot be the subject of emotion. In Scripture divine emotion means human emotion from the Divine. When we become sensible of the divine compassion working in us, then is the state signified by Jesus being moved with pity.

37. Then, too, we become sensible of the value of heavenly blessedness, and affected with the spiritual things in which that blessedness resides, which is implied by the Lord's saying, *The harvest truly is plenteous*. The disciples represent all the truths of the Word taken collectively; and as it is only by means of the truths of his Word that the Lord imparts spiritual instruction to man, therefore it is here stated that the Lord said to his disciples, "the harvest truly is plenteous," to denote that it is by means of the truths of the Word that man receives a conviction of the value of heavenly attainments. The harvest also signifies that completion of the regenerate state when a judgment is performed within us, and a separation is finally made between the principles of heavenly life and love and the opposite principles of infernal life and love, and when man becomes fixed in goodness and truth, and is liberated from evil and falsity. To effect this, much labour and combat is requisite. And this labour is to be carried on by means of truths derived from the Word, which are meant by the labourers; and these truths, so long as they are only learnt and stored up in the memory, have not the power to accomplish the work; therefore it is said of this state, that *the labourers are few*. Truths are said also to be few, and thus inadequate to the work of gathering in the harvest, because as yet the mind in acquiring them has acted too much under the influence of self, and has used them too much in reliance on its own power.

38. Therefore the Lord says, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest*. We are thus instructed to turn from ourselves to the Lord, to recognize the harvest as his, and the labourers as his, and to pray him to send them forth. We are thus instructed that the truths of the Word, by which the harvest is to be reaped and the wheat separated from the tares, are from the Lord alone, and are to be acknowledged as his. Only when this is the case are his Spirit and his power in the truths of our faith; and then only are they sufficient for the important work of gathering in the abundant harvest which his bounty provides. To this end the interiors of the mind must be continually directed to him, and thus kept open to the reception of influences from him. A devout acknow-

ledgment must be impressed on the inmost of the soul, that he is the Lord of the harvest, that all the blessedness of heaven is from him, and that the work of separating between good and evil in the human mind, and confirming the one and casting out the other, is his alone. This is the internal prayer of the true disciple—a prayer which the Lord himself inspires and answers.

If we keep the interiors of our minds continually turned to the Lord, which is to obey the Scripture injunction, to pray without ceasing—always to pray, and not to faint—at the same time learning truths from the Word, and making them our own by loving and obeying them, they will prove efficient labourers in the Lord's harvest, will root out everything that offends, gather the wheat into his garner, and constitute in us the felicity of his kingdom for ever.

CHAPTER X.

THE last chapter closed with the divine declaration that the harvest is plenteous, but that the labourers are few, and the divine exhortation to the disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest. This chapter begins with Jesus, as the Lord of the harvest and shepherd of the sheep, calling unto him his twelve disciples, to send them on the great mission of gathering souls into his church.

1. Jesus first *called unto him his twelve disciples*. The twelve represented all the principles which constitute the church, understanding the church to be a state of spiritual love and faith, or goodness and truth, in the heart and understanding of man. As these heavenly graces and spiritual principles are derived from the Lord through his revealed Word, the twelve disciples represent also all the goods and truths of the Word, these being the powers by which the Lord works out his saving purposes, whoever be the personal instruments who use them. When the Lord had called his twelve apostles, *he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease*. In sending his servants forth on this mission of mercy, the Lord gave them power to do what he himself had done. The power which Jesus exerted for the benefit of mankind he derived from the Father—that is, from his own indwelling divinity. The power of healing conferred upon his disciples was entirely different from that power as it existed in the Lord. They wrought their miracles in his

name; and in that name, as expressive of the divine humanity of the Saviour, was all the power of which they were but the finite mediums. Still, the result of their labour was the same as if they had possessed that power in their own persons. The reason of this was, they were representative characters. The principles of goodness and truth contained in the Word, which they represented, are truly the Lord's apostles or ambassadors; and it is only these in the minds of teachers that makes them servants of the Lord. The Lord's calling his twelve disciples unto him spiritually means, his drawing into a most intimate connection with himself the goods and truths of his Word, and endowing them with new power to evangelize the world and regenerate the human soul. But this subject, and the explanations we have offered, cannot be rationally understood without reflecting that this relates to the Lord in his humanity. When the Lord was made flesh, and his humanity was glorified, a more intimate connection was established between himself, as the eternal Word, and the written Word, and a power from him was imparted to its truths which they did not before possess, or could not exert. There was a reason for this. When the Lord was born into the world he passed, during his sojourn in it, through all the states of human life. Especially did he, as a man, acquire a knowledge of the truths of the Word, and these, in the first instance, as apparent truths. But as he advanced in glorification, as a mere man advances in regeneration, he elevated, or called unto him, the truths which he had acquired, putting off their appearances successively, until in him they were purely divine. And having ascended through all the degrees of truth, as they are in the Word, he is now enabled to descend through them, thus giving them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out from every human mind into which the truths of his holy Word have been admitted, and to heal therein all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease. This calling of the truths of the Word unto him, and giving them power over evils and falsities, the Lord also does in every one who is regenerated; for the truths acquired from the Word, first laid up in the memory, are gradually called forth by the Lord, and elevated nearer to himself; and as they are elevated, so are they endued with power to make all things new in the mind and life of man. And so is it with the church as a body, which was also represented by the disciples. Her power to correct disorder, and introduce order into the world, is exactly in proportion, not merely to the abstract purity of her principles, but to the actual elevation they have obtained in the hearts and understandings of her members.

2-4. *Now the names of the twelve apostles are these.* Before we proceed to consider the reason for enumerating the apostles by name, we shall offer a few remarks on their general arrangement. We have already observed that the apostles, as enumerated in the Word, form three groups, consisting each of four numbers. This general arrangement is common to all the three gospels in which the twelve are named in series. To present this to the eye, we will give the lists placed side by side :—

Matthew, x. 2.

1. Simon and
2. Andrew,
3. James and
4. John,
5. Philip and
6. Bartholomew,
7. Thomas and
8. Matthew,
9. James the son of Al-
- phæus and
10. Lebbaeus,
11. Simon the Canaanite
- and
12. Judas Iscariot.

Mark iii. 16.

1. Simon and
2. James and
3. John and
4. Andrew and
5. Philip and
6. Bartholomew and
7. Matthew and
8. Thomas and
9. James the son of Al-
- phæus and
10. Thaddæus and
11. Simon the Canaanite
- and
12. Judas Iscariot.

Luke vi. 14.

1. Simon and
2. Andrew,
3. James and
4. John,
5. Philip and
6. Bartholomew,
7. Matthew and
8. Thomas,
9. James the son of Al-
- phæus and
10. Simon Zelotes,
11. Judas the brother of
- James and
12. Judas Iscariot.

It will be seen that while the three lists differ from one another in the particular arrangement of the apostles, they all agree in this, that, taken in fours, each corresponding group consists of the same four names, and each group begins with the same name. As in the Word there is nothing accidental, there must be a purpose and a meaning in this general similarity with particular diversity. As the apostles represent all the principles of goodness and truth in the Word, and thence in the church and in the human mind, this trinal arrangement of their names may be considered to represent that trinal order in which, we know, all the goods and truths of the Word exist, which we call celestial, spiritual, and natural. There are other similarities and distinctions that may be seen in these sacred namings of the apostles. There is the general agreement among all the evangelists of placing the name of Simon first, and that of Judas last. There is also the connecting them in pairs, as it will be seen is done in Matthew and Luke, and is according to the order in which the Lord sent them forth, as recorded in Mark vi. 7. Matthew's connecting them, and the Lord sending them forth, two and two, represented that good and truth are partners, every good having its own truth, and every truth its own good; and that they ever proceed from the Lord united, however they may be divided in their finite recipients. So naming the

twelve disciples is spiritually to express the quality of the principles they represent ; for in ancient times names were generally given, not, as now, to distinguish one person from another, but to express something peculiar to or characteristic of the person named. To trace the connection between Scripture names, where their meaning can be determined, and the spiritual signification of the persons named, would be a most useful study, and would yield most valuable results. This has been done to some extent, in the case of the apostles, by Noble, in the *Intellectual Repository* for 1839, to which we must be content to refer the reader.

5, 6. After naming the apostles, the evangelist says—*These twelve Jesus sent forth.* In its reference to the regeneration and spiritual progress of man, this circumstance of the calling to him and sending forth his twelve apostles appears to describe that period in man's regenerative process in which his mind has been already furnished with a sufficient store of the knowledge of goodness and truth, or of the truths of the Word, and these have been united with their proper affections in the internal man, and endued with power by conjunction with the Lord, and thus stand ready to descend into the external man, to bring this into due correspondence with them. The command which the Lord gave the twelve when he sent them forth, expresses the law of order according to which the principles which the apostles represent operate, so as to effect the objects for which they are sent forth. *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* If these directions be only looked at externally, they must appear rather singular. The Lord came into the world, among other purposes, expressly to extend to the Gentiles the privilege of admission into his church, which had long been confined to the Jews ; and while on earth, Samaritan and Gentile people shared his love, attention, and approbation. Whatever reason the Lord had for this limitation of the sphere of the apostles' labour, it was only a temporary arrangement, and can afford no ground for the charge of partiality, since the full and final command of the Lord was, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It is in the spiritual sense, and its individual application, we propose to consider it. In this view, both the apostles, the Gentiles, the Samaritans, and the Israelites, all have reference to certain principles, powers, and faculties existing in ourselves. The apostles, we have seen, are all the principles of truth and goodness operating in our minds from the Divine Word, all the graces of heaven striving for full transmission into, and influence over the

whole man. The Gentiles, when mentioned in Scripture in an unfavourable manner, and as in opposition to the Israelites, or Jews, always signify the evils belonging to the natural mind. And as in the Word, when evil is treated of, falsity is usually treated of at the same time, therefore by the Samaritans, who were the descendants of the people whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, planted in Samaria when he carried the Ten tribes into captivity, and who mixed with the nation, and adopted a corrupt form of the Jewish religion, are meant all the false sentiments to which the human understanding is naturally prone. But the apostles are commanded not to go into the *way* of the Gentiles, by which is meant not to turn aside to any false sentiment, having its origin in evil, and not to enter into any *city* of the Samaritans, by which is meant not to support any doctrine having its origin in false principles. But why this prohibition, if it is to be understood as relating to heavenly principles? These, in themselves, can have no tendency to go out of the right course or countenance anything evil or false. But as they are in us frail and fallible creatures they may turn, or rather be turned aside by being perverted, as many truths of Scripture sometimes are, to countenance the sins and practices that are inconsistent with the principles of pure Christianity. In this command we have the momentous direction, that on no account are the gifts of heaven to be defiled and abused. They are to be regarded as sacred in all the variations of our affections and thoughts, and preserved unsullied in all their native purity. On no account are they to be presented so as to seem to favour any evil lust which the heart is prone to, or any false persuasion which the mind is disposed to adopt. Our duty is to "go not in the way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." By this is meant that the spiritual apostles—the reclaiming principles of goodness and truth present with us from the Word—are to be applied to the cherishing and purifying of everything in us that partakes of good—of every power and faculty of our constitution into which good can enter. As the Israelites, in a general sense, are all the members of the true church, so, in a particular sense, they are all the principles and faculties in the human mind into which the graces constituent of the church in man can enter. Sheep are constantly mentioned in Scripture as types of the principle of charity, which is the same thing as goodness; for genuine charity is the affection of spiritual love, and it is what a man loves that he denominates good. All the sheep of the house of Israel are all the affections of charity or goodness

which have an affinity with the principles constituent of the church in man. But those here mentioned are the lost sheep of the house of Israel ; by which are meant affections of charity as existing in a state not genuine, in consequence of not being in union with genuine truth ; for without the guidance and purifying efficacy of genuine truth, charity is blind natural affection, capable of being easily led astray and drawn into connection even with grievous evils. Truth, in fact, is the keeper of good—the shepherd of the sheep, without whose guardianship they wander from the fold or become scattered abroad. These lost sheep are to be reclaimed by the preaching of the gospel ; our natural charity is to be made spiritual by admitting the influence and operation of the divine emanation of pure goodness and truth constantly proceeding from the Lord, and communicated to our minds through the medium of the instructions of his life-giving Word.

7. When the apostles were sent forth, the first thing they were to do, as they went, was to *preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* How momentous and blessed the announcement of the first preaching of the gospel ! And how beautifully and emphatically is here pointed out, spiritually, the first impression and impulse under which man acts in the beginning of his regeneration, and which continues to urge him on through the whole course of his progress in the heavenly life ! The preaching of the apostles denotes the impressions which the truths of the Lord's Word make upon man's mind ; it is the perception and dictate, accompanied with an impelling influence, which is felt by every one who is awakened to a sense of the importance of eternal things, calling and prompting him to attend to the things that are essential above all others to his real welfare ; it is the truths which he hears, reads, and learns from the Word, accompanied with suitable affection and desire, and filled with an influence from above, continually reminding him that but one thing is needful—to provide for his eternal salvation. Hence the constant theme of this genuine preaching is, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of heaven is the government of the Lord's divine truth—that is, of his wisdom united with his love, as it proceeds from heaven into the human mind. This kingdom is pre-eminently heaven itself, where the Lord's divine love and wisdom ever reign, and when received in heaven by the angels, makes heaven to be really heaven.

8. But it is not only by proclaiming these good tidings that the spiritual apostles, or the graces of heaven communicated by the Word, are commissioned to benefit us. They are to *act* as well as to *teach* ;

and the beneficent acts which they are empowered and enjoined to perform are expressed by the command, *Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.* These are the ills from which we are to be delivered by the ministry of the apostles, if we will accept their aid for the purpose; and whether we are aware of it or not, their assistance herein is of the most indispensable necessity to us all; for whether we are aware of it or not, we are all the subjects of those deplorable miseries. Spiritually, and by birth and inheritance, we are all sick, leprous, and dead; and being dead, we are animated by a life worse than death: we are possessed and actuated by demons. By these miseries are summarily described the selfish nature of man, or the exact state of the natural mind as it exists by birth. The term here rendered sick is one that properly means weak or infirm. Owing to the corruption which reigns in his natural mind, he is mere weakness and infirmity in regard to all that is good, and has no power to resist evil; but would, if he allowed himself to be led by his natural inclinations and prudence, surrender at the first assault; and not only so, but would yield himself up a willing slave. Man is in his natural state called a leper, because, owing to the same ingenerate corruption, he is in the continual tendency to pervert and profane the truth: for, as we have seen (viii. 2), the terrible disease called leprosy is representative of the state of profanation. In the same manner, also, man is what the Scriptures call dead; he is void of all spiritual life, being alive only to the objects of sense and nature, but dead to everything of God and heaven. This is the hereditary and natural state of every one. It is being dead in trespasses and sin; for, viewed in itself, the life of the natural man is, in its real quality, a life of mere evil and of false sentiment. What a man loves supremely is his life. The ruling love which constitutes man's life comes either from heaven or from hell. If his love or life be merely natural, and therefore evil, it connects him with the kingdom of darkness, makes him the organ of infernal influence, and he is possessed as to all the active faculties of his mind by "devils," or, as the original expresses it, demons, by which are specifically meant those evil spirits who are in a life of false persuasions springing from evil lusts. Such is the picture of all mankind as they actually are in themselves, as drawn by him who knows the heart, and who has declared that it is naturally deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. But the Lord only portrays this state that we may be delivered from it, and restored to life and health. He sends forth from himself agencies for our deliverance from

the ills under which we labour, and for our restoration to a state of soundness and true enjoyment. He has given his Word, wherein is laid open the path of salvation. He has endowed us with faculties for receiving its divine truths; and as we yield to his leading, he accompanies those with a living influence from himself. These are the living and active apostles whom he sends forth to purify us from our corruptions, and restore us to the order into and for which we were created. These living agents he empowers and employs to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, to cast out devils. By this means he bestows upon us the power of resisting evil, and of receiving truth without perverting or profaning it; he raises us from the death of our natural corruptions, and casts out those principles and agents of living death which, by an influx from the lower world, cause us to regard such death as life.

9. When the Lord commanded his apostles to take *neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses*, his meaning, in a general sense, is that nothing of their own was to be mixed with what was from him. Gold, silver, and brass are the three kinds or degrees of love and goodness of which man is receptive from the Lord,—gold expressing the highest degree of pure goodness or love, which is love to the Lord; silver, pure spiritual truth, which in itself is love to the neighbour; and brass, natural good, which is the good of obedience; and which may be otherwise expressed as charity, faith, and good works. To have these in our purses is to have and claim these things as our own, and not depend upon the Lord as their Source and Giver. Besides, gold, silver, and brass *in purses* do not represent the graces of charity, faith, and good works as living and quickening principles, but only as knowledge in the memory, of which faculty a purse, like any other similar receptacle, is the symbol.

10. Neither were they to have *scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves*. The scrip was a bag for carrying food. They were not only to take with them no money, but no food or extra clothing. Food is the symbol of the good which supports the soul, clothing, of the truth which protects it, and the staff, of the ultimate power on which it rests. Here, again, there are three things not to be taken,—food, clothing, a staff; representing things that belong to the will, to the understanding, and to the outward life; the prohibition implying that nothing that ministers to the life of either must be self-derived, but derived solely from the Lord, whose gifts and graces are to be preserved single, unmixed with anything of our own. In this simple injunction surely all Christians may see there must

have been some other than the mere literal meaning, since this law, literally interpreted, is seen to be not now applicable to the preachers of the gospel. Yet how beautifully instructive is it in its spiritual sense, and how true is it in that sense, since nothing is more necessary to the members of the church, and to the minister of the gospel, than simplicity of character and a single eye to the Lord's glory in all the labours of the Christian life! The Lord, while he prohibits the disciples from taking their scrip, teaches them to depend on their labour for their daily bread—for *the workman is worthy of his meat*. In spiritual and heavenly things labour is its own reward. We acquire good by doing good. Use is the channel through which the Lord supplies us with the bread of life. So the Lord testifies of himself: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

11. While the apostles were enjoined to attend to those rules that were necessary to qualify them for being suitable agents for preaching the gospel, they were also required to attend to certain rules in regard to those to whom they were sent. *Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence*. Cities are constantly mentioned in the Word to signify doctrine, because it is always in some general principles, assumed as positive truths or settled conclusions, which are matters of doctrine, that the mind, and every distinct faculty in it, feels at home. And when, as here, cities and towns (or villages) are mentioned, cities denote what is interior and principal, and villages what is respectively exterior and subordinate. A city symbolizes the mind itself, especially the intellectual faculty, in which all the affections and thoughts, as its living inhabitants, are contained. To this the apostles are to come, and they are to inquire who in it is worthy. Understanding this in relation to the mind itself, we are instructed that in the work of regeneration we are to seek to embody our principles in suitable and worthy forms of doctrine and life. To be more precise, when we seek to bring down the holy truths and goods from the inner into the outer man, we are to examine ourselves to see that they enter into worthy thoughts and affections, which will afford them a habitation suitable to their heavenly character, and a centre from which they can extend their influence and operation in all directions outward. And who are these worthy ones that are thus to be selected from the general mass? In every mind, as in every land, God has reserved a witness for himself. There is some good ground in every heart. Not, indeed, by birth has man this witness and ground in himself; but it is of providence that every human being shall

receive the faculty of understanding and loving the good and truth of heaven—a faculty which is formed by the Divine operation upon the soul during the innocence of infancy and youth, and preserved by the Spirit of God in every subsequent period of life. In every faculty and principle of the human mind, both interior and exterior, there is something that is of the Lord. Every part of the human mind, by virtue of creation, is good, however it may have been perverted and misapplied; every one has a proper use; and in its use the Lord can be present and his apostles received. That which is worthy in any faculty of the human mind must be the end for which, when man was created, such a faculty was bestowed upon him,—it must be the proper use of the faculty, separate from the abuse of it; and there can be nothing in the whole man, either in his mind or body, which has not a proper use belonging to it. It is even indubitable that no evil can be committed by man but by the exercise of power entrusted to him for a nobler purpose. It is the perversion of something which by creation is good, and to which a proper use is annexed; whereas when use is duly regarded, the faculty is restored to order, it is the abode of such heavenly principles as are represented by the apostles, and is made co-operative with them and by them for conducing to man's eternal benefit. It is in the proper use of the faculty that the apostles are to abide till they go thence. This abiding, or dwelling, has always reference to a state of good, and confirmation in it. To abide till they go thence means that the heavenly principles must continue their presence in every recipient faculty or principle till a state of good is completed and confirmed, and are thence to proceed into use in good deeds. For it is not the purpose of the Lord that good should be confined to one faculty of the mind, or be locked up in the heart, but that it should pervade the mind, and extend itself to the outermost activities of man's life. The apostles are to go through the cities of Israel, and everywhere do the will of their divine Master.

12. The apostles received the command, *And when ye come into an house, salute it.* As the city has relation to the intellectual part of the mind, the house has more especial relation to the will. The salutation refers, therefore, to the exploration which the sacred principles of goodness and truth are to make in the affections of the will. The salutation which was used, as we learn from Luke, was, "Peace be to this house." How heavenly and happy this gospel salutation! Yes, peace is the wish and aim of the gospel, and such should be the spirit and end of its propagation. The principles of heaven, as they flow into the human mind, bring this heavenly sphere with them. The

Lord's "doctrine drops as the rain, his speech distills as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." "The wisdom that cometh from above is peaceful, gentle, meek." But not only is the message one of peace, but when it gives its peaceful salutation, it desires to receive an answer of peace. "If the house be worthy," says the Lord to his apostles, "let your peace come upon it." Its worthiness is expressed in Luke by, "If the son of peace be there." It appears from this, that heavenly peace, to be received, must find the son of peace already in the recipient mind. But whence is this pre-existing element? We have had frequent occasion to remark that the Lord, when he comes to man as his Regenerator, comes to complete a work which he has already begun—to call out those latent affections and perceptions which he has already produced and laid up in the heart and understanding as the germs of the heavenly life. Without these there could be no ground of reception, no sympathetic feeling, no reciprocating thought, no answering voice to the heavenly salutation. The son of peace must already be there, to make the home worthy, before the heavenly messengers can enter and take up their abode. And what is this son of peace but the perception which is the offspring of the peace and innocence of childhood. He that would enter into the kingdom of heaven must become a little child. Regeneration changes the innocence and peace of ignorance into the innocence and peace of wisdom. The first peace is that to which the second appeals—is that which must give the welcome, and with which alone it can abide. In the mind without this, there can be no tarrying.

13. *If the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it.* The peace of the apostles coming upon the house which was worthy, wherein was the son of peace, describes the imparting of spiritual peace to the will in which there is reciprocating natural peace; for the good qualities of the mind before actual regeneration, though in themselves spiritual, are naturally apprehended and loved. They do not constitute the kingdom of heaven, but only bestow the faculty of acquiring it, the stems on which its principles may be grafted. *But if the house be not worthy, let your peace return to you.* A principle of the utmost importance, and a lesson of the greatest moment, are contained in this rather singular injunction. If spiritual principles are allowed to enter into natural principles that are not in harmony or correspondence with them, they become weakened and finally dissipated, since it is a law of influx, that life is modified and even changed by the forms into which it flows. Goodness and truth, as they flow from the internal

can only find their proper abode in honesty and decorum in the external. If these are not found, the heavenly principles must return to the internal, till they find suitable receptacles for them in the natural man. For the meaning of the Lord's words is, not that this return of peace into their own bosom was to be permanent, but only till a worthy house was found for their reception.

14. A contingency of a more general and of a more serious character, involving a rejection of a more aggravated kind, and demanding a more solemn protest against it, is now spoken of. *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.* In the instances of unworthy persons already mentioned, there is nothing said of their refusing to receive the apostles into their houses, but only of the unfitness of these holy men being their guests. The Lord now speaks of those who will not receive them, nor even hear their words. We have seen that the inquiry of the apostles, as to who in a city or house is worthy, is intended to teach us that it is necessary carefully to scrutinize the character of the doctrinal sentiments and moral principles that have entered the external part of our minds from the world, and to do this under the influence of higher principles and the direction of a higher intelligence, before we allow the spiritual to enter into the natural, and "there abide." The refusal being in the present case on the part of the householders and citizens, we are to understand not only incongruity, but a moral hostility on the part of the external man or natural mind. Such a condition of the whole of the natural mind is not to be supposed; for only some of the cities and houses visited are assumed to be hostile. It is possible for the natural mind generally to be debased, and yet the voice of the inquiring apostle to be heard asking who in it is worthy; for heaven sometimes speaks through the conscience of the sinner even when he is meditating the darkest crimes. But this is not the state represented here. The apostles are here going not only on a mission of saving mercy, but on a journey of spiritual progression. And it is possible that they may find in their progress not only unworthy but hostile inhabitants among those they seek to benefit. Do not all of us imbibe from the world, and more or less adopt as our own, intellectual doctrines and moral principles that are directly opposed to the truths and goods of religion? A different duty is imposed on the disciples in regard to these, from that which is laid upon them with respect to the unworthy. They are not simply to let their peace return to them, but they are to shake off the dust of their feet. This, in Mark vi. 11, is commanded to be done for a

testimony against them. The literal sense speaks of judgment and retaliation, but the spiritual sense, of the defence and preservation of what is good and true. The apostles were to shake the dust off their feet, to prevent it from adhering to and defiling them. Dust signifies what is in the lowest degree earthly. Since the fall, dust has been the serpent's meat: the sensual man, and the sensual principle in man, have no higher than earthly aims and satisfactions. The lesson our Lord designed to teach us by his command to the disciples is this, that if we find in our natural will and understanding any sensual inclination or sentiment that is directly opposed to our spiritual principles, we must not allow it to cleave to them, but must shake it off—separate it from all connection with the spiritual principle within—nor allow it to affect our life and practice, which are especially the part of the new man which must be preserved free from all contamination from the world and the flesh.

15. Speaking of the cities that should refuse to receive the disciples, the Lord says, *Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city.* Those who sin against the clear light of revelation are more guilty, and will bring upon themselves greater condemnation, than those who sin against the dim light of tradition. But this declaration of our Lord has a more interior meaning. Every one may see that a whole city could not be condemned because they did not receive the disciples, and instantly acknowledge the new doctrine which they preached. By Sodom and Gomorrha are meant those who are in evil of life, but have known nothing of the Lord and of the Word; while by the house or city which would not receive the disciples are meant those who are within the church, but do not live according to the truth. In a more particular application, the Lord's words relate to the members of his church individually, and to a judgment which takes place within them. Their day of judgment is the time of separation between good and evil in their own minds, with the condemnation and rejection of the evil, and the approval and confirmation of the good. In this judgment the deeper evils must be the subjects of a severer condemnation. Those that belong to early life, which may be considered as sins of ignorance, are less grievous than those committed at a more advanced age, when the mind is more enlightened. As it is necessary for us to judge ourselves, that we may not be judged, we must, if we would escape final condemnation, bring our own evils into judgment, and subject them to the condemnation of divine truth.

16. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* The

sheep are the principles of charity in the spiritual mind, and the wolves are the lusts of evil in the natural mind. This and the whole history of the opposition and persecution which the disciples were to experience from the world, to which they were sent on a mission of peace, is strikingly true as an outward representation or type of the enmity that exists in our own natural mind against the spiritual. The labour of regeneration consists in bringing the natural mind into obedience to the spiritual. The necessity for this, the way in which it is to be effected, and the conflicts and trials with which it is attended, as described by corresponding circumstances in the experience of the disciples, are most interesting and instructive to those at least who are following the Lord in the regeneration. The spiritual principles which the Lord implants in the inner man are truly like sheep in the midst of wolves, when they first descend into the external, for the purpose of making this an image of itself. It is not, however, until good comes into actual contact with evil, that the malignity of the evil, as the opposite and enemy of goodness, is fully exhibited. And as evil works by means of what is false, it is as cunning as it is malignant. That they may be prepared to meet this opposition without being overcome by it, the Lord exhorts them in the memorable words, *Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* How worthy was such an advice of Him who is Wisdom itself and Goodness itself, and in whom, and in all whose works, these attributes are perfectly united. The Christian, whether contending with evil in the world or in himself, is to aim at uniting these two elements of a perfect character. The union of wisdom and simplicity is the surest means of success, as well as of defence, against the evils that assail us in our upward course. But the wisdom of the serpent is, in a more specific sense, that which the children of this world so largely possess, and which makes them wiser in their generation than the children of light. In the Word the serpent is emblematical of the sensual part or principle of man's nature,—that which is most external, and by which he communicates immediately with the world. The serpent is in consequence the emblem of circumspection, which man exercises through the sensual principle of his nature. The sensual principle performs the same office to the mind that the senses do to the body, which act as sentinels to guard the avenues to the seats of life, to warn them against evil, as well as to minister to them for their good. It was through the sensual principle, meant by the serpent, that man was betrayed to his fall, and it was through this principle also that he was redeemed and provided

with the means of restoration. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14). It was by assuming and glorifying the sensual principle of human nature that the Lord can regenerate man even as to this principle. And it is through this principle, now glorified, that the Lord exercises divine circumspection over the human race, and protects them from the cunning and malice of their spiritual enemies. When, therefore, he exhorted his disciples to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves, he exhorted them to be in this, as in everything else, imitators and images of himself.

17. The Lord proceeds to show the necessity that would arise for the exercise of this wisdom. *Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues.* As the distinguishing faculty of man is reason, natural men specifically signify, in relation to ourselves, natural reason. The disciples are exhorted to beware of men, to teach the Christian disciple that the greatest danger he has to encounter is from the opposition of his own natural reason to the truth of the Word and religion. The subtle reasonings of the natural mind are as the Pharisees and Sadducees, who contrived ingenious devices to entangle in his talk him who was the Word and the Truth itself, and from whose sensual and subtle reasonings the Lord called them a generation of vipers. This reasoning character of the "men" of whom the disciples were to beware is indicated in the Lord's words,—*"they will deliver you up to the councils;"* for what are those councils to whom the disciples were to be delivered up, but those reasonings by which the natural-rational man tries to invalidate the truth of the spiritual man, and give a show of judgment and justice to its premeditated condemnation? As the award of their seemingly impartial and dispassionate but unjust judgments, the disciples were to be scourged in their accusers' synagogues—indicating that good and truth are often subjected to violence under the influence of superstition or in the name of religion. For the natural man and the natural mind have their religion as well as the spiritual; and we know, both from history and experience, that conventional religion not unfrequently comes into conflict with that which is universal and essential, and makes men, by no very remote figure, scourge the disciples in their synagogues,—since all false doctrines of the church and religion, which these synagogues of Satan signify, oppose the divine truths of the Word, which is meant by scourging the disciples. But there is a synagogue in ourselves in which the disciples may be

scourged. Every man has a religious principle of his own, which has its root in his self-love, and is supported, even when not confirmed, by his own self-intelligence; and his synagogue is that spurious or false conscience in which his religion finds its sanctuary and its worship. Here the truth may be scourged, and is scourged when it is presented.

18. Besides the religious, there is a worldly side of men's opposition to the truth. After telling the disciples that they would be scourged in the synagogues, the Lord adds,—*And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.* When in an orderly state, governors and kings signify governing principles of goodness and truth; but here they denote evils and falsities opposed to good and truth. The opposition here spoken of is that which evils and falsities, originating in worldly love, offer to the Christian principles that originate in the Lord's humanity—that is, to the Lord's government in the heart and mind. The disciples were to be brought before kings and governors, for a witness to them and the Gentiles. The Jews and the Gentiles were those within and those out of the church, and represented those principles in us that are acquired and those that are natural. The disciples witnessing to them of Jesus, is a communication of the divine truth and its influence to the intellectual and moral principles of the natural man, and is one of the leading uses of the operation of the internal upon the external man. The Lord said of himself, that for this end he came into the world, that he might bear witness unto the truth. And the witness of him is the witness of the truth. But what is the truth that is thus witnessed? It is the truth that exposes and condemns evil, and that teaches the good that is to be introduced in its place. The witness of Jesus is the testimony which the Word bears to the Lord in his humanity—the great truth that comprehends all salvation in itself.

19, 20. *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* There was, no doubt, with the apostles in their teaching the presence of a divine influence not given to ordinary men; but the present promise had reference to extraordinary occasions. This was the promise rather of inspiration than enlightenment. And no better idea of the inspiration by which the Word was given can be obtained than the Lord's words express: *it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* It is somewhat surprising it should be believed that the apostles should be gifted with this plenary inspiration when they testified of their Lord before kings and governors,

and that they should be left partly, if not wholly, to themselves when writing the sacred truths of the gospel for the use of the church in all future ages of the world. No just idea of the Scriptures as the Word of God can be obtained but by admitting the fact, that the sacred writers wrote not from guidance, but from the Spirit of the Lord. In regard to the spiritual sense of these words; when divine principles are brought to the bar of human opinion, in the world or in the individual mind, as the disciples were before kings and governors, it is for the purpose of exhibiting to the understanding the purely spiritual and heavenly—nay, the divine, character of the principles which the Lord has implanted in the inner man, and of causing their power to be felt and their authority to be acknowledged both by the ruling affections and thoughts of the natural mind—the governors and kings—and by the common and subordinate principles, which are the nations over whom the kings bear rule. The injunction to the disciples to take no thought, not to be anxious or solicitous, about what they should speak, implies the absence of man's own will, and also of his own wisdom, in such a case. For so far as our own will and wisdom enter into the witness we bear to the truth, so far it fails to produce its desired effect—conviction. The Spirit of our Father is the truth that is from love; and as this is the spirit that is constantly flowing into the heart and mind of every one that will receive it, so should we endeavour to allow it to have free course to run and be glorified, preserving it, as far as our frailty admits, pure and inviolate. Such should be our inward desire. But the very purity and spirituality of the principles of the new life, as they exist in the inner man, must, as a necessary consequence, excite the greater opposition to them in the outer man, when they descend into the natural mind for the purpose of bringing it into order. Therefore the Lord proceeds further to say—

21. *And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.* There are here three different kinds of opposition. Brother against brother is falsity against truth, the father against the son is evil against truth, and the children against their parents are falsities against goods. The enmity between these is described as being carried out even to the death of the good and true—that is, to their extinction. In those who are being regenerated this does not involve the idea of actual extinction, but the extreme of conflict, in which death is the means of life, the passage into the new life, the true resurrection. This enmity of the natural to the spiritual is so

great that the disciples themselves are spoken of as suffering the extreme of human dislike.

22. *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.* This is expressive of a repugnance of the whole natural mind to the principles of heavenly truth and good, or a conflict in which all the selfhood is exercised in opposition to what is the Lord's in the mind. It is promised, however, that he that endureth to the end shall be saved, which means that those spiritual principles that do not yield in temptation shall become confirmed principles of both the inward and outward life. This is to be saved; for what is salvation but the Lord's saving principles of love and truth wrought into the mind by persevering steadfastness in faith and obedience against all the allurements and temptations that our own corrupt selfhood can use to draw us away from the path of duty. But, to be able to persevere unto the end, we must have wisdom as well as harmlessness and fortitude. The serpent must direct while the dove must influence.

23. *When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.* Clowes, on this passage, which he renders, "When they persecute you in this city, flee into the other," remarks,—“The internal meaning appears to be this, that when man is opposed in the doctrine of faith, he ought to take refuge in the doctrine of charity; and when he is opposed in the latter, he should take refuge in the former: in other words, when he is opposed in truth, he should flee to good; and when opposed in good, he should seek refuge in truth. This alternation is of the Divine Providence, and is probably intended for the perfecting of each principle in the regenerate, since without it man might be induced to rest in one principle separate from the other, or to cherish one at the expense of the other; whereas the end of regeneration is, they should be both distinctly perfected and both distinctly conjoined.” The Lord gives a reason for the disciples fleeing from one city to another,—*Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.* According to the literal sense, this is generally understood to mean that before the disciples had been persecuted in every city, the Lord would have come as an avenger in the destruction of Jerusalem. In the internal historical sense it means that the days of persecution and of the Jewish church should be shortened, not as a work of vengeance, but of love; for unless those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved. No church or religious age is allowed to come naturally to a full end; for if it should, there would be no possibility, because no means, of forming a new one, which must

be raised up out of the remains of the old. That a remnant may be saved, to become the initiament of a new church, the days of every expiring church must be hastened by the performance of a judgment upon it, signified by the Son of man coming before the disciples had gone over the cities of Israel, before the church had completed its consummation, by extinguishing every principle of good and truth. In the internal sense, in which it relates to the work of regeneration, it may, when applied to the doctrinals of the church signified by the cities of Israel, denote the consummation and perfecting of those doctrinals; and in proportion as this is effected the Son of man comes, or, what is the same thing, divine truth is manifested.

24, 25. *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.* This truth was uttered for the immediate purpose of reconciling the disciples to the treatment they were to receive at the hands of those whom they were sent to bless with the tidings of joy and peace, knowing that their Lord and Master had been treated no better than themselves. But the Lord's declaration is not to be understood as being limited to his immediate disciples, but as applicable to those of all times. In a universal sense it signifies that man ought not to make himself equal with the Lord, but that it is sufficient for him that he has everything that he possesses from him,—and thus the disciple is as his master, and the servant as his lord; for the Lord is in him, and enables him to will what is good and think what is true. The call is similar in the particular sense, as relating to any individual man who is led of the Lord; the external or natural man in such a person is a disciple and servant, and the internal or spiritual man is a master and lord; and when the external or natural man serves the internal or spiritual by obeying and effecting, then he also is a master and lord, for they act in unity, as it is said of the principal and instrumental causes that they act as one cause. This particular sense coincides with the universal sense, that when the spiritual and natural act in unity, then the Lord himself acts; for the spiritual man acts nothing of himself, but when he acts, he acts solely from the Lord; for so far as the spiritual man or mind is open into heaven, so far he does not act from himself, but from the Lord. And as disciple and master, servant and lord, have reference to good and truth, or will and understanding, we are instructed that as the interior things of the will and understanding suffer from the opposition of the loves of self and the world in the natural mind, so must exterior things suffer also. *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more*

shall they call them of his household? The master of the house is the ruling principle of the mind: to call him Beelzebub is to oppose and endeavour to pervert essential principles; for to call the Lord Beelzebub was in the highest possible degree to call good evil, and light darkness. And those who thus pervert the primary things of good and truth, much more will they pervert their secondary things, which are them of the household.

26. *Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.* The disciple is not to fear his persecutors. This does not exhort them to have confidence in themselves, but to have confidence in the Lord. The Christian is like the Israelite,—he is not to fear his enemies, however strong and numerous they may be; for it is the Lord that fights for him, and delivers him, and gives him the victory. Fear indicates that the disciple is one of little faith. The reason the Lord gives for dismissing fear is, that “there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.” This is a universal truth with regard to man—the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed in the eternal world, and all outward disguises shall be stripped off, and everything, even the darkest and most hidden thoughts and intentions, come into open day. So, correspondingly, everything covered and hidden shall be brought to light in our own minds; and nothing in the minds of the regenerate shall remain covered or concealed by the fallacies of the senses, or falsities, but everything shall be brought under the influence of the light of truth, and its true value revealed. In a more interior degree the remains of goodness and truth shall be uncovered and brought into manifestation, to the succour of the heavenly principles that act upon the outer mind, in the interiors of which those remains are stored up and concealed till the regeneration brings them forth for use.

27. The result of thus uncovering what is evil and false on the one hand, and what is good and true on the other, is spoken of. *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.* What the Lord speaks to his disciples in darkness is the truth which he reveals interiorly to their understandings, and what they hear in the ear is the good which they receive interiorly in their wills. What is given in the interior is obscurely seen and indistinctly felt, and only becomes clear and sensible when it comes forth into the understanding and will of the rational faculty of the mind. This meaning appears plain from the same words, used on a different occasion and for a different purpose,

in Luke xii. 3, where we have an additional clause, that serves as a key to the explanation,—“that which ye have spoken in the ear *in closets* shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.” The closets are the interiors of the mind, and, relatively to them, the housetops are the exteriors on which there is manifestation. So with regard to light. “Light does not exist in wisdom itself, but in the thought of the understanding, and thence in speech,” just as heat does not exist in love itself, but from it in the will, and thence in the body. Love and wisdom are the essence of heat and light; heat and light are things proceeding. The Lord is said to dwell in the thick darkness, not only because he is in his own essential nature incomprehensible, but also because he is so to the mind in its highest habitation. The teachings of the Lord through the inner man come first as whisperings in the ear and mutterings in the darkness; and it is not till they descend into the will and thought that they become sonorous and intelligible, perceptible and communicable. In the upper regions of the atmosphere sound is tacit, and light is imperceptible; it is when they descend into the lower air that sound becomes audible and light truly visible. The true preacher, like the true disciple, is one who receives from his Master impressions and ideas, faint in their outline, but pregnant with meaning,—souls not yet clothed with bodies, ideas not yet formed into visible images. These he brings down into the region of conscious feeling and distinctive thought, and there gives them intellectual form and moral expression, and, clothing them in intelligible language, makes them perceptible to others. What he hears in the darkness he speaks in the light; what he hears in the ear he proclaims upon the housetops. But the disciple is to be a teacher to himself as well as to others; and what he has learnt from his Lord he is to proclaim in deeds as well as in words. He must bring forth the inward dictates of divine truth clearly into the thoughts of his own understanding, and the inmost impressions of divine love into the affections of his own will, and must thus bring them out into manifestation in his own life and conversation, that we may see his good works, and glorify Him who is their true Author.

28. In laying this duty on his disciples the Lord speaks of two opposing influences that would act upon them—one from the world and one from himself—and exhorts them accordingly. *And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* We are to act, not with the fear of men, but with the fear of God before our

eyes. The power of man extends only to the body, that of God to soul and body alike. But the literal sense of these words express an apparent, not a real truth. God destroys not the soul in hell, and the material body in all alike is killed by death, and survives not beyond the grave. Its spiritual sense is that which discloses the true meaning and real force of this rather singular declaration. Soul and body are predicated of the spirit, and signify the internal and the external man, which are indeed as soul and body to each other. In the spiritual sense him we are to fear does not mean the Divine Being, who never destroys, but some principle in ourselves which is the cause of our destruction. What, then, is it that kills the external, but cannot reach the internal? and what is it that reaches and can destroy both? The partial destroyer is falsity, the entire destroyer is evil. False persuasions may greatly injure the external man by perverting the understanding, but evil alone is able to destroy the whole man, for the man is wholly such as his will is. This destruction is not only wider but deeper than the other. For the Lord says of him whose power extends only to the body, that he kills it; but of him whose power extends to both body and soul, that he destroys them both in hell. Hell implies a deeper state of immersion, in the state opposite to what is expressively called life in the Word, than death. This appears from the Lord's words as given in Luke xii. 4, where the disciples are warned to beware of him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Death and hell are therefore mentioned distinctly; and where both mean final states, death is the abode of satans, hell of devils. How solemn a lesson is this, and how practical in its inner meaning!

29. To show them how little cause they had to fear men, the Lord directs his disciples to the Providence that is ever over them, and which enters into the minutest particulars of their lives. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.* If the last was to excite fear, this is to inspire hope and trust in God and in his goodness. Birds are the emblems of thoughts, and sparrows of the commonest and least precious; and when two are mentioned, they mean thoughts of truth and thoughts of good, or true and good thoughts. Two sparrows are sold for one farthing, or are worth only one farthing, when the lowest of our thoughts of good and truth are united to the lowest degree of the knowledge of good and truth, of which knowledge money is the emblem. Yet it is declared that even one of these shall not fall to the ground

without your Father. We are to reflect that the trials and persecutions of the disciples is the subject to which these beautiful analogies relate. A sparrow falls to the ground when, in times of trial, the thoughts, instead of soaring into the heaven of the inner man fall drooping and even dead to the earth of the outer man. The reason of this is obvious. Affection is the life of thought; and when the affections or the feelings are depressed, the thoughts languish and even die. Every one knows the effect of natural trial. The death of some beloved one in whom the affections are bound up seems for the moment to leave the world a blank, and the thoughts seem as if they had fallen to the ground, never to rise again. How much more in severe spiritual trial! Yet even in these states we are under the care of our heavenly Father, who controls and overrules even the least of our thoughts, if we are his disciples. The promise is, therefore, that when in these states the thoughts, or rather one such thought, falls, it shall not fall without our Father. Where there is sincere trust in God, the divine love enters into and preserves the least of our thoughts, so as that even in their depression to the earth they shall not be without its influence to sustain them.

30. *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* The hairs of the head are the ultimate things of wisdom, or of the rational principle, as sparrows are of the natural. And here again the minuteness of the Lord's providence is declared and promised to watch over us, especially in times of temptation. The declaration teaches us that all things, even to the least and lowest, are not only known to God, but ordained (numbered) by him, and are thus under the superintending care of an all-provident Father. How much reason have we, therefore, to take courage from the words of the Lord in the next verse!

31. *Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.* If the Lord takes care of the least and lowest, he will assuredly not forget the highest and the best. The disciples represent these highest and best principles. Those principles that are nearest to the Lord and heaven, that love him above all things, and seek to carry out his purposes and fulfil his commandments, are of more value than many lower thoughts and affections that concern themselves with matters of less importance—that relate to the concerns of the world and the body. And, indeed, some of our trials relate to these; some of our temptations come through them. It is about these things that we are inclined to take thought for the morrow, and that brings our thoughts down to the dust, when they should be elevated to the Lord in truth and thanksgiving. It is these that lead us to inquire "What shall we

eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" not remembering, or rather not fully believing, that our Father knoweth that we have need of all these things, and that he who feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the grass of the field will not leave unprovided those who are much better than the fowls, and more enduring than the grass, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.

32. *Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.* If we confess the Son before men, the Son will confess us before his Father. The Son is the Divine truth, the Father is the Divine good. If we do the truth, the truth will lead us to good. We confess the Son not only by openly avowing our faith in him, but by faithfully doing his commandments. This is practical confession. And this is the confession of the truth that leads to good. For the truth itself is then in us as a witness, and it acknowledges us as sons, and gifts us with the good of truth as the result and reward of our consistent profession. The Father is said to be in heaven, and the Son is understood to be on earth. The promise further implies, therefore, that a consistent and persevering practical acknowledgment of truth in the external man will be the means of raising that truth into the internal man, and so change the government of wisdom into the government of love.

33. *But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.* The denial of the Son before men involves the denial of the denier by the Son before the Father. If truth is practically denied in the life, it cannot lead to the good to which it continually points and was intended to conduct us. But we find here a more serious consequence of denying the Son than his not confessing us before his Father: he will deny us. And this denial means that when the truth is known and yet dishonoured, the truth itself condemns us, and deprives us of all the good which it teaches, resulting in a greater opposition against both truth and good than if we had never known and professed the truth.

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.* The literal meaning of this declaration is not that the Lord came to create discord among men, but that a necessary result of his teaching was difference of opinion, and division as a consequence. The world could not be awakened from its lethargy and sinfulness without causing commotion and conflict among men. In the spiritual sense it teaches, in a very striking manner, the result, in the mind of the believer, of the coming

of the Lord to him as his Saviour. That result is, to excite into hostility the whole of the thoughts and affections of the natural mind against the spiritual. This is the subject we have already said is treated of in this chapter. And here it is directly declared, and as plainly as directly, to those who look at this declaration spiritually. For the natural mind of man is meant by the earth. The Lord came not to give peace, nor does he ever come to give peace, to the natural mind of man in its state of disorder and corruption. The sword of divine truth must go forth against the principles of evil and falsity in the mind, which are equally the enemies of God and of the man himself. Before regeneration, there is peace; but it is the false peace which is not peace, but the mere acquiescence of the whole mind in the disorder, and infidelity, and sin which are the natural man's chosen inheritance. The coming of the Lord to the soul, and his acceptance as the Saviour, introduces the sword, and initiates a war that continues till victory is obtained over evil, and peace established on the principles of justice and truth. The war which the Lord's reception creates is between the external and the internal man. The evils of the external being no longer acknowledged as the ruling principles of the mind and life, but another law—the law of God—being now acknowledged in the inner man, the lusts and imaginations of the natural mind rise up in hostility against the new and inward law, and strive in all the bitterness of hatred to wage a successful war against it. The nature of this warfare is described in some of the verses that now follow.

35. *For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.* The man, a son, the daughter, and the daughter-in-law are the new principles and affections of good and truth in the internal man; and the father, mother, and mother-in-law are the old principles and affections of evil and falsity in the external man. The man is truth, and the daughter and daughter-in-law are the affections of good and truth. These are the principles of the inner man. The father is evil, and the mother and mother-in-law are the affections of evil and falsity; and these are the principles of the external man. The Lord's coming to the soul sets these at variance; for the mind that has been enslaved to what is evil and false cannot receive the truth, whose very nature it is to make its recipients free, without striving to be freed from the bondage of sin, and resisting therefore the tyranny of his evil passions. In this struggle the Christian finds the truth of the Lord's words as expressed in the next verse.

36. *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.* The house is the man's own mind. And truly are his foes they of his own house. His hereditary nature is nothing but evil. To love himself and the world before the Lord and his neighbour is his very nature. The loves of self and the world are always his enemies, since they deprive him of the true riches and of true happiness. But they are not known and regarded as enemies so long as the principles of truth and life are unknown. When a man becomes in purpose a friend of God, and of men as the images of God, he soon finds how deep is the enmity of his yet unregenerate heart. His foes are truly seen and felt to be those of his own house.

37. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.* When a man has made the discovery that his enemies are they of his own house, there is a danger to which he is exposed, as indeed all trial and conflict are attended with danger. For the conflict or warfare of the Christian life is between the love of God and the love of self—the love of the neighbour and the love of the world; and the very fact that there is a conflict between these opposite loves indicates a balance of power that makes it possible for either side to gain the victory. If self and the world were not deeply rooted in our affections, there would be no ground for a serious contest, nor any danger of the natural overcoming the spiritual. As it is, this result is possible. Therefore our Lord guards us against such a calamity: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Father and mother are the loves of self and the world, which are the parents of all evil loves; and son and daughter are the affections of all falsity and evil, which are the offspring of these two principal loves; thus they include all evil, hereditary and actual. The object of the conflict is to determine whether self is to be loved more than the Lord, or the Lord more than self. And in this warfare we have need to be reminded of the truth, that he that yields, and gives the predominance to self is no more worthy of Him whose love is life. Evil is the devil, especially the evil of self-love; and if we are of our father the devil, we are utterly unworthy, because utterly unfit, to be called or to be the sons of God.

38. *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.* A necessary duty, and one that is essential to success in the Christian warfare, is that work of self-denial of which the cross is the expressive symbol. To crucify the world and the flesh is the Christian's

daily labour, and to follow the Lord is his daily duty. He must not only struggle against the evil lust within, but against the evil habit without; and must not only cease to do evil, but he must also learn to do well. He must take up his cross by resisting evil, and follow the Lord by imitating his holy example. And if he do not, he is not worthy of him who at once bore his cross and lived a life of beneficence and love. To perform the important duty of bearing the cross, it is necessary to know what that duty is, or to understand what the cross means. Bearing the cross does not consist in afflicting the body, but in purifying the mind; not in denying either body or mind its proper and natural gratifications, but in resisting whatever is impure and selfish in them; so that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God. Bearing the cross means more especially to endure temptation; and temptation is an inward struggle against spiritual evil, as it rises up in our hearts against the good which the Lord has implanted there.

39. To bear the cross implies constant self-denial; but it includes also, as its end and final result, the crucifixion and death of the selfhood; and if it effect not this, we have borne it in vain. *He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* Love is life. The love of self and the world is our own or unregenerate life; the love of the Lord is our new, our regenerate life. He that findeth his life, by allowing self-love to rule in his heart, must lose his life, which is the love of God, and which alone is true life. But he that for the Lord's sake loses or lays down his life shall find it in love to him. For to lay down our life for the Lord's sake is to die to self, that we may live to God; it is to exchange evil for good and falsity for truth, and to do this because the Lord's will is thereby done and his glory advanced. It may be remarked that the original word for life in this passage is one of two that are both rendered by this term in the New Testament. But there is a distinction between them, and the propriety, if not necessity, of attending to it will appear from an example. We read of our Lord that "in him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4); and we read also that our Lord himself said, "I lay down my life for the sheep. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 15, 18). The life he derived from the Father was not the same as the life he laid down, and is not expressed by the same term. The life which the Lord laid down is expressed by the same word as that which he used when he said, "My *soul* is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The reason of the distinction will at once be seen when we reflect that

the life which the Lord had in him, by virtue of his being begotten by the Father, was the Divine love; and that the life which was sorrowful, and which he laid down, was the Divine truth: for the Lord was tempted and put to death as divine truth; but as divine love or good, he was above all temptation, and incapable of death. Let us here remark that, when we speak of him suffering and dying as divine truth, we do not mean divine truth as it is in itself, but of divine truth as clothed with appearances of truth derived from his descent into the world by means of a finite and frail humanity. We may express the doctrine otherwise by saying, that the life which the Lord had in him from the Father was the life of his internal man, and that the life which he laid down, and which he derived from the mother, was the life of his external man. The life, therefore, which he that findeth shall lose, and which he that loseth, for the Lord's sake, shall find, is the life of his external man, specifically the life of his intellectual mind. To lay down this life is to put off the falsities and fallacies with which the truth we possess is surrounded, and thus remove from our faith the doubt and unbelief which adhere to it from the natural man. Intellectual pride is, in this application, the life or soul that we are required to lose; and when this life is laid down we find a new life, which is the living soul that God breathes into us, and which makes us new creatures. We may remark, in conclusion, that these two promises express summarily the doctrine of divine providence, which includes that of the Lord's permissions, as well as of his provisions, in regard to us as his disciples. We have remarked that the Lord never permits any evil to befall us but for the purpose of preventing a greater, and for our good as an end. A sparrow never falls to the ground without his permission and control; and the very hairs of our head are all numbered. The numbering of the hairs of our head signify not only the preservation but the arrangement by the Lord, and in agreement with his divine order, of all the least things and minutest activities of our natural mind and life. It is by this, indeed, that the Lord preserves; for he operates by order, and order is power.

40. We come now to another and still brighter side of the subject of the process by which the natural mind, and consequently the man himself, is regenerated. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.* The disciples were sent of Jesus, and Jesus was sent of God. We are not to understand that Jesus Christ was a separate person from the Father, as the disciples were separate persons from him. The Divine Essence is one and indi-

visible, and that which is begotten of God is God, and therefore infinite. But men are created, and therefore finite; and between the infinite and the finite there is no comparison: the infinite is life itself, the finite is a mere receptacle of life—a life which cannot exist for a moment separate from its source. But although the Divine Essence is one and indivisible, yet there is in it a plurality of Divine Essentials. Love and wisdom, or goodness and truth, in God are distinct, though inseparable, as are the will and understanding in man. This distinction in God is expressed in the New Testament as that of Father and Son—the Father being the Divine Love or Goodness, the Son being the Divine Wisdom or Truth. Wisdom proceeds from love, or truth from goodness, comparatively as a son proceeds from a father; this, at least, is the natural similitude by which this divine subject is expressed to men in the natural world. Divine wisdom is thus sent by divine love. In this sense Jesus is the sent of God. In a corresponding sense the disciples are sent of Jesus; for the disciples whom the Lord sent in his name represented the truths that proceed from the Lord as the Truth itself—truths accommodated to the lower apprehensions of the human mind. Thus, we may say, there is a gradation of life from God to man. Divine truth is sent of divine good, and truth divine is sent of divine truth. So also the spiritual principle proceeds from the celestial, and the natural from the spiritual. The lower leads to the higher, and the higher to the highest; and not only so, but the lowest includes the higher in it. He, therefore, who receives the lowest in all sincerity receives the others also. So with respect to the Word: all its interior senses are contained in its ultimate or natural sense. So is every one that is taught of God. He who receives the truth in its simplest sense receives in it its higher wisdom. He who is in simple obedience to God has in that obedience both the love of the neighbour and the love of God; and if he continues to progress in the religious life, those loves which are potentially in his obedience will successively come to be active principles in his mind, and raise him into a correspondingly perfect life. “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” (John xiv. 23). Here we have the blessed promise, that if we hear—that is, hearken to and obey—the Lord’s words, our minds will become the habitation both of his love and wisdom, and thus the tabernacle of God will be with us, and we shall be his people, and the Lord himself shall be with us, and be our God.

41. The Lord proceeds to say,—*He that receiveth a prophet in the*

name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. A prophet, who taught the truth, and a righteous man, who did it, signify truth and righteousness. To receive a prophet in the name of a prophet is to receive truth for its own sake; and to receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man is to receive good for its own sake. The reward of receiving what is true and good for their own sake is to have the affection of truth and goodness. In love is happiness, for spiritual love is the Lord's love in us, and in this love are contained, and in it are bestowed, both happiness and heaven.

42. *And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.* Little children are the emblems of innocence; and to give the little ones to drink is to instruct the ignorant who are in innocence, and to insinuate truth into innocence itself. But the reward which is promised for this duty extends to those who give to drink only a cup of cold water. As warmth is love or affection, cold is the absence of love, or rather a defect of love. Cold water is the truth, not of love, but of obedience. And the promise that he who gives even a cup of cold water to a little one shall not lose his reward, is an assurance that even the simplest act of goodness done from a dutiful obedience to the Lord's will shall have its own reward, as well as the highest, and not less in its degree than the most loving virtue. But to be entitled to a reward, this simple duty must be done in the name of a disciple; it must not be done in our own name. It must have respect to the teaching of the Word, and not be the offspring of natural benevolence. To give it a spiritual quality and a heavenly result, duty must proceed from a spiritual principle. Christians often lament their want of love to God. If they have not much love, they need have no lack of obedience. No one can force himself to love, but every one can compel himself to obey. And he who begins with honest, though it be but cold obedience, will, by a conscientious discharge of duty, gradually come to have and to feel that love the absence of which he laments. Although love cannot be willed into existence, it can be wrought into existence. If we give God obedience, he will give us love.

CHAPTER XI.

1. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding (or ordaining) his twelve disciples, he departed thence, to teach and to preach in their cities.* The Lord's operations are of two kinds—mediate and immediate. He acts mediately through his Word and through his church, in heaven and in the world, and immediately from himself. His immediate operation is into the inmost of the soul, and thence as far as possible into the faculties of the mind below. But this inmost and immediate operation must, to effect its purpose in our regeneration, be seconded by outward agencies, by whom knowledge and other means are supplied for opening the way for the descent of life and light from within, thus far preparing the way of the Lord. This two-fold operation is treated of in these chapters. When the Lord disposes in heavenly order the principles of goodness and truth in the inner man—which is meant by ordaining the twelve disciples—and causes them to descend into the outer man, to bring him into a corresponding heavenly order—which is meant by sending the disciples forth to gather in the lost sheep—the Lord himself operates from within to accomplish his beneficent end in our salvation; and this is meant by his departing thence to teach and to preach. The cities into which he went to preach are doctrines, these being the receptacles of his divine influx, and the ground of his operation.

2. *Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples.* Historically considered, the fact of John's sending to inquire of Jesus if he were the Messiah, or only, like himself, a forerunner of the expected Saviour, seems rather unaccountable, seeing that he had himself pointed out Jesus to the people as "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Various conjectures have been made on the subject, which it would profit little to repeat. Our object is to derive from the circumstances of the history some lesson of spiritual wisdom. John had been shut up in prison for bearing noble testimony to the truth, in reproving the reigning tyrant, Herod, for having taken his brother Philip's wife. This criminal connection well represented the state of the Jewish church; and John's imprisonment as fitly represented the treatment by that church of the Word, which John represented, for its testifying against the gross and glaring sinfulness into which the Jews had fallen. But, considered in reference to the regeneration of the man of the true church, this subject has another meaning. John representing the written Word, or the truth which it teaches, the imprisonment of John

represents a state of temptation, when the truth is shut in and deprived of its freedom of action by the enmity and opposition of the natural man, whose evils it condemns. In this state doubts regarding the Lord in his humanity arise in the mind, and these doubts relate to the salvation which the Incarnate Word has provided. In these states of spiritual trial the Lord appears to be absent, and it seems as if he had forgotten to be gracious, and that he comes not to give deliverance. These doubts do not, indeed, originate in the Word itself, which John represented; but the truths of the Word not unfrequently, in times of temptation, are so construed by us as seemingly to favour them. But there is a time of light in the darkest states of trial, which comes when the mind seeks and is prepared to receive it. This time is when the thoughts and affections, like the two disciples of John, are sent forth to the Lord himself, to see if he will remove our doubts, and give us from his lips, or by immediate influx, an assurance of the truth.

3. But the Lord himself is the subject of the doubt. *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* To understand this in relation to ourselves, we must reflect that the period to which this belongs represents a transition state in the regenerate life. John's life and ministry, in relation to the Lord's, represented the state of reformation, the Lord's own life representing the state of regeneration; and the end of John's ministry, and the beginning of the Lord's, represented the transition state which is between them. John's own words were now about to be fulfilled: "He must increase, but I must decrease." The one state is the inverse of the other. As the second increases, the first decreases. The truth which leads to good, which John's ministry represented, decreases in its influence and power, as truth derived from good, which the Lord's ministry exemplified, increases. The office of the first is superseded by that of the second. The ministry of the letter gives way to that of the spirit; the ministry of repentance, to that of holiness; the labour of sowing, to the work of reaping. In the trial attending this change of state, the doubt of John is felt. This question then arises in the mind,—Is this the very Good itself, and the very Truth itself—the Lamb that removes the sins and sorrows of the soul? Is this the very principle and state which the soul, through her repentance and tribulation, has looked for? or is it but another stage in the preparatory state of labour which is to prepare the way of Him who is yet to come as the Prince of Peace?

4. How significant was the Lord's answer to John's disciples! *Go*

and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. This was saying in effect, "If you are looking for one whose coming is not in word but in power, judge whether I am the Christ or no." And if we interpret aright what our affections hear and what our thoughts see, allowing experience to be the interpreter, no other evidence will be required to convince us that He whom we look for has indeed come; for what more convincing evidence can we receive of the Lord having come to us, than his beneficent works being wrought in us? But the lesson which it teaches is most consoling and encouraging to those who are passing through states of temptation, represented by John in prison. It tells them that even while their external man is bound in affliction and iron, and is darkened by doubt and oppressed with the worst apprehensions, tempted even to doubt if the Lord is a Saviour or no, that Lord is at the very time present with them, working deliverance for them by his miracles of goodness, healing all their diseases, and restoring their souls. Let us see what those beneficent works are.

5. *The blind receive their sight*—the understanding, blind from ignorance or error, is restored to the power of perceiving truth; and *the lame walk*—the life, distorted with the evil of ignorance and error, is restored to rectitude; *the lepers are cleansed*—the truths that were known, but falsified and profaned by perverse interpretation so as to countenance sin, are purified from defilement; and *the deaf hear*—the will, deaf to the voice of truth and love, is brought to hearken and obey; *the dead are raised up*—natural love, which is death, gives place to spiritual love, which is life; and *the poor have the gospel preached to them*—poverty of spirit becomes the ground of a new and higher reception and love of the truth, while the gospel becomes to the soul truly the glad tidings of salvation. This brief enumeration of the Lord's works, which the disciples of John beheld, includes almost all the kinds of miracles He performed, and are such as prophecy had declared the Messiah would perform. To John, therefore, if he had doubts, these wonders must have been sufficient testimony that Jesus was the Christ. To those who, like John, are in prison, tempted with doubts as to the Saviour, in relation to themselves as the objects of his saving mercy, the testimony here given is that which is to be seen in themselves, in the removal of the very evils in which temptations originate, or with which they are connected.

6. When the Lord had shown John all these things, he pronounced the words, *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.* While prophecy had foretold the Lord's works of mercy and power, it

had also declared that he would be a stumbling-stone and rock of offence. The time in which our Lord came was one when trial and decision were necessary. He was the stone on which men were to fall, the Truth by which they were to be tried. To the evil, or those confirmed in sin, he was a stone of offence, to the repentant he was a rock of safety. Blessed are they who are not offended in him. This blessing is ours when, having cast out all things that offend, and brought our minds into a state of holy submission to the laws of divine order, the Lord's love and truth rule in our hearts and understandings, and thence govern the life and conversation. The Lord had given testimony to John respecting himself as the Eternal Word in human nature, and he now turns to the multitude to give his testimony to them respecting him who represented the written Word in its literal sense. This will be seen to be appropriate when we reflect that the outward coverings with which divine truth, in descending from God out of heaven to men on earth, had clothed itself, was analogous to the humanity which Jesus, as the Word itself, had put on to come into the world. *What went ye out into the wilderness to see?* This question is addressed to us as truly as it was to the Jews. For, as John was a type of the revealed Word—which is still the subject of numerous opinions, all which are comprehended in the Lord's descriptions of the different notions and expectations of those who went out to see John in the wilderness—so we may each find a revelation of our own state of mind in relation to the Word of truth. The wilderness—which describes the desolate state of the Jewish church, where the revealed Word was—describes also the state of the human mind when in a corresponding state of spiritual desolation or temptation. We go out to see and examine the Divine Word with different expectations of what it is and teaches,—too often with preconceived opinions; not content, as we should be, to see and hear in simplicity what the Lord communicates through that sacred medium concerning himself and his kingdom. These different views, the false as well as the true, are accurately expressed by the Divine Speaker, who had a perfect knowledge of the state of the church, as he has of the human heart. We should therefore listen to his words of wisdom, that we may learn of him respecting ourselves.

What went ye out to see? A reed shaken with the wind? This describes with great exactness and force the state of a large class as to their ideas regarding the Divine Word. The Divine Word is "a reed shaken with the wind" to those who regard it merely in its literal sense, and who are dependent for their views of its teaching on

the opinions of others. The hollow reed is an exact emblem of the Word when its outward literal sense is considered to be all that constitutes it. As the literal sense of the Word consists for the most part of apparent truths, it is capable of every different interpretation which human expositors may be disposed 'to give it, and may be made apparently to teach not only different but opposite doctrines, as we know is actually the case. To all such the Word is as "a reed shaken with the wind," a revelation, in its origin Divine, made to yield to the breath of human opinion. This character of the Word in the letter adapts it to the states of all, and by admitting of different interpretations, serves as a protection to its internal sense, being in this respect the flaming sword that turns every way to guard the way of the tree of life. But even if the Word in the letter is interpreted erroneously, yet, if this is done sincerely, it is not seriously injurious to or destructive of faith, for even "the bruised reed will he not break." If, on the other hand, it is subjected to a sinister interpretation, it becomes "the staff of a broken reed, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce him" (Isa. xxxvi. 6). If men wilfully pervert it, so as to make it oppose its own essential principles, then do they, like the blaspheming Jews, put a reed in the right hand of the Son of man, and take a reed and smite him on the head, and spit upon him, and mock him (ch. xxvii. 29, 30). When, however, the letter is honestly interpreted, it becomes like the reed on which the sponge with the vinegar was raised to the lips of the Lord upon the cross, by which men minister to interior truth, when suffering at the hands of its enemies.

8. Another class who go out into the wilderness are those who go to see *a man clothed in soft raiment*. This class consists of those who think that, to be worthy of God and attractive to men, the Word should be clothed in more than the graces of the most perfect human composition, and who are therefore offended with its hairy garment. But our Lord teaches us that *they who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses*. The kings' houses are the mansions of heaven, which is the house of the King of kings; and consequently not in its literal, but in its spiritual sense, is the Word to be found in the soft and gorgeous attire in which some unwisely desire to see it in this lower world. In this world, indeed, it is possible to behold the Word in something of this soft and flowing apparel. To those who are in heavenly states of mind, Divine Truth will disclose some of its heavenly beauties. Those who are in kings' houses are spiritually those who are in the good of spiritual truth; for houses signify the affections

of the will, and kings the spiritual truths of the understanding, and those truths which reside in these affections are soft and beautiful. They have cast off the rough garment of the prophet, when, as a preacher of repentance, he reproves, and prohibits, and threatens the sinner with divine wrath and judgment, and have put on the soft raiment of those in kings' houses, where, the reign of order being established, God is felt as well as seen to be love, and his kingdom to be the rule of righteousness and peace.

9. Besides these two classes who form a wrong estimate of the essential character of the Word, by judging of it from their own disordered states, there is a third class who regard it with a juster appreciation of its nature, and who are meant by those of whom the Lord says—*But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.* It is difficult to see what can be meant by its being said that John was not only a prophet, but more than a prophet; unless it be allowed that the term prophet has some spiritual meaning, and that John was not merely a man entrusted with a divine commission, but a man who was invested with a representative character. A prophet, whose office it was to teach the doctrines of the Word, signifies doctrine derived from the Word. We regard the Word of God in its true character when we look to it as the source of all true doctrine, and seek earnestly and honestly to learn its doctrines from it. But the Lord said of John, not only that he was a prophet, but that he was *more than a prophet.* Although the Word contains all doctrine, the Word itself is more than all doctrine; it is, even in the letter, Divine Wisdom itself revealed for the use of men, to serve for their instruction and edification in all states of the regenerate life, and through all generations.

10. In consequence of the Word being more than all doctrine, and thus more than a prophet, it is the Lord's forerunner as well as messenger to the church, and to every member of the church. *For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.* The Word, we have seen (iii. 3), which John represented, is the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight." The truths of the Divine Word, by whoever preached, are alone capable of preparing the Lord's way into the human heart. The Lord speaks in the passage before us as if another sent the messenger to prepare his way, as if Jehovah had sent John to prepare the way of Jesus. But Jehovah and Jesus are the same Being, yet distinct as the Divinity and the Humanity of the one Lord and Saviour, and as the

Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom. Jehovah may here be said to send his messenger before the face of Jesus, since it is the Divinity that is the sender or the origin of the Word, while the whole Word has reference to Jesus as God manifest in the flesh, the Redeemer and Saviour of men. It is said that John came before the face of Jesus; for the Lord's face is the internal of the Word, which Jesus was, and the letter of the Word, and true doctrine as its interpreter, go before the internal truths of its spiritual sense, to prepare the mind for its reception.

11. But not only is the Baptist more than a prophet, but *Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.* Those who are born of women are opposed to and distinguished from those who are born of God. The letter of the Word is formed of images taken from nature, and is thus adapted to the natural apprehensions of men. Its literal truths are therefore meant by those born of women. As the truths revealed to us in the Word, even in its literal sense, are greater than those to be found in the writings of men, it is said of the Word even in the letter, that a greater hath not risen than John the Baptist. Yet immeasurably greater as the Word is than all human compositions, its literal sense is far less glorious than its spiritual sense. The highest apprehension of divine truth by men can bear no comparison to the lowest apprehension of divine truth by angels. Therefore, although "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist;" *notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

12. The Lord proceeds to say, *And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* Assuming, as we think we justly may, that the authorized version expresses the true meaning of the passage, the question is, What does it mean? The common interpretation is, that the violence used and the force exerted are such as holy men can employ. This interpretation may be considered as on the whole correct. But it may be understood that the violence and force here spoken of, though such as indeed are consistent with the nature of the heavenly kingdom and of the heavenly life, are yet of a character such as belongs to the church, and to the member of the church, in that stage of their progression meant by the days of John the Baptist, which is a state of initiation. In the beginning of the Christian dispensation, as in that of every other, its truths were received intellectually rather than morally, or men endeavoured by

the power of intellect alone to enter into the mysteries of faith. Some seized on the truth with avidity, but did not, as they ought to have done, unite to it the good which makes it truly useful, except, indeed, that many whose first reception this describes might come to accept the good as they advanced in the knowledge of what the gospel required. According to Luke, the first reception of the gospel was the same with all. "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time every one presseth into it," or enters into it by violence. This does not mean that all men entered it, but that those who did so, entered by force. The language seems also to imply, in the spiritual sense, that entrance was not effected without severe trial, and that temptation, of an external but violent kind, is a means by which every one, in the days of John, enters into the kingdom of God.

13. *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.* It is the time of the prophets with us when we are yet only learning of the Lord; it is the time of John when the Lord has indeed been born in the inner man, but has not yet been fully manifested in the outer man, in which, however, a way is being prepared by repentance and obedience for his coming into it and passing through it into the life.

14. *And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.* Why was it promised (Mal. iv. 5) that Elijah should come to prepare the way of the Lord? It may be admitted that Elijah was a type of John; but the reason he was selected from among the prophets to be so was, because, like John, he was an eminent representative of the written Word. It is the Word itself that prepares the Lord's way both into the church and into the human mind. It is, moreover, the function of the prophet, and not the prophet himself, that represents what is divine and holy; and therefore the personal question is one of no moment.

15: When the Lord had finished his address to the people respecting John, he added these words, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* This was to call their attention to what he had said to them, and also to remind them that his words demanded a willing and attentive hearing. The ear, as being the sense through which the sound as well as the meaning of articulate language is conveyed, is the organ that more especially communicates with the will, as the eye is the organ that communicates more especially with the understanding. He that hath ears to hear is one whose will is inclined to hearken to the lessons of divine wisdom, and who has a disposition

to obey. This submission of the will to the Lord's teaching is better than any offering we can make ; for "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

16, 17. Few, it would appear, were ready to incline their ear to either the Lord's teaching or to John's, which the Lord proceeds to point out in a parable. *But whereunto shall I liken this generation ? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced ; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.* The Jews had refused to mourn with John or to rejoice with Jesus. John had appeared as an ascetic, living in retirement, clothed in his hairy garment, and feeding on locusts and wild honey, and teaching the hard lesson of self-denial. He mourned unto men, but they refused to lament. The Lord came without any sign of austerity, and mingled with the people in the ordinary concerns and even the pleasures of life. He piped to them, but they refused to dance. Besides this meaning, as applicable to the Jews, this beautiful parable has a meaning still more instructive for us. The little boys here spoken of, sitting in the markets, are manifest figures of the truths of love and innocence contained in the holy Word ; and their *calling to their companions* is a figure equally plain of the application of those truths for reception with man. "We have piped unto you," denotes the celestial affection with which they are replenished, and which they are calculated to inspire, for *pipers* and *piping* signify such affection. "Ye have not danced" denotes that that affection had not been admitted, so as to produce a corresponding joy in the natural mind, for *dancing* denotes such joy and delight. "We have mourned unto you," denotes truth without affection. "Ye have not lamented," denotes that they had not acted in conformity with such truth, by obeying it, as they ought to have done. A still more personal application of it may bring its lesson nearer to our common spiritual states and experience. The want of sympathy between the children and their juvenile companions, expresses a want of harmony between the internal and external affections of our own minds. The children that piped and mourned are the affections of the spiritual mind, which call to their companions, the affections of the natural mind, to reciprocate their joys and their sorrows ; for the joys of the spiritual mind should be reciprocated by pure delights of good and truth in the natural mind, and its sorrows should be reciprocated by contrition and humility. It is the Lord's purpose in his divine operations to produce harmony between the spiritual and the natural affections

and thoughts in our minds, to bring the natural mind to respond to and co-operate with the spiritual. The slowness of our natural disposition to yield a ready and hearty compliance with the calls of the spiritual affections is a matter which most of us must have learnt by abundant experience. The Lord's parable may remind us of our natural want of sympathy with what is spiritual, and should lead us to listen to the calls and pleadings of the conscience, which has been formed within us by the good of truth.

18, 19. The Lord openly applies and explains the parable in reference to himself and John the Baptist. *John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.* We see this disposition to magnify and distort, so as even to turn virtues into vices in those we are disposed to condemn. Its spiritual meaning is our principal object. John came neither eating nor drinking, because the work of reformation, which John's ministry represented, consists essentially in the removal of evil by self-denial. The Son of man came eating and drinking, because the work of regeneration, which the ministry of Jesus, as distinguished from that of John, represented, consists essentially in the doing of good. Self-denial, or desisting from evil, is spiritual fasting, and doing good is spiritual eating and drinking. The Jews said of John that he had a devil, for the natural man regards self-denial as an evil, and as destructive of all true life and enjoyment; and they said of the Son of man that he was gluttonous and a wine-bibber, for the natural man has so little relish for the good and truth of religion that the very idea of them is surfeiting to his spirit. But this objection to the Lord was no doubt made chiefly by the Pharisees, who affected great sanctity, and who regarded the Lord's life as that of a man of the world, because he refused and condemned nothing of the world but its evil and hypocrisy. They therefore coupled with this accusation that of his being a friend of publicans and sinners. He was indeed their friend, for his object, in his intercourse with them, as with all others, was to do them good. In this feature of his character, our Lord was the pattern of the perfect man. He did not shun sinners, as many do, either because they contemn them or fear contempt. His love for their souls was so great as to draw him towards them, and so pure as to prevent his being contaminated by contact with them. The Lord concludes by saying, *But Wisdom is justified of her children.* In the literal sense, the children of wisdom are the wise; and of all these, but of these only, is wisdom justified. He who is

Wisdom itself is justified only of those who have become wise from him; for who but the wise can appreciate wisdom? In the spiritual sense, the children of wisdom are the truths and goods of wisdom. In Scripture usage, wisdom is not so much an intellectual as a moral quality. As folly means depravity, so wisdom means goodness grounded in intelligence. Wisdom is justified of her children when the fruits of wisdom bear testimony before men of the excellence of the principles that produce them.

20-24. The Lord now turns to those cities in which most of his mighty works had been done, and upbraids them because they did not repent. *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.* These cities afforded solemn examples of the truth he had just delivered in his parable. How striking and solemn an answer is this to those who demand signs and wonders that they may believe. The mighty and beneficent works of the Saviour did not produce conviction or conversion generally in the cities in which they were done. Men could witness the greatest and most beneficent miracles ever performed, and yet remain in unbelief and sin. External evidence cannot produce internal conviction; there must be an internal witness before there can be internal belief. There is only one way in which the Lord's miracles can produce saving faith—by being spiritually wrought in our own souls. The Lord's miracles represented the saving works which are the means of restoring the soul to a sound state; and these are the only works that carry their own evidence with them, since they give us an experimental knowledge of the Lord as our Saviour. Those who do not thus witness the works of the Lord are the Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, on which rests the woe of unbelief and unrepented sin.

In the literal sense of this passage some find a difficulty. If those works would have led Tyre and Sidon to repent, why were they not done in them? The answer to this is, had the Lord saved Tyre and Sidon, he could not have saved Chorazin and Bethsaida. Had he come into the world at an earlier period, he could not have provided for the

salvation of those who lived after his coming. Iniquity had to be consummated or full before the remedy for it could be applied, that the remedy might be a complete one. Yet the Lord's mercy provides, as far as possible, against any disadvantage to those who lived before his coming. It was to be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for the cities who rejected the Saviour. "To whom much is given, of them much is required." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." The spiritual sense teaches a still more solemn and important lesson. It appears evident that the intellectual principle of the natural man in general is represented in this passage by Tyre and Sidon, and the false persuasions in that principle by Chorazin and Bethsaida. In like manner, the will principle of the natural man in general seems to be signified by Sodom, and the evils inherent in it by Capernaum. According to this view, we find that the intellectual principle itself of the natural man, represented by Tyre and Sidon, is capable of being saved by the "mighty works" or redeeming mercy of the Lord; whilst the false persuasions of it, represented by Chorazin and Bethsaida, being diametrically opposed to the divine truth of the Lord, must be rejected and condemned. A woe is pronounced against them, and we can only escape being subject to it by separating ourselves from them, and concurring in the judgment by which they are anathematized. So also we find that the mighty works of the Lord's redemption extend even to the saving of the will principle of the natural man, represented by Sodom; but the evils of it, represented by Capernaum, being diametrically opposite to the divine love of the Lord, must be extirpated and removed. A woe is here also pronounced, and we can only avoid being included in it by leaving every evil, especially that of self-love, to sink into hell; whilst, by appropriating principles from heaven which have an opposite gravitation, we are borne up and saved from sinking into perdition with them.

25, 26. *At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.* The subject we have been considering has another side, a divine and heavenly one. Whilst men reject the overtures of divine mercy, that mercy is employed in tempering both the malignity and the consequences of their rejection, by hiding from them, as far as may be, the knowledge that would aggravate their state and criminality. When Omniscience sees that the impenitent will not accept the good that would make them

happy, mercy withholds from them the truth that would but increase their sin and misery. It is a part of God's providential operation that man shall not be admitted into the interior acknowledgment of truth further than that he can be preserved in it to the end of his life. Such being the case, God's goodness hides the things of salvation from the wise and prudent. But it reveals them unto babes—to those who have innocence of heart and simplicity of spirit sufficient to enable them to receive it. How can God at once conceal and reveal the truths of life? One way is this. The letter of the Word conceals its spiritual truths from the wise, and reveals them to the simple. It is like the cloudy pillar that came between the camps of the Egyptians and of Israel—it was light to the one and darkness to the other. This thanksgiving is addressed to the Father, and the concealing and revealing is said to have seemed good in his sight. As the Father signifies the Lord as to his divine love, we are instructed that this providential dealing is one of pure love, which is further indicated by its being *good* in his sight; for all good is of love. Yet the Lord's love acts by wisdom, which is meant by his sight, in which it seemed good.

27. From addressing the Father as one distinct from and superior to himself, the Lord turns to the multitude and instructs them respecting the true nature of the relation existing between them. *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* If his thanksgiving seems to acknowledge his inferiority to the Father, his address claims equality with him. "All things" include "all that the Father hath"—all the attributes and prerogatives of Deity. These the Father delivered to the Son. It is almost needless to say that it was impossible for one divine person to impart these personal attributes and rights to another. When we know that the Father is the Lord's indwelling divinity, and that the Son is the humanity in which his divinity dwells, we can see the possibility and reasonableness of "all things" belonging to the divinity being delivered to the humanity. We see an image of this in the soul delivering all things that it hath to the body. The soul does not by this act divest itself of any of its attributes or authority, but only invests the body with them—at once giving them to another and retaining them in itself. The Lord's delivering the attributes of his divine to his human nature made the human itself divine—a fitting divine body for the habitation of a divine soul. The human thus became the very form and manifestation of the divine. In Jesus

the Divine is human, and the Human is divine. Both are alike infinite. Hence, "no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." If no one knows the Son, but the Father, and no one knows the Father, but the Son, their knowledge of each other must be infinite. But the Son is the only source of our knowledge of the Father. We cannot know the Divine but in and through the Human. How appropriate, therefore, is the invitation which now follows!

28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* This blessed invitation and assurance brings Jesus before us as the Divine Man, who himself has passed through all states of spiritual labour, laden with the burden of all human infirmity and sorrow, and who is therefore able to comfort poor sinful creatures in their afflictions, and sustain them under their heaviest trials. Evil and error are the two oppressive burdens which depraved humanity bears, and under which it groans. But it is only those who have come to feel these as a hindrance to their entrance on the spiritual life who will answer the Lord's call, for they only can be disposed to exchange their own burden, oppressive as it is, for the easy yoke of the meek and lowly Jesus. We must see evil to be sin before we will listen to the Lord's exhortation—before we will seek that rest which he promises to the weary souls that come to him. "I will give you rest." There is none but the Saviour can give that which the sinner needs, and he needs rest. "There is no rest for the wicked." Rest is only to be obtained in righteousness, and righteousness can be found only in him who is Righteousness itself. To obtain his rest we must "come unto" him by forsaking the way of sin, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. But we must advance beyond this, by doing his commandments from love; for it is love that draws us to him as the Author of rest.

29. He who invites men to seek from him rest from their burden, invites them likewise to take his yoke upon them, and learn of him. *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* When we throw off the yoke of Satan, we must take upon us the yoke of Christ. The yoke of sin must be exchanged for the yoke of righteousness. To take the Lord's yoke is to accept his love as the guiding principle of our wills, and to learn of him is to accept his truth as the directing principle of our understandings. The Lord himself is meek and lowly of heart. He is meekness and lowliness itself. He who is greatest is least; he who is the highest is also the

lowest: "I am among you as him that doth serve." Those who imitate his blessed example will find rest to their souls; for there is rest only in him who has conquered all the powers and cast out from his humanity all principles of discord, and has made peace in his reconciled humanity, now the Fountain of peace to all who seek it.

30. *My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* If the Lord's yoke is the yoke of love, it cannot be but easy; if his burden is the burden of truth, it cannot be but light. Truth makes us free, and love is perfect liberty. Where these are there can be no sense of oppression or weariness, but a feeling of happiness and freshness, the service which the state of our hearts prompts us to render being a delight. Such must be the experience of all who take upon them the yoke of Jesus. It is not so difficult to live for heaven as many suppose. The Lord came into the world that he might make the way to heaven more easy, and our entrance into it more certain. He did this by first making the burden and the yoke of the law his own, and then enabling us to bear it. He did not fulfil the law in our stead, but on our behalf, not as one who relieves us of the duty, but as one who, by doing the duty, makes it more easy for us to do it. We are to take his yoke upon us; and it is easy because it is his. He has done all that he requires us to do, and he gives us strength to do it, because he is with us as our Sustainer, as well as our Example. The exhortation of the Psalmist is truly applicable to the Christian and his Saviour: "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee." He does not say that the Lord will bear our burden for us, but that he will sustain us under it. Such is the Lord to us—a Friend and Helper, who will go with us in all our journey, and will succour us, and hold us up in our goings, till he introduce us into his own kingdom of joy and peace.

CHAPTER XII.

1. In the previous chapter we find our Lord severely censuring some of the cities of Judah for remaining unmoved by the mighty works he had done in them; and in the very beginning of this chapter we find the same people exhibiting their zeal for a traditional observance of the Sabbath, condemning the Lord for an assumed breach of its requirements. *At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hundred, and began*

to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. It is the mark of a fallen church that it is zealous for external observances, and careless about internal principles, or, as our Lord expresses it, that its members pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth. This the Pharisees so completely did, that they found great fault with the Lord for doing works of mercy on the Sabbath day, as well as for walking through the corn-fields. Our Lord did not, however, violate the Jewish sabbath, as established by the Jewish law. He observed all the duties connected with its rightful observance, but he did not conform to the ceremonial additions that the church had made to them. But our Lord's conduct, while consistent with the law, had a deeper cause and purpose than the Pharisees dreamt of. The Sabbath was a representative institution as well as a day of rest. The day is said to have been instituted to commemorate God's having rested on the seventh day, after the six days of creation. This assigned reason involves an important spiritual idea. The account of the creation in Genesis is a symbolical description of the spiritual creation or regeneration of man, while in the highest sense it describes the glorification of the Lord, which is regeneration in its divine degree. The six days' work are expressive of the states of spiritual labour which precede and are preparatory to the state of spiritual rest. In the case of the Lord, to whom the subject eminently relates, the six days' work signifies his states of temptation in his conflicts with the powers of darkness; while the sabbath signifies his state of glorification, which is rest itself, and the origin of rest to heaven and to those who follow him in the regeneration. All that the Lord did on the Sabbath day, including his going through the corn, had therefore special reference to the two works of glorification and regeneration. The Lord's glorification was the union of divinity and humanity in his own person; but this is a result of the union of goodness and truth in his humanity. The image of this in man is the conjunction of goodness and truth, or of charity and faith, in his external man, and the consequent conjunction of the external with the internal, which completes his regeneration. The corn-field is an emblem of the church, and consequently of the human mind, in an advanced stage of the regenerate life, the corn being a symbol of the spiritual good which the church provides for the support of her children, and a type of that harvest which the Lord had just before sent his disciples forth to gather in. And while we see in the corn a representative of the provision which Jesus, as the Lord of the harvest as well as of the Sabbath, had made

for the members of his church, the hunger of his disciples is expressive of the desire or spiritual appetite which the Lord's true disciples have for the "corn of heaven." Standing or growing corn signifies good as conceived and increasing in the mind, but not yet fully brought forth into the life, and gathered into the garner of the inner memory. The ears of corn signify the knowledge of what is good; while eating the corn is expressive of the actual reception and appropriation of the principles of goodness thus acquired, so as to incorporate them with the inner life.

2. *But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.* The Pharisees represent those persons whose religion consists in mere formality and profession, and therefore also signify such thoughts and feelings themselves in the natural mind. These offer opposition to the spiritual principles there; but this opposition only serves to bring out the true spiritual ground of the orderly operation which they oppose. All such opposition to what is good and true acts by means of some perversion and misapplication of the truth, as was in fact the case in the present instance. There was no violation of the law in going through the corn on the Sabbath day; while the act of the disciples, when there, is expressly authorized: "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hands" (Deut. xiii. 25).

3, 4. The Lord justified the conduct of his disciples by *what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests.* The Lord introduces this reference by asking the Pharisees if they had not read what David did; and it is presented in this form for the purpose of teaching that the Lord desires to excite inquiry in the minds of those with whom such suggestions arise. That which the Lord cited was a very apposite case, for it was representative, and therefore prophetic, of himself. David's entering into the house of God, and there receiving sacred bread from the officiating priest, represented the union of good and truth in the Lord's humanity. For the priest represented the principle of divine love or goodness, and the king represented the principle of divine wisdom or truth in the Lord's humanity, the humanity itself being represented by the house of God, in which the priest and the king were together present. The union of divine good and truth in the Lord's humanity is described by the priest giving David the sacred bread—the bread

representing the principle of good; the priest giving this bread to David signifies the communication of divine good to divine truth, by which union is effected between them. This does not, however, represent complete and final union, for the Lord's humanity was perfected successively, or by distinct degrees, and one of those degrees is represented in this historical fact. Besides receiving the hallowed bread, David on that occasion received from Abimelech the priest the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom he had slain. As David represented the Lord as divine truth, he represented him also as the Redeemer, and in this character he engaged in conflict with the powers of darkness. Therefore David received from the priest, and in the Lord's house, both the hallowed bread and approved sword—the bread representing good and the sword truth—one for supporting, the other for combating.

5. The Lord gives another case. *Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?* What the Lord calls profaning the Sabbath, consisted in preparing the sacrifices that were offered on that day, this being servile work, like that of which the Pharisees accused Jesus. This, like the previous case, is not to be regarded as being adduced merely to justify what the Lord did, but also to describe representatively his own divine work. For as the priest represented the Lord as to divine good, so the priestly office represented the Lord's work of salvation. As the case of David and the priest, which the Lord had previously mentioned; is descriptive of the union of good and truth in the Lord's humanity, the present case describes the succeeding state, which is that of the Lord as divine good, in the temple of his humanity, engaged in the work of salvation—the priests representing the Lord in his priestly character, and the temple in which they officiated representing the divine humanity. The Lord speaks of their work on the Sabbath, because, as we have seen, the Sabbath was the most sacred representative of the union of the divinity and the humanity in the person of the Lord, and the consequent divine rest into which the Lord entered after his temptation conflicts. But this rest into which the Lord entered is not inaction, but the most perfect activity. It is not labour, indeed, but work, and is the great work of salvation, for the sake of which the Lord laboured in effecting the work of redemption. The work of the priests in the temple on the Sabbath eminently represented this work of salvation, as did the Lord's own works on the Sabbath, he having on that sacred day performed many of his beneficent miracles, and on that day

walked through the corn-fields, his disciples plucking the ears of corn, that they might eat, and thus enter into the enjoyment of that abundant provision which the Lord of the harvest and of the Sabbath had made for them.

6. The Lord, however, justifies himself not only by parallel instances, but by asserting his authority. *But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.* This assertion must have greatly offended Jewish prejudice. One of the charges brought against the Lord, and that on which he was condemned, was, that he had declared he would destroy the temple and rear it up in three days; on hearing which the high priest rent his clothes, and pronounced the words to be blasphemy, when the whole Sanhedrim at once condemned him to be guilty of death (Mark xiv. 58-64). The Lord spake of the temple of his body (John ii. 21). In the Lord we are indeed to behold one greater than the temple. How grand is the truth declared in the Lord's words! The temple, the glory of the Jewish church, when seen to be a type of him who was to come, discloses the wonderful truth, that the whole of the elaborate and splendid ceremonial revealed from heaven was but the shadow of good things to come, whose substance Christ was. But the Lord is greater than the temple in a higher sense. When he declared, "The Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28), he taught that the divinity was then greater than the humanity, and that in heaven and the church divine good is greater than divine truth. But when the Lord speaks of himself as greater than the temple, his words, spiritually understood, are assertive of his being the Father as well as the Son—the divine as well as the human, the essential Divine Good as well as the essential Divine Truth. He is greater than the temple, as his habitation in us, when in our estimation and experience his love is greater than his truth, or when charity is greater than faith.

7. The Lord proceeds to point out to the Pharisees the real origin of their having *condemned the guiltless*, which they would not have done if they *had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* This we have already considered (ch. ix. 13). This passage occurs in Hosea vi. 6: "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Sacrifice, we have seen, is here put for worship or piety, which the Pharisees regarded as religion. This divine declaration shows that, even under the Jewish dispensation, the superiority of mercy to sacrifice, or of charity to piety, was distinctly taught. To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, is really all that God requires. Other things are

included in human duty, but they are the means, of which these are the end; for without these there is no religion. If the Pharisees had cultivated the grace of mercy, as that which God requires both in worship and in life, they would not have condemned the guiltless; nor will those condemn the guiltless who render mercy to God in their conduct towards their fellow-creatures.

8. But how much less would they have been disposed to censure the act of the Lord's disciples on the Sabbath if they had known that *the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day!* The Lord's claim to this character is a claim to divinity: for no one can be Lord of the Sabbath but he by whom the Sabbath was instituted. Spiritually, he is Lord of the Sabbath, as being he whom the Sabbath represented, and as being, through his divine work in the flesh, the Author of that state of spiritual rest which the Sabbath signified. He is also the Lord of the Sabbath as the Author and Pattern of the conjunction of goodness and truth in the minds of his regenerate children. When this, the sabbatical state, is formed in us, and the Lord's love is the ruling principle in our hearts and lives, then is Jesus practically to us Lord of the Sabbath. This state of spiritual rest and peace is not attained except by the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness within us, and the submission of our natural thoughts and affections to the laws of eternal order, the effecting of which is our six days' work of regeneration. The state of rest which succeeds is meant by the Sabbath day, of which Jesus says he is the Lord; for day signifies state.

9. The miracle and the circumstances connected with it, which come now to be considered, afford a further exemplification of the difference between the Lord's doctrine and that of the Pharisees respecting the Sabbath. *When he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue.* This was on a Sabbath, though not the same day as that on which he and his disciples walked through the corn (Luke vi. 6). A change of place is a change of state. A synagogue being the symbol of doctrine, the Lord's entering into it signifies the influx of his divine truth into the doctrine of the church, as it is in the minds of her members.

10. This influx is productive of different effects upon those who are in the same doctrine, but in opposite states of life—the evil, like the Pharisees, being excited to opposition, the good, like the infirm man, brought into submission. *Behold, there was a man which had his hand withered.* Palsied frames and withered members signify, as we have seen, a state of the external man in which it refuses to obey the behests of the internal. The hand is withered when any infirmity of temper,

or other evil that has become habitual, prevents the concordant action of the internal and of the external man, of the will and the life. But the peculiar circumstance in this case was the tempting of Jesus by the Pharisees. Before, it would appear, either the man had asked or Jesus had spoken of a cure, the Pharisees proposed the question whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath days. According to Luke vi. 8, the Pharisees did not utter this question; but Jesus read it in their thoughts, and addressed them accordingly—a singular instance, showing that in the Lord's sight speech and thought are one. The question of the Pharisees proceeded from the evil intention of drawing from the Lord a declaration that might injure him in the estimation of the people. But every evil intention endeavours to effect its purpose by ingenious reasonings, and some of these may even be urged in the name of religion and virtue. So did the Pharisees when they condemned the Lord's merciful works of healing on the Sabbath day. The insidiousness of such reasonings is marked by the Pharisees attempting to carry out their opposition even to the Lord's destruction; for false reasonings may proceed even to the destruction of truth. These enemies of truth and goodness, as these principles were incarnated in the person of Jesus, asked him, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him.* Although Jesus had as yet performed no miracle on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees, who had seen him walk through the corn-fields, supposed he would not be more scrupulous about performing cures on that day, and therefore resolved to try to draw from him a declaration that might be used against him.

11, 12. One of the remarkable features in our Lord's history is the marvellous facility with which he defeats the attempts of the most cunningly-devised schemes of his many and skilful enemies to entrap him in his words; and he defeats them generally, as he did the tempter when he came to him, by means of that very Word in whose laws they trusted, and by which they sought to betray him. When asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" he answered by demanding of them, *What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* This answer was sufficient not only to silence them, but to put them to shame. In the law to which the Lord refers (Deut. xxii. 4), there is nothing said about the Sabbath day, but only about the duty of helping a brother's beast out of the pit into which it had fallen; yet the Jews did not scruple to do this on the Sabbath day. How much more might the Lord on the Sabbath day

deliver from a more painful and helpless condition a much more precious object! But let us look at this as it applies to ourselves. The sheep and the man are the symbols of two different affections—a natural affection being meant by the sheep, and a rational or spiritual affection, by the man. Thus understood, *How much is a man better than a sheep?* Of how much greater value are the affections that have spiritual and eternal things for their objects, than those that are fixed upon the things of sense and time? Of how much more importance is it also to attend to the spiritual than to the natural, both in others and in ourselves? The natural man, even when from motives of benevolence he seeks the improvement of his neighbour or himself, seeks only to elevate the natural affections, and place them on higher natural objects. But the spiritual man, while he does not neglect the natural affections in himself or others, makes the spiritual the object of his chief regard. Thus he esteems the man as better than the sheep, and seeks to deliver those whom disease has disabled or whom Satan has bound (Luke xiii. 14). Like his Lord, he is ever ready to do this on the Sabbath day. For while the Sabbath of the Pharisee is but an outward sanctity, that of the true Christian is a spiritual state, in which he works the works of God.

The conclusion which our Lord established from his address to the Pharisees was, that it was lawful to do well, or rather to do good, on the Sabbath day. Looking at the subject only in its literal sense, this is a principle that it were happy for us faithfully to act upon. The Sabbath is a day for religious instruction and for the exercise of charity. This is the description of the Christian Sabbath, and it accords with our Lord's declaration and with his practice. And his words are applicable to the Sabbath as a heavenly state of life, and to heaven itself as well; for doing good is the essential of spiritual life both on earth and in heaven.

13. When Jesus had ended his address to the Pharisees, who seem to have made no attempt to gainsay his heavenly doctrine, *Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand.* How was he to stretch forth that withered hand? Faith in him who gave the command induced him to make the effort to obey, and in the effort he received the power to do as he was commanded. Thus it ever is with the willing and faithful. The power to do the Lord's will is always given. The power comes in the attempt to use it. But why attempt to use what we seem not to possess? The impotent man did not reason thus. He knew his hand to be powerless; he had often essayed to use it, and had as often failed. So do we fail when our attempts originate in

our own strength; but so soon as we make the effort in obedience to the Lord's command, his strength is imparted to us, and the successful result follows in due course. In the effort and the act the withered hand was restored; nor is it simply said to have been restored, but restored whole *like as the other*. The two hands, like the two feet, correspond to the power of the two faculties of will and understanding—the hands to the power of these faculties in the internal man, the feet to their power in the external man. When one of these two members is diseased or powerless, it represents the want of correspondence between the state and activity of the two faculties, which injures or destroys their harmony and their use. When the will refuses to act concordantly with the understanding, or the understanding with the will, there we see a withered hand; and when divine mercy effects the removal of the obstructing cause, the hand is restored whole “like as the other.”

14. The Pharisees, so far from being convinced by this exhibition of the Lord's power, or conciliated by the benevolence of his act, become more stubborn in their unbelief and more exasperated in their opposition. *Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.* Evil shuns the presence of goodness, falsehood the presence of truth. It is thus that the evil, inwardly in this life and outwardly also in the other, go out from the presence of the Lord. It is thus, too, that the malignant thoughts of the unregenerate mind shun the true light, and retire into their own darkness to plot against the truth, how to destroy it. Falsity is the opposite of truth; but its destructive tendency is proportioned to the evil by which it is actuated. As error may be redeemed by purity of intention, so falsity is rendered more destructive in proportion to the mind's hatred of goodness. And when this hatred takes possession of the heart, the intellect becomes inventive of means for accomplishing its purposes. Yet, however cunningly devised the schemes of the unrighteous may be, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel. How much less against Him whom Jacob and Israel represented, and who is the Author of all that makes the church, both in its external and internal principles!

15. The action of our Lord in reference to the proceedings of the Pharisees is deserving of our attention in its literal as well as in its spiritual sense. *When Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence.* This is not the only instance of the Lord withdrawing from a place of threatened danger. He had at his command divine power; yet, although he was God, he acted as a man, both because it behoved him

to do so, and because in all things he was to be a pattern to men. He instructs us in this practical way that we are to act with prudence, and not leave ourselves to the machinations of our enemies. Even when we may have the power to defend ourselves, it is not always wise to use it. It is often better both for ourselves and our enemies to imitate the example of Him who was as wise as he was good, and as merciful as he was powerful,—to avoid rather than to resist evil. In the spiritual sense, as this circumstance applies to individual man, Jesus withdraws himself from the sphere of evil, by drawing his truth inward towards the interiors of the mind, when evil in the external is excited into active opposition to good, in order to draw after him man's better thoughts and affections, and there to carry on his divine work of restoring them to a state of healthy activity. These are the *great multitudes that followed him*, and of whom it is said, *he healed them all*. May these believing multitudes be found in us, and be ready to follow the Lord, when evil influences compel him, so to speak, to withdraw himself from the more open and ordinary scene of his saving operations; and may they be delivered by him from the evils and disorder that still adhere to them!

16, 17. Those whom the Lord cured he *charged that they should not make him known*. This charge differs from that given to the leper (viii. 4), which we have already considered. The leper was desired to "tell no man" that Jesus had cured him: here the multitudes that he cured are charged not to make him known. It cannot be supposed that the Lord was literally afraid of the Pharisees, yet it is not inconsistent to suppose that the Lord's reason for withdrawing himself from them might also dictate the command that he should not be made known. The Lord's charge not to make him known was no doubt grounded in the same benevolent cause that led him to thank the Father that he had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. To the well-disposed, knowledge is a power for good; to the ill-disposed, it is a power for evil—and therefore to the one it is a means of salvation, to the other, of condemnation. The same mercy that grants it to the good withholds it from the evil. That this is the distinction the Lord had in view would seem to be indicated by the prophecy quoted from Isaiah; for the Gentiles are there the only ones mentioned to whom the Lord had come to show judgment, and the Gentiles signify those who are in simple good, and thence in the desire and capacity of receiving truth; while the Jews, as they then were, have a contrary representation, and may be said to have almost destroyed that capacity in themselves.

18. The prophecy relating to the Lord, as quoted by Matthew, says,—*Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased.* The Lord is called a servant—the servant of Jehovah—with respect to his divine humanity, because he served his Father by doing his will, as he frequently declared; by which is meant that he brought all things in the spiritual world into order, and at the same time taught men the way to heaven. It is, therefore, the Divine Humanity which is meant by “my servant, whom I have chosen,” or on whom I have laid hold, and by “my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased.” The Lord is called a servant in respect to the Divine truth *by* which these effects were produced, and beloved, with respect to the Divine good *from* which they were produced. From this being the case, the Lord is called chosen of the Father, and his beloved in whom his soul is well pleased. To see the true meaning and force of these words, we must reflect that all these expressions of relationship and endearment between the Father and the Son are descriptive of the relationship, and the infinite sympathy and infinitely perfect union, that exist between the Divine and Human of the Lord, by which the salvation of the human race is provided for. And when Jehovah speaks of Jesus, those principles in the human which had been received from the Divine, and by which union was effected between them, are to be understood. Thus the Divine truth in the Son was the servant, and the Divine good from the Father in the Son was the beloved. It is therefore said of the servant that the Father had chosen, or taken hold of him; for it was by the Divine truth in the humanity that the Divine love took hold of man, both in the person of the Saviour, and through him of the saved; and therefore, also, is it said of the beloved that the soul of the Father was well pleased in him, because the “soul” is the Divine wisdom, and good pleasure is the Divine love. The soul of Jehovah was the Divine truth, which the Lord was as to his humanity in the world, and in this was the Divine love. The same great truth is expressed in these words of the prophet as in those of the Father,—“This is my beloved Son,” or the Son of my love, “in whom I am well pleased.” The Son of the Father’s love is the Divine wisdom from the Divine love, which was and is the Son. The prophet proceeds to say,—*I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.* The Spirit of Jehovah is the Divine proceeding, which, it is said (John iii. 34), the Father gave without measure to the Son; for the humanity received the Spirit of Jehovah, or all the divine attributes, infinitely, and so became divine. But the Spirit of God is, distinctively, the Divine truth; and in reference to

the Lord having this put upon him, it is said that he would bring forth "judgment to the Gentiles"—meaning that the Lord would impart of his saving truth to all who are in good, or who have in them the good ground of an honest heart; and would thereby effect in them that work of individual saving judgment which consists in separating their good from their evil—gathering their good as wheat into the garner, and dispersing the chaff, which "the wind driveth away."

19. As a further effect of the Lord's being the servant and beloved of the Father, and receiving his Spirit, it is declared, *He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.* This does not mean that the Lord would not teach in the streets; for the unfaithful are represented as saying to him in the judgment, "Thou hast taught in our streets." It only means, literally, that he would not teach with noise and vehemence, but with gentleness and meekness. The streets of a city are the truths of doctrine, or, personally considered, the thoughts of the understanding. In these the Lord teaches: they are the avenues to the will, which it is the great purpose of his labours to reach. But while the Lord teaches, he does not strive nor cry,—he does not strive with or force the will, nor does he cry to or overbear the understanding; neither does any one hear his voice in the streets,—he does not act compulsorily on the affections of truth, so as to compel assent.

20. Therefore it proceeds to say, *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.* The reed, as we have seen (xi. 7), is a symbol of truth such as it is in the letter of the Word. A bruised reed is such truth, as apprehended by the Gentiles and by the young and the simple, who see it through the fallacies of the senses, and therefore apprehend it sensuously. Flax is also a symbol of truth, but of a higher order; and the slumbering fire, whose existence is faintly indicated by the smoke, signifies some small degree of love in truth, feebly burning and struggling for existence. That the Lord will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, is a promise that in acting on the young and the Gentile mind, he does not break down their simple faith, though not in agreement with the genuine truths of his Word, nor will he extinguish their feeble love, though it be more natural than spiritual. On the contrary, the Lord in his goodness leads his creatures by whatever in their hearts is not opposed to his love, and by whatever in their understandings is not hostile to his truth. Were it not for this stooping to our infirmities, and taking hold of us by our imperfect thoughts and feelings, we never could be brought to

know and love God as he is. The Lord thus leads us *till he send forth judgment unto victory*—that is, until genuine truth can be implanted in the mind, and its power can be exerted so as to overcome our errors and evils.

21. Then *in his name shall the Gentiles trust*. The Gentiles trust in the Lord's name when good, at first natural, is made spiritual by the reception of truth ; for truth spiritualizes good by directing it to true objects and guiding it to right ends.

22. *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb*. This double calamity, we ought thankfully to acknowledge, is one of rare occurrence. Two cases only are known to have occurred in recent times, of which that of Laura Bridgman, in America, is the most interesting. In her case we see how much can be done by intelligent Christian philanthropy to mitigate the worst states of physical imperfection, and reach the mind through the densest covering which Providence has permitted to be cast over it. Such rare instances are sufficient to show us how great a blessing we possess in sight and hearing, as the two great avenues to the heart and intellect, and how much we should be disposed to do to aid others in whom they are closed. The one whom our Lord cured had not, however, been blind and dumb from birth ; but, like other of the maladies then prevalent, this was the result of demoniacal possession. There is nothing directly stated in the narrative to authorize this conclusion ; but in Luke xi. 14, where the same case is recorded, we read that "when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake." We read of evil spirits taking possession of the organs of the human body, but here we find that they can not only use them for their own ends, but, when it suits their purpose, can entirely suspend their functions. Great as such a calamity as this is, that which it represents is far greater. For that which this singular case represents is nothing less than the suspension of the functions of the understanding and will in everything relating to spiritual life. A mind whose affections and perceptions of the good and truth of heaven are dead, rendered of none effect by the overpowering influence of some demoniacal principle, combining in itself both falsity and evil, is the spiritual state represented by the blind and dumb. The afflicted person does not represent one whose heart and intellect are wilfully closed against the voice of love and the light of truth, but one who is labouring under some strong temptation, or under the pressure of circumstances that lay him open to the seductive power of evil and deceitful spirits, by whom he is held for the time in spiritual thralldom. Jesus healing this afflicted

man teaches us again, that he who came to destroy the works of the devil is able to deliver from the power of evil spirits, and, curing the most dreadful and hopeless of spiritual disorders, to restore the powers of the soul to the freest exercise of their functions, insomuch that even the blind and dumb both speak and see.

23. So extraordinary was this miracle felt to be, that *the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?* Amazement is the effect of beholding some extraordinary and unexplained phenomenon, and may be produced by beholding or contemplating the exhibition of some extraordinary instance of moral excellence, as well as of physical power. Amazement at our Lord's works must have combined these two; for his goodness was as great as his power. His beneficent works could not fail to produce in the well-disposed of the beholders reverence and admiration as well as amazement. We therefore find that this miracle forced upon the minds of the multitude a conviction of the true character of Jesus, as expressed in the affirmative question, "Is not this the son of David?" This is equivalent to saying that he was the Messiah. But the form in which it was expressed involves a particular meaning. David was a type of the Lord as a king, or as the Divine Truth, conquering and governing—conquering his enemies, the powers of darkness, and governing his church—and, individually considered, overcoming men's evils and ruling in their hearts. The Lord is called the son of David, the offspring of David, the branch or germ that grows out of the roots of Jesse; and this idea of derivation directs us to the Lord as divine truth in us, which subdues our evils and enmity, and makes us his willing and obedient subjects,—branches that grow out of and live in him as the true vine.

24. But if the people or multitude are thus led by his wonderful works to acknowledge and receive him, not so the Pharisees. A negative state is only made more negative by that which brings conviction or confirmation to the willing mind. And even the greatest and most beneficent miracles, which some suppose so powerful to convince, can do nothing to create belief. The Pharisees could not deny the miracle which our Lord performed. They did not even attempt to evade its force, or explain it away; but they showed that what men cannot deny they will pervert. *When the Pharisees heard it they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.* By Beelzebub, who was the god of Ekron, is understood the god of all falses, for the name of this Beelzebub literally means the god of flies, and flies signify the falses of the sensual mind—thus all falses. This is further evident from the Lord substituting Satan for

Beelzebub, "If Satan cast out Satan" (v. 26), and opposing to this the real power by which he cast out demons, the Spirit of God (v. 28); for Satan means all falsities, and the Spirit of God all truth. And here, indeed, in the conduct of the Pharisees was both exemplified and represented the sum and the essence of all falsehood, not simply the denial of the Lord's power to work miracles, but the ascription of his miracles, and of this as one of the most marvellous and benevolent, to the demoniac power itself. Can so great a wickedness be the symbol of anything in us, or in any who confess the name of Jesus? This crime is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and its nature and possibility will come to be considered under verses 31, 32.

25. *And Jesus knew their thoughts.* This is one of those instances that bring to view the divinity of the Saviour. "Thou knowest my thoughts afar off," is one of the characteristics of Deity. From this knowledge of their thoughts the Lord proceeds to show the fallacy of their explanation, and then the wickedness of their charge. He answered their explanation by saying, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.* The argument here is plain and conclusive. It is only surprising that the hatred of the Pharisees should so blind them as to lead them to propose the idea that Satan should overturn his own kingdom. Leaving the literal sense, which carries its own weight with it, both as a refutation of the Pharisees and an instance of the extraordinary wisdom of Jesus, we turn to the spiritual sense, which is more profitable for our spiritual instruction. The kingdom signifies the church, and a city and house signify the truth and good of its doctrine, which do not stand, but fall to pieces, if they are not in unanimous agreement. This is to be understood of the church in its least form in the mind, as well as of the church in its largest form in the world. This, too, must be in harmony within itself, in order that it may stand; but if it be divided against itself it must come to desolation. In this particular sense, the house is a correspondent of the will, the city, of the understanding, and the kingdom, of both together in the life. Each must be harmonious in itself and with the others, that there may be stability; but if each and all are divided, there must be dissolution.

26. *And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?* Although the kingdom of darkness is one of discord, yet it is not divided against itself as a power that is opposed to its own principles, and one that desires and labours to effect their destruction. In the practical application of the Lord's declaration we see its absolute truth. Falsehood and evil cannot, and

if they could they would not, deliver us from their own power and dominion. Truth only can cast out what is false, good only can cast out what is evil. Therefore, in casting out demons the Lord manifested his true character as the enemy of Satan, and of all hell and evil, and the only Deliverer of the world and of the soul from their dominion.

27. *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?* This is one of those touching appeals which the Lord in his wisdom and goodness sometimes makes to the heart and conscience of man for the truth of his doctrine and the beneficence of his acts. *Therefore they shall be your judges.* How can men condemn in another what they justify in their own? But let us see what is the spiritual sense of these words. Whether the sons or disciples of the Pharisees really were able, or only professed to be able, to cast out evil spirits is of no consequence. If they were able to do it, it was as the Egyptian magicians were able to perform wonders imitative of the miracles of Moses,—by means of the truth which they possessed, and perverted to their own ends. But if truth in the hands of a human and even insincere instrument was able to cast out devils, how much more the Truth itself! How much more unreasonable and wicked, therefore, was the imputation of sorcery against him who was the Truth in person! The sons in this case are their judges; for the truths that the evil possess are the witnesses that convict and the judges that condemn them.

28. But how different the case when it is acknowledged that devils are, and can only be, cast out by the *Spirit of God*—that is, by the power of divine truth proceeding from the Lord's divine humanity. This is the truth; for none can really cast out evil spirits, and the evils and falsities in which they reside, but the Spirit of God, that leads into all truth, and makes us free from the slavery of sin. And when this is experienced and acknowledged, then is the kingdom of God come nigh unto us; for the government of the Lord's truth and love can only be established in the mind when the government of what is evil and false is destroyed.

29. The Lord gives another illustration of the same general truth. *Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.* Without recurring to the literal meaning, which is sufficiently obvious and striking, we turn at once to the spiritual sense. And as falsity as opposed to truth, and truth as opposed to falsity, is the subject of the verses immediately preceding, evil as opposed to good, and good as

opposed to evil is the subject of the present verse. The house here mentioned is the mind, especially the will, the strong man is self-love, and his goods are evils, which are the objects of that love. But how can love to God enter into the will as its habitation, and remove the evils that are there, unless self-love be brought under subjection, bound by those truths which are the laws of order, and thus deprived of the dominion which it has hitherto exercised ?

30. When the Lord had delivered these momentous truths, he laid down this principle as a conclusion,—*He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.* In Mark ix. 40 we have the inverse of this : “He that is not against us is on our part.” He that is not with me in principle is against me, and he that is not against us in principle is on our part. The end determines the state of every one. This end is evil or good, and essentially determines whether we are with the Lord as the essential good and truth. This end has its seat in the will. And such as is the state of the will, such is the state of the understanding. And as the will is either with or against the Lord, the understanding either gathereth with him or scattereth abroad. If the will is in good, the understanding gathers truths which are in favour of the Lord, and gives the intellect harmonious and united action with the Divine wisdom ; but if the will is not in good, the understanding scatters truths—disperses and dissipates them, leaving that faculty a prey to falsities.

31, 32. The Lord comes now, after refuting the Pharisees’ explanation, to set forth the spiritual character of their accusation. *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men : but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him : but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* The sin against the Holy Spirit, especially as distinguished from a word against the Son of man, with the unpardonable nature of the one and the pardonable nature of the other, has been felt to present some difficulties. The sin of the Pharisees was directed against the Lord himself, and yet it is treated as a sin against the Holy Spirit. It is true that their charge against him—that he performed his miracles by Beelzebub—involved the denial that he did them by the Spirit of God, but in this charge Jesus himself was implicated. The truth is, that the accusation which the Pharisees brought against the Lord involves both these sins, since Jesus was and is at once the Holy Spirit and the Son of man. The subject can only be understood by a knowledge of the dis-

inction between the Spirit and the Son of man, not as divine persons, but as divine principles. In relation to the Lord himself, the Holy Spirit is his Divine spiritual principle, and the Son of man is his Divine natural principle. But this distinction may be best seen by considering the subject in relation to the Word; for whatever relates to the Lord relates to his Word also. Thus considered, the Holy Spirit is the spiritual sense of the Word, and the Son of man is its literal sense. To violate the sanctity and pervert the meaning of the Word in its spiritual sense is to be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit; but wrongly to interpret the literal sense is to speak a word against the Son of man. The former sin cannot be forgiven, but the latter may. The reason is this,—The spiritual sense of the Word consists of naked and genuine truths, or of divine truths as they are seen in the light of heaven; but the literal sense consists of truths clothed with appearances—truths as seen in the light of the world. The obscure and apparent truths of the literal sense of the Word may be misunderstood, and may therefore be misinterpreted without a sinful intention, and without producing errors of doctrine destructive of spiritual life. The numerous sects among Christians are a standing evidence of how various interpretations may be given of the letter of the Word, and the history of the church is no less prolific in examples. In many of the systems of Christian doctrine there is a word, in some of them a cruel word, against the Son of man. Yet this can be forgiven; for in every doctrine and sect men may be saved—because in every one the heart may be sincere, though the understanding may be in error. The case is different with those who receive and acknowledge the spiritual sense. The truths of this sense being real and not apparent, naked and not clothed, they cannot be misunderstood, and therefore cannot be misinterpreted. He, therefore, who would evade their meaning or their force has no alternative but to deny or pervert them. This was the sin of which the Pharisees were guilty. The work which the Lord performed by the Spirit of God was so plainly supernatural, if not divine, that they could not deny it to be miraculous; but in order to evade its force, they impiously ascribed it to diabolical powers, and thus perverted the truth, even to a denial of the Lord—to believe in whom is life eternal. The Lord provides, as far as can be done consistently with man's free-will, against this greatest of all sins; and that men may not presumptuously enter into the spiritual sense, and profane its pure and holy truths, he has covered it with a veil of apparent truths, as a protection and guard. This special providence is the cherubim that stand at the gate of Paradise; and the flaming

sword that turns every way to guard the way to the tree of life is the Word in its literal sense. This serves as a protection to the internal sense, because it is capable of being variously interpreted without being destroyed; and is thus a means in the hand of the Lord for guarding the way to the living truth of its spiritual sense, lest the hand of the profane should be put forth to take of the fruit of the tree of life, to eat of which would bring upon the evil a never-ending living death. It has been a question whether the unpardonable nature of this sin is to be understood as implying that one who commits it is placed beyond the reach of possible forgiveness. The language of the Lord is certainly peculiar,—*Neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* Yet there is nothing inconsistent in it. It is literally true in the contrasted cases; for a wrong interpretation of the letter, if not corrected in this life, *can* be corrected in the next; but not so a violation of the spirit of the Word. In the spiritual sense, by “this world” is understood the natural mind, and by the next world, the spiritual mind. This sense teaches us that “a word against the Son of man” may be confined to the natural mind, but that the sin against the Holy Ghost extends to both the spiritual and natural. That which is only of the natural mind can be removed in the other world, but that which is engraven on both the natural and the spiritual parts of the mind cannot, but remains to eternity. It is possible, however, that the greater sin may be repented of in the present world, and therefore forgiven.

33. One kind or degree of profanation is hypocrisy, which consists in speaking and acting well and thinking and willing ill. This was one of the sins of which the Pharisees were guilty. It is in reference to this that our Lord said, *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.* The tree itself is the man and the fruit is his works. Our Lord teaches in these words that it is less sinful to be openly evil than hypocritically good. It is not to be inferred from this that the evil should be allowed freely to practise wickedness. The Lord's words only mean that, spiritually, an evil heart is hardened in evil by the outward pretence of holiness. In the other world the universal law is, that the tree and the fruit must be alike, both good or both evil: the external and the internal make one; the mind can no longer be divided. In the more precise spiritual sense the tree is the will, the leaves are the understanding, and the fruit is the outward life. As we are not to judge of a tree by its leaves, but by its fruit, so we are not to judge a man by his faith, but by his works. In this world,

indeed, even works may deceive; but it is enough for us that we judge so far as we can see. No doubt, on the large scale, principles are known by their results, though individually we may not always be able to discover the true character of a man by his actions. This, however, is a truth by which we are to judge ourselves more than others, and by which we shall all be judged in the other life.

34. Our Lord now addresses the Pharisees in their true character. *O generation of vipers.* The cunning and malignant, who deceive by fair appearances, are spiritual serpents and vipers. The serpent is an emblem of the sensual part of man's nature; and in this have originated all the fallacies that have ever presented evil under the guise of good, or error under the name of truth, since man was first persuaded by it to eat of the tree of knowledge, that he might be as God, knowing good and evil. To ascribe the Lord's beneficent works to the prince of the devils, was truly to put evil for good and darkness for light. Error may be unintentional, but falsehood has its root in cherished evil. *How can ye, being evil, speak good things?* In the sight of God nothing that evil men speak or that they do can be good—an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The word and the work are essentially such as the will and intention are. Truth that is spoken to deceive is falsehood; good that is done from dissimulation is wickedness. This was not, however, the case in the present instance with the Pharisees: they spake the falsehood which their hearts prompted and their thoughts conceived. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh* was true of them. And it is true of all, though not always discerned by all, except by Him who discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart.

35. *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.* The heart is the treasury whence issue the good or evil that the lips utter or the hands perform; and as our words and works are effects from the good and evil intentions of the will, and of the true or false thoughts of the understanding, so do they contain them. Our words and works are reproductive of the good or evil that produces them; they, like fruit, have the seed within themselves that produce trees of the same quality as that by which they were produced. The tree which exists from a seed, exists again in the seed that it produces. In the small seed treasured up in the heart of the fruit the whole tree is comprehended; its whole history is written; its whole experience is expressed. So in our words and works our whole being is embodied. But to read our entire life and character in what we say and do, is the

prerogative of Him only who is to judge every man according to his works. Men and angels may see something of one's true character in his works, but these are only gleams of light from Him who is the light itself.

36. The Lord therefore proceeds to say, *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* These words are spoken with immediate reference to the sin of which the Pharisees had been guilty. They are designed to teach us how careful we should guard the door of the lips. Not only blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and a word against the Son of man, but every idle word that men speak shall be brought into judgment. We are not to include in these idle words everything we say that is not solemn or important. Words may be trivial and yet innocent. We are to make a distinction, too, between the lighter conversation that serves as an intellectual recreation, and the idle talk that forms the business and delight of life. One of the most pernicious and sinful kinds of idle words is that of using the language of Holy Scripture to garnish idle talk. When seriously and judiciously introduced, the language of Scripture serves both to adorn and invigorate human composition; but nothing is so indicative of bad taste and the absence of true religious sentiment, and, above all, of the want of reverence for the most sacred things, as to drag in the language of Scripture to give a quaint or ludicrous turn of expression. One great evil arising out of this is, that sacred language becomes so connected with profane ideas, that their separation is a matter of difficulty even in the other life.

37. The Lord continues: *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* That is but a part of the doctrine that we shall be judged according to our works. Words are acts, and come forth from the will as much as deeds. Whatever any one wills from the love principle, he wills to do, to think, to understand, and to speak. Words are verbal acts, and they reflect the character as faithfully and completely as the deeds which the hand performs. Every word we utter, as well as every act we do, is inscribed on the memory as distinctly and much more indelibly than if written in a book, and will be read aloud in the day of our judgment, as if it came from the hands, instead of the lips. How much good and how much evil, how much sweetness and how much bitterness, flow from the tongue! How much may the tongue do to enlighten and comfort, to promote harmony and peace; and how much may it do to darken counsel and disturb peace, to create discord and conten-

tion! In the words which our Lord addressed to the Pharisees there is something deserving of our particular attention. In nothing is Christianity more distinguished from Judaism than in considering words and actions as deriving their character from the motive which gives them birth—the end they are intended to serve. The motive is not measured by the act, but the act by the motive. Yet motive is not the only thing taken into account. The will, as the motive power of the mind, does not of itself determine the character of an action. The understanding, as the directing power, has its share in every act performed. It is to include both these faculties, which are united in everything we say or do, that both words and works are spoken of as certain to be brought into judgment. Good and evil are not of the will alone, nor are truth and falsity of the understanding alone, although we ascribe them distinctively to these faculties. Good and evil are produced by the will acting through the understanding, and truth and falsity are produced by the understanding acting from the will. Both faculties are concerned in producing every word we speak and every action we do, and both are included in every word and action when produced. Whether, therefore, we are judged by our words or works, or by both, we are judged as to our whole mind and life.

38, 39. As if to show how little impression these solemn words had made upon them, *Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.* They had seen the Lord perform a great miracle, yet they ask him to give them a sign. There would be no real meaning in this demand, nor in the Lord's answer to it, if there was no difference between a sign and a miracle. By a miracle is meant that which excites, strikes, and occasions amazement; but by a sign is meant that which declares, testifies, and persuades concerning what is inquired after. Thus, a sign moves the understanding and its faith, and a miracle moves the will and its affections; for the will and its affection are excited, struck, and amazed, and the understanding and its faith are persuaded, and to them declaration and testification are applied. The Lord's miracles were works of benevolence; and their spiritual purpose, with regard to those who beheld them, was to affect their hearts with a sense of the Divine goodness, and incline them to listen to the teaching of his truth. A sign, on the other hand, is a work of power, having nothing in its character to affect the hearts of the spectators, but is a direct appeal to their understandings, so as to produce conviction. The Lord refused to give a sign, because it is no part of his providential

economy to compel men to believe, or even persuade them to believe with the understanding only. This it would be easy for Omnipotence to do: if it pleased the Lord, he could exhibit every truth so clearly before men's minds that unbelief would be impossible. Their intellects could be raised into such clear light as would enable them to see the truth. This would be giving them a sign. But what would it avail? It would not produce true or lasting faith, but it would render unbelief or error more inexcusable, and only increase their condemnation. True faith is not produced by signs, but by reasons—by the truth being rationally apprehended and spiritually discerned. Nor does saving faith come from without, but from within; nor by truth alone, but by truth and love united. Truth must, indeed, enter the understanding from without, but unless love comes into the will from within, there can be no true faith. The Scriptures give the knowledge of the truth, and without revelation there would be nothing to believe, no means of belief in God and in spiritual and eternal things; but faith itself comes from the Spirit of the Lord acting upon the heart, and inspiring it with the love of the truth which has been acquired from the Word. If the Holy Scriptures themselves cannot give faith, how much less any outward sign that neither informs the understanding nor improves the heart! *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.* This is the case individually as well as generally. It is only those in whose minds unbelief has been generated by evil and impure affections that seek faith through other means than the Word and the Spirit of the Lord. Such a demand is, in fact, nothing else than asking God to convince us of the truth by suspending the functions of that very faculty which he has given to enable us to understand it.

40. The demand which the unbelieving make for a sign cannot even for their own sake be granted. But there is one sign, and one only, which the Lord grants. *There shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.* That which completed and forever sealed the Lord's great work of redemption is the historical evidence of the truth of the gospel; and those who refuse to receive this are not in a state to accept any other sign, even if it were given them from heaven. Yet this is a sign which natural men are unwilling to receive. But the Lord's death and resurrection were themselves but the outward sign of an inward glorious work. The Lord's resurrection was the effect and the sign of his glorification. The Lord's

glorification is eminently the sign of the prophet Jonas. The three days and nights during which the Lord was in the tomb represented, because they completed, the glorification of his humanity. The glorification of the Lord's human nature is in the highest sense the sign which is given to all men, in all ages, in testimony of the truth. Through that divine work the means and the power of faith were provided ; and the Lord in his humanity, as he is the only true Object, so is he the only Author of saving faith. But this pre-eminent sign produces another, which is its reflected image. This other sign is regeneration. The prophet Jonas was, therefore, the sign not only of the Lord's glorification, but of man's regeneration, which is its effect and image. The new birth is to us and all men the practical sign, the inward and living witness, of the truth. If we would believe the truth, we must both receive and live it. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." The evil heart of unbelief must be removed before any sign can avail to produce faith, for faith is of the heart as well as of the understanding. The sign of the prophet Jonas is, therefore, the only sign that can be given unto men ; but it is one that cannot fail to produce conviction of the truth, if they only admit it as the foundation and evidence of their faith.

41, 42. The Lord now contrasts the men of that generation with some of earlier times, who, without their advantages, manifested religious qualities of which they were destitute. *The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it : because they repented at the preaching of Jonas ; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it : for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.* In this and some other instances the Lord cites the case of Gentiles, to show that they were more ready to receive the truth than the Jews, who possessed the Word, and had even the presence and teaching of Him who was the Word itself. The singular circumstance of a Jewish prophet being sent to preach to a heathen nation, and the Ninevites repenting at his preaching, typified the calling of the Gentiles at the time of the Lord's advent, and the successful preaching of the gospel after his resurrection, the Christian apostles having at first shown no less reluctance than the Jewish prophet to carry the great tidings to the heathen. The Queen of Sheba, here called the queen of the south, coming to Solomon at Jerusalem, with exceeding great riches, with camels carrying spices, gold, and precious stones, like the wise

men who came from the east to present their gifts to the infant Saviour, represented the wiser Gentiles coming to the Lord to offer him the precious gifts of their best affections, and to receive from him in return the riches of his wisdom. The Queen of Sheba also represented the celestial affection by which the Lord acquired all wisdom and intelligence, meant by the queen's precious gifts, the camels denoting the knowledges of the natural man by which they were introduced. Wherefore, when he whom they represented is come, truly may we say, Here is one greater than Jonah, Solomon, and the temple itself. Yet the change from the representation to the actual in ourselves is not effected without opposition and conflict. Considered in reference to ourselves, the Ninevites and the queen of the south, Jonah and Solomon, are representative of different affections and principles, as they exist in our own minds in early life, before the commencement of regeneration. As actual regeneration commences with the Lord's birth in the soul, corresponding to his birth into the world, the religious element which exists in the mind before this, is rather representative of the kingdom of heaven than the kingdom itself. Like the persons and events of the Old Testament, they are the shadow of good things to come, whose substance Christ is, when he makes his advent into the little world of the human mind. The old man with his affections and lusts, of which the Pharisee and the Sadducee, and the priest and the scribe, are the fit representatives, offer a determined resistance to the new man, with his heavenly affections, through whom the Lord shows his power by casting out demons and healing all manner of sickness and disease, and his wisdom by teaching and reproving. What, then, is specifically to be understood by the men of Nineveh and the queen of the south rising up in the judgment against this generation and condemning it? The judgment in which they rise up with the men of this generation is the judgment which takes place in the mind of every one who becomes regenerate, by which a separation is effected in his mind between good and evil. In the process of this judgment all states return, and the early states of life rise up in judgment against the later, and condemn them. Our contrition for the errors we committed in our youth, when, like so many among the Ninevites, we could not distinguish between our right hand and our left, rises up and condemns our impenitence for the evils we have committed since we had the guiding power of a clearer light; and the simple affections of childhood, innocent though natural, rise up, as experience often testifies, and condemn the loves of our after-life. And what are the grounds of this condemnation?

The men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonas, but those of a later age could not be moved to penitence by the preaching of Jesus. And so it is still. Not only were the sins of our youth more venial than those of our manhood, but, when reproved by the Word, our repentance was more ready and earnest. The queen of the south came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but the men of a later age turned away from the wisdom of Jesus. And so it is still. The affections of our childhood drew us to the Word, and made us listen with delight to its lessons of wisdom, as conveyed in its charming narratives and simple precepts; and even when, like the Queen of Sheba, we tried it with hard questions, we received from the lips of parents solutions of all our difficulties, while its higher wisdom is neglected or contemned by us in our riper years. When those rudimentary states of penitence and affection are made to "rise up" in the judgment with the impenitence and deadness of our after-life, they cannot but condemn them; and it is for condemnation that they are brought into the judgment against them, that they may bring to light, in order that we may condemn, our errors and evils, and so lead us to a true and loving acknowledgment of the Lord as the supreme good and truth, of whom all inferior goods and truths are the types and foregleams.

43. The Pharisees, we have seen (v. 38), demanded a sign, and the Lord declared that no sign should be given them. He now returns to the subject, and describes what the state of an impenitent man would be, supposing he were brought by a sign to a conviction of the truth. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.* By the power of a sign, the spirit of unbelief would indeed be driven out for a time, but it would eventually return with seven-fold greater force than before. The spirit is here to be identified with the man, for a man's heart-belief or unbelief is himself, and in going out of this, unless from a sincere conviction, he goes out of himself. The spirit wandering in "dry places, seeking rest, and finding none," aptly describes the mental condition of one in whom the singular contradiction exists of having obtained faith without having received the truth—truth being meant by water, of which there is none. The outcast spirit seeks rest, but finds none, in the waste places of the soul. The mind can find no rest in a faith which is forced upon it from without. The knowledge and the evidences of truth come from without; but faith, as a living principle, comes from within, and is produced by the Spirit of the Lord operating upon the heart. Faith which is impressed upon the understanding, with-

out changing the heart, passes away with the force which produced it, and leaves the mind more hardened in its infidelity.

44, 45. As the effect of the sign begins to pass away, as it must do, or life would cease, the spirit begins to say,—*I will return into my house from whence I came out.* And what a picture does the house present of the faculty on which the sign had taken effect! The spirit finds it *empty, swept, and garnished*—empty of everything true, swept of everything good, and garnished or disposed, brought into conformity of state with evil and falsity, which the absence of everything good and true implies. The spirit is represented as first returning to the house alone, and then, when he found it empty, going and taking with him *seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.* By the former spirit returning, is signified the return of the original spirit of unbelief; but his going out and returning with seven others, indicates that circle of life which every principle makes before it is confirmed. It is like the blood that flows from the heart and returns to the heart again, and may return either pure or defiled. The mind thus empty becomes the prey of greater infidelity and wickedness than before; for the seven other spirits more wicked than the former one signify a complete and confirmed state of unbelief and profanation. And this greatest of all sins makes the last state worse indeed than the first. Our Lord concludes with the terrible declaration,—*Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.* The generation to which these descriptions apply is the whole congregated mass of evil and falsity, which not only deny the Lord's love and wisdom in the salvation of man, but pervert them to the destruction of spiritual life and to the everlasting misery of the soul.

46-49. As if to relieve this dark picture by shedding upon it a ray of divine light, we read that *While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.* Yet here, too, there is a claim put in—not, it is true, by the evil and the false, represented by the Pharisees, but by the naturally good and true, represented by the mother and brethren of the Lord. Therefore, when one told him, *Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee,* the Lord did not comply with their desire, but continued his discourse to the multitude, and changing the natural into a spiritual idea, showed who were truly his mother and who were his brethren. It is well known that the Lord never addressed Mary by the name of mother. The name "woman," by which he addressed her at the marriage in Cana, was expressive of respect. The Lord's avoiding the use of "mother" in relation to Mary had a deep spiritual

ground. Jesus was indeed the son of Mary according to the flesh, but he was the Son of God according to the Spirit. The humanity he derived from his human mother was but a natural and temporary covering to the humanity he derived from his Divine Father; and it was eventually put off, and so entirely, that not the least vestige of it remained; so that when his glorification was completed, at the time of his resurrection, the Lord, as to his humanity, was purely the Son of God—born, as he had been begotten, of the Essential Divinity. Even at the time when he addressed Mary, as we first read of it in the gospel, the Lord's consciousness was so far in the paternal humanity, and he so far spake immediately from it, that to have called Mary his mother would have been to express an idea and a feeling that did not at the time exist. But whatever the Lord spake was not to express natural and temporary, but spiritual and eternal truth. One great purpose the Lord had in never calling Mary by the name of mother was to teach the church, in all ages, that the Lord's humanity is purely divine, and no longer the son of Mary. Another purpose was to teach the important spiritual lesson which he delivered to the multitude on this occasion, when he said, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!* There is no real relationship between the Lord and men but a spiritual relationship. He has no saving relationship with men according to the flesh. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. To come into saving relationship with him, men must be born of the Spirit, for that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And in this new birth Jesus is not our God only, but our Father. Whatever other degrees of relationship may exist between the Lord and mankind, they are all derived from this, and comprehended in it. On our part, sonship lies at the foundation of brotherhood, and of every other degree of relationship with Him who is all in all to us. The disciples to whom the Lord stretched forth his hand are all the true members of the church. His brethren are those who are in the good of charity from him; his sisters are those who are in truths derived from that good; and mother signifies the church derived and formed from those principles.

50. The question the Lord asked of the one who told and the many who heard him he still asks of us,—“Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?” And it behoves us to prepare ourselves to learn from him the true answer. And the answer is,—*Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* To do his Father's will is to keep his commandments from

love—from his own love in us. His Father's will is his own divine love. This closing declaration of the Lord's discourse is an answer to all demands made of him, as recorded in this chapter. Those who do the Lord's will require no sign, for it will enable them to know the truth; and they who do the Lord's will will be recognized by him as his true relations, and will not only be permitted to speak with him, but to dwell with him in the mansions of heaven—the home which he has prepared for his family, consisting of the faithful, the loving, and the obedient. There will the blessed truth which these words contain be truly and fully realized. In heaven, where all is spiritual, natural relationship is not even known. Those who were related to each other on earth may indeed dwell together in heaven; but it must be on the basis of spiritual, not of natural affinity. In heaven there is but one Father, and all existing degrees of affinity are but degrees of nearness to each other in him.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Luke mentions, what Matthew has not recorded, that while the Lord was delivering the preceding discourse, "a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him : and he went in, and sat down to meat" (ch. xi. 37). It is in reference to this that the evangelist relates that *The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.* The present discourse being delivered upon the same day with the preceding one, implies its being adapted to the same general state, with the difference, that in this instance the divine teaching is accommodated to the mind in its more external condition. The sea is emblematical of the Word in its natural sense; and when the sea and the land are mentioned together, they refer to the two distinct principles of truth and good, of which it consists. The Lord's sitting by the sea side, where the land and water meet, denotes his presence where there is conjunction of good and truth in the letter of the Word, sitting also denoting an interior state, the result of that conjunction.

2. *And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.* A ship signifies knowledge, and thence doctrine. The Lord spiritually teaches from a ship in the sea when he instructs us from doctrine as it is in the literal sense of his Word. And when he sits in the ship, as he sat on the mount, we are instructed that he is in the inmost of all the doctrine which he teaches from the Word; the whole multi-

tude standing on the shore denoting a state of external good which is receptive of true doctrine, their standing being expressive of an active state of thought to listen to the teaching of divine truth.

3. *And he spake many things unto them in parables.* The present discourse consists almost entirely of parables. These were delivered to teach men by similitude the nature of the kingdom of heaven. They are not to be considered as different illustrations of the same thing, or the placing the same subject in many different lights. The kingdom of heaven, as a state of heavenly-mindedness and holiness of life, is formed progressively, and is made up of many different and various graces and virtues, the growth of years and the result of manifold experience. Every different parable has, therefore, a meaning of its own, as descriptive of a particular state. And the parables, as a whole, contain a circle of instruction applicable to the entire religious life. It is not necessary to assume that the whole may be matter of common experience to every one who reads them; yet there is something in each that comes home to all. They teach us much relating to regeneration that may be useful to every Christian, as showing the nature and magnitude of that divine work in the soul, and providing spiritual knowledge that may aid us materially in our future life. The first which the Lord delivers is the parable of the sower—one on which more has been preached and written than on any other in the New Testament; which is due to the circumstance, that the delineations it gives of the characteristic differences of the several classes of the hearers of the Word are so wonderfully confirmed by observation and experience. The Lord begins by saying, *Behold, a sower went forth to sow.* The Lord is the sower, and this character belongs to him as the Author of all truth. As the sower, the Lord has gone forth in every age of the world, and into every land. There is no heart in which the truths of his kingdom have not been sown. But the character and office of the sower are more especially applicable to the Lord in his humanity. He went forth as the sower, in a peculiar sense, when he came into the world as the Word in person, that he might accommodate his eternal truth to the altered states of men. The Lord also inseminates his truth in the mind from the earliest period of life, and afterwards to eternity. The Saviour is therefore ever going forth to sow, and in all souls are the seeds of truth scattered with a bountiful and impartial hand. There are, however, various and very different kinds as well as degrees of reception, but these depend on the recipient, not on the dispenser of the blessing. The divine speaker describes four different kinds of ground, as sym-

bolical of four different states of mind among those who constitute the visible church. We shall consider these separately, together with the explanation which the Lord gave to the disciples, when they asked him why he spake unto the multitude in parables.

4-19. The first class is described in these words: *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.* In the Lord's explanation of the parable, he that received seed by the way side is one who *heareth the word, and understandeth it not.* Understanding is not mere intellectual apprehension. A right apprehension of divine truth is most important; but that which our Lord means is, "to understand with the heart," which consists in receiving the truth in love. Love or goodness forms the ground in which the seeds of the eternal truth are sown. A difference of minds, in respect to the principle of goodness, is that which is so graphically set before us in the parable. The way side is where there is no proper soil, or where it is so trodden down that the seeds that fall upon it never enter it, but lie unchanged upon its hardened surface. These are they in whom the good acquired from the Lord through parents and others in early life has been so trampled upon by the practical errors of later years as to have hardened the heart into a careless unconcern about eternal life. Of the seeds that fell by the way side it is said that "the fowls came and devoured them up." These the Lord explains to mean *the wicked one.* Fowls are the emblems of thoughts, and are the wicked thoughts originating, in the present case, in evil, which is the wicked one that *catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.* It is one of the temptations of early manhood to forget their Creator, whom they had been taught to remember in the days of their youth, and allow light pleasures and a vain philosophy to catch away that which pious hands had been sowing in their hearts, and which the Lord's providence is continually scattering, although it be upon an ungrateful soil. Let them reflect that there is a harvest as well as a seed time, that the reaping is according to the sowing, and that he who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

5, 6-20, 21. The second class of unprofitable receivers of the truth are those whose minds are like *stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.* In his exposition the Lord tells us, *the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.* No

class is better known than this, its characteristics being so open to observation. The readiness with which some persons accept views and receive impressions is only equalled by the readiness with which they part with them, and their warmth and zeal are quickly succeeded by indifference, and their goodness is as the early dew that passeth away. The reason is to be found in their ground being stony, where there is not much earth. They have more intellect than heart; they have a keen appreciation of the beautiful, but a small love of the useful. Yet the seed which quickly germinates in the slender but genial soil might come to a weak maturity were it fanned by zephyrs, and refreshed with dews, and warmed by the tempered rays of the sun of heaven. But this is not the unvarying course of Nature nor of Providence. Nature has her floods and her tempests, her dense clouds and her beaming sunshine; and Providence has its tribulations and persecutions. These strengthen the strong and healthy, but destroy the feeble and sickly; they soon prostrate or wither that which has no root in itself, however promising its beginning may be in the eyes of men. No heavenly plant can be reared without temptation, and those which are unable to endure this ordeal must perish. Some of those who, when they hear the word, anon with joy receive it, sometimes have so little root in themselves that they fall away under the outward tribulation of contempt or opposition; but still more liable are they to fail when the inward persecution of temptation comes. Then it is that they are offended; the sun, not of heaven, but of their own self-love, arising, scorches up everything green and living in the mind.

7-22. The third class of unproductive recipients consists of those of whom it is said *And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.* The Lord explains the thorns to mean *the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches.* Temporal care and a desire to be rich doubtless have a tendency to stifle the spiritual affections and repress the soul's aspirations. We are, however, to distinguish between distrustful care and mere absorbing worldly occupation, and between the honourable pursuit of wealth and an ambitious or avaricious desire to be rich. There is, however, another world and other riches, the care and deceitfulness of which may choke the Word and render it unfruitful. This world, individually considered and spiritually understood, is the natural mind, and the riches which belong to it are the knowledges of religion; and its riches are deceitful when we deceive ourselves with the false idea that the knowledge of religion is religion itself. The Lord's descrip-

tion of this class leads us to suppose that they do not want capacity but culture. The ground was neither deficient nor barren. The soil which produces weeds can support something better. Wheat would have grown where the thorns flourished. But the thorns required to be rooted up, and the ground prepared to receive the good seed. And here we see the great defect of those whose state is here described. It is not enough to know the truth; if we would be happy, we must do it. And even here we may deceive ourselves. For it is not enough to do good, we must cease to do evil. We must root out the thorns as well as sow the wheat. And this is just what the class we are considering neglect to do. And a large class it is, if theory be an indication of practice, which it is not always, even when doctrine is unfavourable to virtue. They may be pious, and studious, and exemplary, but they do not examine themselves to discover, with the view to put away, the inborn and inbred evils of their neglected hearts. The seed is indeed received and grows, but it never comes to perfection, but becometh unfruitful.

8-23. We come at last to those with whom the seed fell into good ground. *But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.* The divine Sower himself explains it thus: *He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.* Some hear, but do not understand; some understand, but fail to perform: but here we have one who, after he has taken the first step, goes on perseveringly till he has reached the end, from the sowing of the seed to the ingathering of the harvest. The distinguishing mark of this class is—they bear fruit; the other parts of the process are necessary to precede, but this is the end and fulfilment of them all. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John xv. 8). The fruitfulness of religion is different in different members of the church. Every branch of the vine must bear fruit, otherwise the husbandman taketh it away; but every branch is not alike productive, nor does the husbandman demand that it should be. All that bear fruit are branches of the true vine, but they may bear some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold. Yet this does not mean a difference only in the quantity of the fruit, but of the quality also. With some, good works are the fruits of simple obedience; with some, they are the fruits of charity; with others, they are the fruits of love. These are the three degrees of perfection pointed out by our Lord in his thirty, sixty,

and an hundredfold. The thirty, sixty, and an hundredfold are expressive both of three distinct states and degrees of the regenerate life, and of three distinct classes of regenerate persons. The numbers are significative of the character of these states, and of those distinguished by them. These numbers are three tens, six tens, and ten tens. Ten has perhaps the most comprehensive signification of any number that occurs in Scripture. God gave his representative people ten commandments, and he required of them a tenth of their produce; the one being expressive of all their moral duties, the other of all their divine worship. Ten therefore signifies a full or complete state, the other numbers with which it is combined signifying the quality of the state. These signify the three states and degrees which we call natural, spiritual, and celestial. Ten signify remains; three tens, the remains of good and truth acquired by instruction; six tens, remains of good and truth confirmed by temptation; and ten tens, the remains of good and truth confirmed by life: this last is a complete and perfect state, in which good and truth are equal and united.

We may remark in conclusion that, although we have explained the parable in reference to different classes in the church, it is not without an application to different but successive states in the regeneration of one. You will perceive from the parable that the ground improves in each succeeding state, and the seeds enter more deeply into the soil, and make a more successful effort to grow up, till the effort is crowned with success in the producing of fruit. And then, also, the threefold fruitfulness may be found in the fully regenerate man.

As, in order to avoid prolixity and repetition, we have given the spiritual sense and practical application of the parable of the sower as our Lord explained it, combining with it whatever is peculiar in the parable itself, we shall now return to verse 10, where we find the disciples inquiring, and the Lord declaring, the reason of his teaching by parables.

10. After the Lord had delivered the parable of the sower, *the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?* The disciples and the multitude are those who are within and those who are without the church, and the question is, why those who are without, differently from those who are within, are taught by parables. This question and the Lord's answer cover more than what is strictly called the parabolic portion of the Word. The whole of the literal sense of the Word, considered in relation to the spiritual, is parabolic, — truth veiled, so as to make it apprehensible by the natural mind.

To those within the church who are in genuine doctrine from the letter of the Word, the spiritual sense can be opened. Not that a mere intellectual reception of true doctrine can prepare the mind for seeing the internal sense of the Divine Word; for the real reception of genuine doctrine itself presupposes a state of love and holiness, since they only who do his will know savingly of the doctrine. Those who by goodness have received the genuine doctrines of the Word, and have been introduced into the church, are prepared to see and receive the spiritual sense. To them it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to those who are without it is not given.

12. *For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.* The meaning of which seeming paradox is this—that whoever has goodness will receive spiritual truth, and receive it abundantly; but whoever has not goodness, from him will be taken away even the truth of doctrine that he hath. This law is fulfilled in its perfection in the other life. Those who in this world have lived in love to God and to their neighbour, although in comparative ignorance, or even in error, will receive as much truth as their good admits or requires; rich in goodness here, they will abound in wisdom hereafter; but they who have not lived in love and charity will be deprived of that truth, however much it may be, which they had known in the world.

13. *Therefore, continues our Lord, speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.* Man has an internal and an external will and understanding, and there are internal and external goods and truths adapted to them: the first are spiritual, the second are natural. We may see with our natural understanding, and hear with our natural will, and yet have no inward discernment or love of truth and goodness. Nay, the internal will and understanding may be opposed to the external. The outward will may prompt us to learn and even to teach the truths of religion, and the understanding labour intelligently and unweariedly in the work, and yet our inner natural mind may disbelieve and condemn them. There is no real understanding where there is no inward discernment, for the outward sight is derived from the inward perception.

14. This, in the Jews, was the fulfilment of a prophecy by Isaiah, the first part of which is similar to the statement of the Lord in the preceding verse, and on which it is unnecessary to enlarge.

15. In this verse, however, it is declared that the heart of the

people had waxed gross, intimating that the will had become sensual, which is the ground of all other morbid conditions; for when the will is debased, men close their ears and their eyes against the truth. And their object in doing so is, *lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and be healed.* To understand with the heart—that is, from the will—is true discernment, and the gate of true conversion and health. Conversion is a change of the understanding; healing is a restoration of the will. When this salvation is deliberately and determinately refused, it is a mercy to speak to men in parables—to address the truth to them in dark sayings. Were it presented to them in clear light, they would pervert and profane it. But why present it to them at all? Because, in the first place, the Word is of much indirect benefit to even natural men; and in the second place, salvation being possible with, and therefore offered to all, the Lord provides all with his truth as they are able to bear it and are most likely to profit by it.

16. But happy are those whose state is the reverse of all this, and to whom the Lord can say, *blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.* To have the understanding and the will open to the admission of heavenly light and love must be a blessed state indeed. In this is realized the Lord's desire towards his creatures, and their own true happiness.

17. The blessing connected with this state is spoken of as being enhanced by the circumstance, *That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* This refers to the fulfilment of the prophecies and promises to which the wise and good of all ages had looked forward with hopeful desire, but which the disciples were privileged to behold in the person and work of the Incarnate God. But, as we have seen, there is a spiritual state in the life of every regenerate man corresponding to that which preceded the Lord's advent; and there is a looking forward of truth in the intellect, and a desiring of good in the will—which are the prophet and the righteous in us—to the time and state in which the things which once were objects of faith and hope shall be the realized possession of the heart and life; when, indeed, things that existed abstractly in the remote conceptions of the inner man will exist actually in the practical experience of the outer life. To the former state belongs the parable, to the latter its explanation; for the second state is the unfolding of the first.

18-23. These verses contain the Lord's explanation of the parable of the sower, which has been incorporated with the parable itself, as explained in verses 1-9.

24-30. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.* In the previous parable there is one sower and one kind of seed; in this there are two sowers and two kinds of seed. The Divine Sower is here followed by his enemy, who sows tares where he had sown wheat. In the former parable there were pre-existing in the mind obstacles enough to the success of the sower's labours; here there is a new and extraneous aspect and element employed to neutralize his work. This particular feature in the parable describes a circumstance in the regenerate life similar to that recorded in the 4th chapter, where we read that Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. The reception of the Lord's truth and of the Spirit of truth lays the mind open to temptation, as induced by the spirits of darkness. Temptation is not, however, the result of the mere admission of truth into the mind, even when intellectually apprehended. There can be no temptation where there is no goodness, for temptation is essentially a conflict between good and evil; yet evil assails good by means of falsity, and good defends itself by means of truth. It is therefore the truth of good that lays the mind open to temptation. That which the man of the present parable sowed in his field is therefore called *good seed*, to indicate that the implantation of the truth of good, and its confirmation by temptation, is the subject treated of. As this parable of the Lord contains in it arcana relating to the separation of the evil from the good, and concerning the last judgment as it took place in the spiritual world, it is of importance it should be minutely explained. The kingdom of heaven is the Lord's church in heaven and on earth, for the church is in both worlds. The man, called in ver. 37 the Son of man, who sowed good seed in his field, is the Lord as to divine truth, which is the Word; the good seed is the divine truth, and the field is the church, where the Word is. "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way," signifies that whilst men lead a natural life, or the life of the world, then secretly, or when they are not aware, evils from hell insinuate and implant falsities. To sleep signifies to lead a natural life, or a life in the world, which life is sleep compared with spiritual life, which is wakefulness. The enemy signifies evils from hell, which affect the natural life

separate from spiritual life; to sow tares is to insinuate and implant falsities; and his going his way signifies that it was done secretly, or whilst they were unaware. *But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also,* means, when truth grew and good was produced, falsities from evil were intermixed; for the blade springing up signifies truth, such as it is when first received, fruit signifies good, and tares signify falsities derived from evil, in this case intermixed. *So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?* By this is to be understood that those who are in truths derived from good, perceiving that falses from evil were intermixed, then make complaint; for the servants of the householder signify those who are in truth from good; the householder signifies the Lord as to truths from good; the good seed, the field, and the tares signify the same as already explained. *He said unto them, An enemy (or adversary) hath done this,* signifies that those falsities were from evil in the natural man. *The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them (the tares) up?* signifies the separation and ejection of falsities derived from evil before truths derived from good are received and increased. *But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them,* signifies that thus truth derived from good, and its increase, would also perish; for with the man of the church truths are intermixed with falsities, which cannot be cast out and separated until they are reformed. *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.* The separation of false principles derived from evil, and their ejection, cannot be effected until it is the last state of the church; for then such falsities are separated from the truths of good, and these falsities are delivered to hell, and the truths of good—or, what is the same, those who are in them—are conjoined to heaven. These things are done in the spiritual world, where all who are of the church, from its beginning to its end, are in such a manner separated and judged. The harvest is the end or last state of the church; binding in bundles signifies to conjoin together the several species of falsities derived from evil; to burn signifies to deliver to hell; and to bring together into the barn to be conjoined to heaven.

31, 32. *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds;*

but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. When the Divine Word declares the deep depravity of the human heart, and points out the long and severe labour of the regenerate life, we are sometimes disposed to be overwhelmed and discouraged. There are not wanting, on the other hand, lessons that give us relief and encouragement. The parable of the mustard seed is one of these. It tells us, in language which every one can understand, that if the kingdom of heaven is really received into the heart, the smallest possible beginning is sufficient to ensure a successful issue, if we only persevere. In its spiritual sense the parable teaches this lesson still more clearly. The mustard seed is the symbol of truth in which there is something of spiritual good. If only a little, however little, of spiritual good has taken root in the heart, it grows as seed in good ground. In the process of its growth the mustard seed becomes first the greatest among herbs, and then a tree. When faith is being conjoined to love, the spiritual principle within us is an herb or a shrub, but when faith and love are actually united, it is a tree. And then the birds of the heavens come and make their nests in its branches. Birds are thoughts, branches are knowledges; in which, when man is regenerate, thoughts, or intellectual truths, are multiplied.

Nor is the encouraging lesson of this parable confined to the growth of spiritual principles in the present life. For any one who, by combating against evil, *as sin*, has in the world procured anything spiritual, however small, is saved, and his uses afterwards grow like a grain of mustard seed into a tree.

“For so long as man lives in the body, the seed is in corporeal ground, and is there entangled and obscured by scientifics and pleasures, and by cares and sollicitudes; but when these are put off, as is the case when he passes into the other life, the seed is loosened from them and grows, as the seed of a tree grows when it rises out of the ground to grow into a shrub, and then into a tree, and next to be multiplied into an orchard of trees; for all science, intelligence, and wisdom, with their delights and felicities, thus fructify and are multiplied, and thereby increase to eternity, and this from the smallest seed, as the Lord teaches respecting the grain of mustard seed; which may be sufficiently manifest from the science, intelligence, and wisdom of the angels, which was ineffable to them at the time they were men.”

33. *Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal.*

This parable describes the formation of the heavenly state in the mind, as effected or promoted by temptation. Leaven itself signifies what is false derived from evil; and meal or flour, truth, from which good is derived. Meal or flour has two significations. Considered as the product of wheat, meal signifies truth derived from good; but, considered as that from which bread is made, it signifies truth from which good is derived. As bread-making is the subject of the present parable, the meal signifies truth from which good is derived. The leavening process, which is the prominent idea of the parable, is an expressive symbol of temptation. The use of temptation is analogous to that of leavening or fermentation: it serves to purify good and truth. The purification of truth from falsity in the mind cannot be effected without that tribulation to which fermentation corresponds, and which is the combat of falsity with truth, and of truth with falsity. After the conflict, when truth has triumphed, falsity falls down like dregs, and leaves the truth pure like wine, which becomes clear after fermentation. This conflict, meant by leavening and fermentation, belongs chiefly to that turning-point or transition state in the regenerate life where the Christian, who has hitherto acted from the truth of faith, begins to act from the good of charity; or when his religion, which has been hitherto chiefly of the head, begins to be of the heart. This distinction between a state of truth and a state of good was represented in a singular distinction ordained by the Jewish law between the general meat offerings and that of the first-fruits. The passover and other feasts were required to be celebrated with unleavened bread, leaven being strictly forbidden; but in the new meat offering at the feast of the first-fruits, the wave-bread was commanded to be baked leavened. The first-fruits, it is easy to see, represent a new state in the regenerate life. This new state is the state of good which succeeds a state of truth, or of love that succeeds a state of faith. And to mark this distinction, the preceding feasts were to be celebrated with bread unleavened, but this with leavened bread. Thus, when we have sown our seed, and have succeeded in bringing our harvest to that degree of maturity which enables us to offer the first-fruits to the Lord, who has crowned the year with his goodness, we have at least entered on that state which enables us to eat and to offer leavened bread—good purified from evil by temptation. So is the kingdom likened unto leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of meal. Let us attend to the particulars. A woman represents affection; here the affection of that good on which the regenerate soul is entering, which

it desires, and to which it looks forward, as the woman did to the bread for which she was preparing. The woman's taking the leaven and hiding it does not imply that the regenerating man knowingly adopts what is false, but that the false principle insinuates itself into the mind through the affections. Her hiding it teaches that falsity, when it has thus insinuated itself, lies concealed among the truths which have been acquired, signified by the meal. And there being three measures of meal, indicates that the mind, having attained a full state of truth, is prepared to enter on a state of good; and the attainment of this state is indicated by the leaven remaining in the meal *till the whole was leavened*. It is only when the whole is leavened that the kingdom of heaven is realized.

Another lesson contained in this parable may be useful. Fermentation not only signifies the purification of the individual man, but of the collective or social also. Spiritual fermentations are effected by various methods, both in heaven and on earth. They are evils and falsities together, which, being let into societies, produce effects similar to those produced by leaven put into meal and new wine, by which heterogeneous things are separated, and homogeneous things conjoined, and purity and clearness are effected.

36. We here read that when Jesus had sent the multitude away, he went into a house, and his disciples came unto him, saying, *Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field*. This sending of the multitude away, and going into a house with his disciples, evidently signifies a change of state in which the natural thoughts and affections recede, while the higher affections and thoughts are elevated into a higher region or faculty of the mind. It describes a state, indeed, in which man retires from the world, and enters into a more immediate communion with the Lord, and is enlightened by him respecting those external truths which had been addressed to him while in a more external state of apprehension. The Lord, therefore, expounds the parable to his disciples. His exposition we shall now consider.

37-43. *He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man*, signifies divine truth from the Lord; *the field is the world*, signifies the church everywhere; *the good seed are the children (or sons) of the kingdom*, signifies that divine truth is with those who are of the church; *the tares are the children of the wicked one*, signifies falsities with those who are in evil; *the enemy that sowed them is the devil*, signifies that they have falsities from evil which is from hell; *the harvest is the end of the world* (consummation of the age), signifies the last time of the church; *and the reapers are the angels*, signifies that divine truth from

the Lord effects separation. *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend,* signifies that divine truths from the Lord are about to remove those who shall hinder separation; *and them which do iniquity,* signifies that they are those who live in evil; *and shall cast them into a furnace of fire,* signifies into hell, where they are who are in self-love, in hatred, and revenge: *there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,* signifies where there is what is direful arising from evils and falsities. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,* signifies that they who have done the Lord's precepts will live in heavenly loves and in their joys in heaven: they are called righteous who acknowledge the Lord and do his precepts.

44. *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* In the previous parable the kingdom is compared to leaven hid in meal; here it is compared to treasure hid in a field. In the former case the worse is hid within the better; here the better is hid within the worse—at least, the precious within the common. Does not this point to that inversion of state of which we have spoken in treating of the last parable? The internal was occupied by an evil and disturbing element; now, when tribulation has spent its force and done its purifying work, a treasure is found where impurity dwelt. And now also the treasure is appreciated, and is a source of joy; and to obtain possession of it, the discoverer is disposed to sell all that he has. But to obtain the treasure it is necessary to purchase the field in which it lies hid. The treasure which the man found are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge as revealed in the Divine Word, and the field is the church and heaven, not the church that is without him, but the church that is within him—the principles that constitute the church, especially the good in which is truth. But if the church containing the treasure is within, why should he sell all that he hath to obtain it? Because these principles are as yet only in the inner man, and they are not truly a man's own till they have become principles of the outer man also. And they cannot become so till the evils of self-love and the love of the world, which have their abode in the outer man, are removed to make room for them. These evils of the selfhood are man's own and only property—the all that he hath; the treasure and the field are the Lord's. And these can be purchased and possessed only by selling all that he hath, which is to give up his own will and wisdom, that he may make the divine will the motive of his heart,

the divine wisdom the guide of his understanding, and both the rule of his life. Nor is this now felt to be so very difficult a work; for the joy which he has in the newly-found treasure makes him willing to go away and part with his old possessions. And when he has sold all, the treasure is his, and he is the Lord's.

45. *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls.* The man of the previous parable found the treasure; this man goes in search of the pearls. After the mind has been freed by tribulation from its obscurity and deadness, truths are seen and joys are felt to which the mind was before a stranger. And when these hid treasures, thus brought to light, have been acquired, they give the mind a desire for more, and prompt it to seek after them. Now, too, there is a definite object in view: goodly or beautiful pearls are the objects of his search. These pearls are the beautiful and precious truths that enlarge the mind's view of spiritual life and eternal things, and that lead to a more perfect practice; and like the pearly gates of the holy city, introduce the mind into the glories and beatitudes of the second paradise. But this searcher also becomes a finder: in seeking for pearls he finds one pearl of great price. This pearl of pearls, this truth of truths, is the truth as it is in Jesus—the knowledge of him whom to know is life eternal. It is not the merely intellectual, but the saving knowledge of the Lord, the saving truth, that makes him to us, not the Saviour of the world only, but the Saviour of our souls. This is the pearl of great price for which the merchant man sells all that he hath. But what has the regenerate man to sell if he has already sold all? A man may part with all that is opposed to religion so far as he has become religious, but a new advance in truth or goodness brings some new principle of the mind into action, and discloses some new evil or error hostile to it which requires to be removed. And that which is opposed to the love of the Lord, which has now been found, is the love of self; as that which is opposed to the love of the neighbour, as already remarked, is the love of the world. As there are two distinct possessions that belong to the selfhood, so there are two distinct acts of alienation; the alienation of the lesser evil being meant by the selling of the man's all in the last parable, and the alienation of the greater evil by the selling of his all in this.

47-50. The Lord gives still another parable, which forms the last of the present discourse. *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into*

vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. In a general sense the sea signifies the Word, and the fish in the sea signify the living truths which the Word contains. Fishers are teachers who draw truths from the Word that they may impart them to others; and their net is the science or knowledge they employ for the double purpose of acquiring truths and converting men. The general subject, or the internal historical sense of this passage, relates to the end of the church, and the judgment by which that event is attended in the spiritual world. "The separation of the evil and the good is here likened to a net cast into the sea, which gathered fish of every kind, because fish signify natural men as to scientifics and knowledges; and they, in the consummation of the age, or the time of the last judgment, are separated from each other, for there are natural good men and natural evil men. Their separation in the spiritual world appears as a net cast into the sea, gathering and drawing fish to the shore: this appearance is also for correspondence, wherefore the kingdom is likened by the Lord to a net gathering fish." Judgment being the subject of the parable, we may extend the application. Consider it first in application to those who draw truths from the Word, and judge, and separate between them. When we first learn from the Word, we draw truths of every sort, consisting, however, of two general kinds, which are genuine and apparent truths. In the minds of the young, these are mixed or undistinguished; but when reason assumes its sway, it judges between them, gathering the genuine into the vessels of true doctrine, and casting the apparent away,—that is, removing them from the others, and placing them out of the field of active use. But there is still another judgment, more practical, because entering deeper in the life than this. A time comes when it is required of us to judge of principles, not as they relate to doctrine, but to life; not to the understanding, but to the will. So far as we are natural, we cast our net into the sea of life, and take up all that comes, indulging without distinction in lawful and unlawful pleasures, gains, likes and dislikes, ends and means; or if we distinguish between them, it is by a worldly rule applied by worldly motives. As we acquire, not the knowledge, but the conscience of good and truth, and act from the will, which is meant by sitting down, we gather the good into the vessels of the inner memory, which is into the life, and cast the bad away, or remove worldly ends away from the life's love. That this judgment proceeds from a high spiritual

principle is indicated in the parable. There is nothing said in the parable as to who cast the net into the sea, or who drew it to the shore ; but in the Lord's explanatory application we learn that the separation is effected by the angels. "In the consummation of the age the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just." That is to say, when we come to act from spiritual or heavenly principles, the spiritual or heavenly principles of the internal man "come forth" into the external, where the good and bad have been mixed, and where the separation between them is to be effected. Besides separating the wicked from the good, they are to cast them into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. As the scriptural descriptions of the final place, and sufferings in the other life, is only a description of their final state, operations, and experience, so, when understood of separated principles, these descriptions are only revelations of their real character. This casting into the furnace of fire means that these wicked principles are in themselves burning lusts, and that it is their very nature to give birth to evil and falsity, signified by wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The way to know the final state of the evil and the good is to know the nature of evil and goodness ; and the way to avoid the furnace of fire in the other world is to quench the fire of evil lusts while we live in this.

In treating of this series of parables we have not always traced their connection. This has been done by Clowes, whose remarks we quote, as a summing up of the whole. The serious and intelligent reader will be at once edified and delighted at observing that the several parables contained in this chapter stand in a connected order as to their internal sense, and thus follow each other in a regular series, expressive of the whole process of regeneration, commencing with the first reception of heavenly truth from the Word, and advancing through all the gradation of its growths to the full maturity of heavenly love and life. Accordingly, the *first* parable, of the *sower*, describes the first insemination of truth, which is the first step towards the heavenly life. The *second* parable, of the *tares of the field*, describes the manifestation of evils and falses in consequence of such insemination, which is a second step, and an effect of the first. The *third* parable, of the *grain of mustard seed*, describes the small increment of heavenly life, whilst man supposes that he does good from himself alone, and not from the Lord, which is the third state in the regeneration. The *fourth* parable, of the *leaven*, &c., describes the temptation consequent on the reception of heavenly truth and good, which is a fourth state.

The *fifth* parable, of *treasure hid in a field*, describes the further effect of heavenly truth and good, in leading man to renounce his proprium, or his own proper life, that he may appropriate the life of heaven, which is signified by *selling all that he hath, and buying that field*, which is a fifth state. The *sixth* parable, of the *merchant man seeking beautiful pearls*, describes the effect of heavenly truth in leading man to the acknowledgment of the Lord as the alone source of all good and truth, and the consequent renunciation of self-love and its guidance, which is a sixth state. The *seventh* parable, of a *net cast into the sea*, describes the last effect of the reception of heavenly truth and good, in accomplishing a full and final separation between goods and evils, and between truths and falses, so that goods and truths are brought into conjunction with heaven, whilst evils and falses are cast down into hell; and this is the seventh and last stage of the regenerate life.

51. When he had finished his parables, *Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things?* Addressed to the disciples, this question is still asked of every one by the Spirit of the Lord, that dwells within him; and every true disciple must be able to answer, *Yea, Lord*. Question and answer express reciprocation. Love asks, and wisdom answers. And when the answer and the question correspond, there is unity of heart and understanding.

52. *Then said he unto him, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.* Literally, a scribe was one skilled in the law; a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is one versed in the gospel. Things new and old, which the disciples, as scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, were to bring out of their treasures, are the truths of the Old and New Testaments. Every heaven-instructed scribe must bring out of both these treasure-houses the precious things, new and old, in such due proportion as may be required for edification; for the law and the gospel are intimately connected, forming but two parts of one great whole.

There are, however, other two things included in these, which the heaven-instructed scribe must bring forth; which are the letter and the spirit of the Word. In the Scriptures these are called old and new, as where the apostle speaks of serving God, not according to the oldness of the letter, but according to the newness of the spirit. The letter without the spirit is not only old, but dead, and therefore killeth. The letter and the spirit together afford the means of perfect instruction; and these new and old things every scribe instructed unto the

kingdom of heaven will bring unitedly to bear on the eternal concerns of men, and not less on his own, which it is his duty and his privilege to promote.

53. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.* When Jesus teaches men, and departs from the scene of his labours, it is to represent that he first instructs his children, and then withdraws himself, leaving them freely to act upon the lessons of life he has imparted to them. We feel ourselves more in the presence of the Lord when reading his Word; but when we are engaged in the business of the world, we feel as if we were alone. We are not then less in his presence, but are permitted to feel as if we were alone, that we may act from liberty according to reason, and so confirm by practice what he has taught us by precept.

54. But when the Divine Teacher withdraws from one place, he goes to another. In the present instance he went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up (Luke iv. 16). *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue.* The Lord comes to his own country in us, where he was brought up, when we contemplate him as he appeared to us in our early life, when our thoughts of Him, though reverential, were yet natural, when we saw him as man, but knew him not as God. When he returns, it is in the power of the Spirit, to preach a new doctrine in our old synagogues, to infuse into our early religious notions higher ideas, to emancipate us from the dominion of the senses, as well as from the slavery of sin. This state is accurately described in the narrative, which is instructive in itself. If the Lord's words and works did not produce belief, they caused astonishment. *The people were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?* The wisdom of the Lord's words, and the might of his works, were not questioned; the doubting question was, whence he had obtained them. The inquiry is one that may be legitimately and usefully made; but we should strive to obtain the true answer, which the Lord himself has given,—“Of myself I can do nothing. As I hear I judge. The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.”

55, 56. The Nazarenes had seen Jesus as an ordinary man, and they could not bring themselves to believe that he was anything more. *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?* They who asked these questions were more excusable than those in the present day who look upon Jesus as a mere man; for these obstacles

to a belief in his divinity are now removed out of the way of the senses, which draw down the mind to sensual judgment, and the record of his whole life is presented in the gospels, while to the evidences which his words and works presented to the people of his own country are added his resurrection and ascension, which raise him out of the category of ordinary men, and, truly considered, declare him to be God in a divine humanity. But the Spirit of inspiration, in adopting these inquiries as a part of revelation, has embodied in them spiritual and eternal truths. Joseph is not mentioned by name in this passage. Jesus is called the carpenter's son. "His being apparently the son of a carpenter, or worker in wood, confirmed the people in a natural idea respecting him, not understanding its divine signification, as being representative of the good of life derived from the doctrine of truth." In the general sense, Mary, the mother of Jesus, signifies the church; and the church is constituted by life, and not by doctrine without it. To teach this representatively, the Lord on the cross consigned Mary to John as his mother, and John to Mary as her son; and John, who represented the good of love, took her to his own home, to represent that where the good of love is, there is the church. Those called the brethren and sisters of the Lord represented rational good and truth. "In the Lord himself is the celestial marriage, being the essential divine good, and at the same time divine truth. Angels and men are in the celestial marriage so far as they are in love to the Lord, and in charity towards the neighbour, and thence in faith—that is, in the Lord's good, and thence in truth. Then they are called daughters and sons, and amongst themselves sisters and brothers. The reason why rational truth is called a sister is, because it is conceived by an influx of divine good into rational truths; the good which is thence in the rational principle is called brother, and the truth thence is called sister." The contemptuous ascription of mere natural descent and relationship to the Lord, when understood by angels, as they may be obscurely by men, are changed into ideas of spiritual affinity with him, according to his own declaration, "He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

57. Those who pointed to his natural relationships *were offended in him*. This is an example of the proneness of the natural mind to judge of the Lord and his Word by appearances, and its repugnance to connect visible effects with divine causes. The Word, as divine truth, is precisely analogous to the Lord himself when on earth: it is clothed with a natural body, which is its literal sense; and those who

judge of the Word by the letter alone are similar to those who judged of Jesus by the outward humanity alone. In both cases, within those human appearances, from which the natural man judges the whole to be human, there is a true spirituality and divinity that raise them entirely above ordinary men and ordinary writings. When the Lord saw the effects of the reasonings of the people, he said unto them, *A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.* The literal truth of this is well illustrated by the case of the Lord himself. If any one could have escaped this common fate of prophets, our Lord must have been that one; yet even he was no exception to the rule. If such was the experience of the Perfect One, how much more the frail members of his household. As to the spiritual meaning of this, the prophets represented the doctrine of truth which they taught. The native country and the house of the prophet are the understanding and will of the natural mind. The doctrines and truths of the Word are, at their first reception, laid up in the memory as knowledge, having the same place, and being on the same level, as other knowledge relating to the world. So long as they occupy this part of the mind they are not honoured above the other matters of science with which they are mingled. It is only when they are separated from other and inferior things, and made the subjects of a higher thought, and connected with higher ends, that they obtain the honour that is due to them; for they are then elevated into the spiritual mind, and exalted in the affections and thoughts, and invested with the authority which belongs to them. It is possible, on the other hand, that when the time for decision comes, the truths and doctrines of religion thus laid up in the natural memory may be rejected and degraded, instead of being chosen and honoured; when the early disciple becomes offended in Jesus, and regards him only as a man among men.

58. *And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* It is a very common opinion that one great purpose of the Lord's miracles was to produce belief. Here we find that unbelief was an impediment to his performing miracles. Hence the question so often put to applicants for cures, "Dost thou believe that I am able to do this?" Miracles may confirm and exalt belief, but they cannot produce it. The ground of belief is in an honest and good heart, and this miracles cannot create. The same principle holds good in our individual experience in regard to the Lord's mighty works of regenerating power. He can do no mighty work in us if our unbelief is such as to hinder the operation of his love and truth within us. The Lord

works in us through our faith. And if his mighty working in our hearts and minds and lives is not experienced by ourselves, and made manifest to others, it is assuredly because of our unbelief.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN the eleventh chapter we read of John, in prison, sending two of his disciples to Jesus, to ask him if he was the promised Saviour, or if they were to look for another. The cause of that eminent servant of the Lord being shut up in the prisoner's cell, and the cause and manner of his violent death, are brought to light in the beginning of this chapter. Like many other teachers sent from God, he suffered for his faithfulness and integrity. Although it may seem inconsistent with an overruling providence that the just should suffer for their righteousness, it evinces at least that God does not show any partiality even in favour of those who serve him, but that it is the order of his government that events should take their natural course, uninterrupted by his special interference. So far on the circumstances relating to John the Baptist as historical facts. As part of the Divine Word, they contain a deeper sense, and convey a more instructive lesson, which we now come to consider.

1, 2. *At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.* Herod, as the ruler of Galilee, represented the ruling principle in the unregenerate natural mind, and the natural man, of which Galilee was the symbol (ch. ii. 22). He heard of the fame of Jesus. Evil is no insuperable obstacle to men acquiring the knowledge of spiritual and divine things. But the effect is very different on them and on the good. With Herod the knowledge of the fame of Jesus revives in his mind the recollection of his crime against John; and superstition, which is the natural man's religion, leads him to see in this new power the increased potency of an old and hated, and now dreaded enemy. This is no unfaithful representation of the case of the evil in the other life, where judgment follows crime. When they themselves are risen from the dead, the Word which, because of its testimony against their sins, they had destroyed in themselves, rises from the dead with greater than its former power, as a testimony against them. For the words which the Lord has spoken, and which he speaks in our conscience, though silenced, are not absolutely destroyed, but will rise

against us even out of our own minds in the day of judgment. But, in regard to the regenerate, this circumstance has another aspect. With these, when in temptation, the truth is imprisoned in their own natural minds, among the evils and falses of the selfhood; and when the appearances of truth die, or are put off, the truth itself rises into new life in a higher region of the mind; and then it is no longer John, but Jesus—not the letter, but the spirit of truth. Herod did not keep his conviction of the identity of Jesus with John in his own heart, but expressed it to his servants. His servants signify the thoughts of the natural mind, and his telling them signifies the feelings of a corrupt and guilty will finding utterance in the thoughts of a subser- vient understanding.

3. The evangelist then begins to relate the events which had given rise to this surmise of the guilty tetrarch. *For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.* This aggravated crime of Herod represented the complete adulteration of good and truth in the church. Herod's hostile conduct towards John describes the sinner's determination to silence and repress the testimony of the Word against himself. And in the description of Herod's acts the completeness of this activity is represented, for laying hold of John signifies the opposition to the divine truth, binding him signifies the opposition of the understanding, and putting him in prison signifies the ultimate effect of both in the life.

4. *For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.* John's noble testimony against Herod's aggravated and unnatural crime represented the condemnation of sin, by the Word, as contrary to divine order and to human happiness. When the lusts of the flesh, or other natural concupiscences, tempt us to forbidden because debasing pleasures, we should listen to the voice of God's truth, which ever speaks to us in the words of him who still comes to prepare in our minds the way of the Lord—"It is not lawful for thee to have her."

5. In the disposition of Herod to put John to death, we see the effect of the Divine testimony on the hardened sinner, who desires not only to silence, but to destroy the truth. That there was some faint trace of conscience even in the mind of Herod, appears from the record of the evangelists; but the outward consideration was stronger than the inward dictate. *And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude.* The fear of man is not without its use: it prevents the perpetration of many crimes. Yet the fear of man only restrains; the fear of God constrains. Of this truth Herod is a striking example.

Spiritually, the multitude are the affections and thoughts of the natural mind—those which have been brought under the influence of the principles of religion in early or in simpler states of life. Although the lessons of truth may not have taken root in the heart, they yet check us in our sinful career. *Because they counted him as a prophet.* The Word is still acknowledged as a teacher of truth and righteousness, whose authority is not to be entirely defied.

6. When the soul is progressing in sin, these suggestions of external truth are easily and effectually silenced by the influence of inward passion. The history of Herod's crime against John, naturally and spiritually understood, teaches this. *But when Herod's birthday was kept.* Birth signifies the coming into actual existence in the external of what has been purposed and deliberated in the internal—thus, the bringing an intention into act. Here, indeed, we have not a birth, but the celebration of a birthday; but we celebrate birthdays only because we rejoice in the birth, and our joy includes rejoicing in the continuance and progress of a life which was commenced on the day we keep in its honour. The rejoicing on a birthday denotes also a state of the delight of the affections, which disposes the mind to yield to the ruling tone of the person or principle born. The new state represented by that of Herod on his birthday is pregnant with warning. A crime, from which he had been restrained by the fear of the multitude, he is now led to commit through a promise to an unscrupulous woman. When the restraining influence of fear yields to the promptings of corrupt affection, we have entered on a new stage of sinful indulgence. *The daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.* What is here rendered "before them," literally means in the midst of them; and this spiritually signifies what occupies the centre of the affections and thoughts, and exercises a commanding influence over them. Dancing has been employed in the most profane, as well as in the most sacred rites, acquiring a character from the object it is designed to promote. It signifies the pleasantries and joy of the affections, whether they be good or evil. The daughter of Herodias signifies the affection of evil in the will; and when this puts itself, so to speak, into the most graceful or alluring attitudes and exciting action, its influence on an already yielding intellect may easily be imagined.

7. The effect of her dancing upon Herod is most striking, and reads us a most useful lesson. He is first fascinated, and then blindly abandons himself to the dominion of his enchantress, even binding himself by *an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.* And such is

the progress of evil. The analogy with the spiritual life is easily seen. The principal point here is the promise upon oath. An oath signifies confirmation, either in good or evil, as the case may be. Confirmation belongs to the understanding. Consent is dangerous, but confirmation is fatal. And the understanding may be so influenced as to blindly give up the reins to passion, regardless of consequences. When the understanding says to the will, "Ask what thou wilt, and I will give it thee," we may be sure the result will be sinful and disastrous.

8. *And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.* The affection of evil, which is the daughter, acts under the direction, or from the prompting, of the evil and depraved will, which is the mother. And what should such a will desire of the understanding? To give up to its power that truth which had reprov'd it, to deny and reject the Word itself, which is as a standing condemnation, to deprive it of all authority and rule in matters of life—this is to give the head of John the Baptist. He desired it should be given in a charger. All vessels signify knowledges or scientifics. When truths are received into false scientifics, they themselves become falses, being falsified; so that even the highest and principal truths are turned into the lowest and deadliest of falsities.

9. *And the king was sorry: nevertheless, for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her.* A new step in sin is seldom made without compunction. Nay, some never repeat an old sin without awakening a feeling of remorse; but the sin is repeated nevertheless. The intellect may see an act to be wrong, and yet consent to it, and lend itself to its commission. This weak and sinful compliance arises from the fact that the intellect has already bound itself as if with an oath to the corrupt will. Another consideration that swayed Herod's mind was what the world calls honour, for them that sat at meat with him—those who are joined by the appropriation of a common good or evil. All the affections, therefore, that participated in the prevailing evil bound the mind still more firmly to its sinful promise. When Herod, bound by his oath and his honour, commanded that John's head should be given to her, he acted as those he represented act, from both evil and falsity.

10. *And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.* This great crime, committed against the law of God and man, on one who was more than a prophet, because he had honestly reprov'd sin in the cause of holiness, and in love for the sinner, represented a crime still greater

—the separation of the internal of the Word from its external, and the consequent destruction of both, which is the beheading of him who represented the Word. This separation of the principles from the laws of truth reduces the divine laws to a dead letter, and makes righteousness either lifeless or hypocritical.

11. *And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.* The purpose was the mother's, and, after its accomplishment through various agencies, it returns to her in its present horrid shape—such, one might suppose, as would cause the most obdurate sinner to tremble. Can it be supposed that any one not utterly abandoned could be guilty of such a crime? If under the law of Christ hatred is murder, and hatred of a person is hatred of his principles, there is the possibility of this crime being committed in another form, even by those who profess veneration for that Word which John represented. Practically to deny any of the great principles of the Word is spiritually to do as the wife of Herod did. When an evil, proceeding as an intention from the will, has been carried out into act, and obtains the approval of the will which purposed it, the circle has been completed which makes it completely our own. Evil has returned to its origin, and that which in this world gratifies the love of evil will in the next produce wretchedness and woe. We cannot think of the death of John the Baptist without reflecting on the seeming inscrutableness of Divine Providence. One who was devoted from his mother's womb to be the messenger sent to prepare the way of the promised Saviour, and who went before him in the spirit and power of Elias, we see smitten down by an unprincipled ruler to gratify the personal revenge of a wicked woman. May we not say with David, in his lamentation over Saul, "How are the mighty fallen!" But if we lament, need we be astonished? Was not the fate of John also the fate of Jesus? And, no doubt, there is some analogy between the case of the messenger and that of the Lord whose way he came to prepare. John represented, and Jesus was, the Word. John represented the written Word, Jesus was the Word incarnate. The rejection, like the reception, of the written Word preceded, and always precedes, the rejection of the incarnate Word. John prepared the Lord's way in his life; he prepared his way also in his death. There is some difference, however. John fell a victim to the kingly power; Jesus to the priestly power. John was put to death in Galilee; Jesus in Judea. All these circumstances, representative as they were, point to the fact that the men of the church treat the Lord as they treat his Word. Those who deny the divinity

of the Word deny also the divinity of the Lord. Those who behead John come also to crucify the Son of Man.

12. When Herod had put John to death, *his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.* The disciples of John, taking up his body and burying it, represented the transfer of the church to others, when the former has been utterly perverted ; and also the preservation of the Word, so as that its pure truths shall be capable of restoration in the interval between the end of a former church and the establishment of a new one. The body of John is the letter of the Word itself. Hence, then, we are taught that, while the Word is utterly rejected in the minds of the corrupt members of a former church, it is nevertheless preserved and reinstated among a new body of people, who are willing to be disciples indeed. It has, however, a more particular application. In regard to the disciples of John, it is to be considered that John's imprisonment was to them a trial, and their trial represented a temptation. The death of John, though it represented the extinction of the Word or the Divine truth in the minds of the evil, represented its exaltation in the minds of the good. And the exaltation represented is effected by the putting off of the letter, and the raising up of the spirit of the Word, as it is received and acknowledged in the mind. And whether we speak of putting off the letter of the Word, and raising it up in the spirit, or raising the Lord's truth out of the natural mind into the spiritual, it amounts to the same ; for divine truth in the letter is adapted to our natural apprehension, and in the spirit to our spiritual apprehension ; and its resurrection in us is its elevation into the perception of our spiritual mind. This elevation of the Word brings the mind into more immediate connection with the Lord as the divine good, indicated by John's disciples coming and telling Jesus—this name being expressive of the Lord as to his divine love or goodness.

13. *When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart.* This retirement of Jesus into the solitude of the desert was, we learn from Mark and Luke, because of the multitudes which were "coming and going." Yet why should the Lord himself propose (Mark vi. 31) to go with his disciples into a desert place apart, and rest awhile, when he knew that the multitudes would follow him, and even outgo him ? Does not this teach us that the Lord had another purpose, and that his departure has another meaning ? The Lord sometimes leaves us, that we may follow him. He withdraws into the desert solitudes of our own minds, that we may go with him, there to behold the wonders of his power, and see a table spread for us even in the wil-

derness, that, where all natural and human resources fail, his power and goodness may become more conspicuous in our deliverance and support. This desert place also represents a lower or more external part of the mind ; for it was on the east of the sea of Galilee, external to the land of Palestine itself, though on that side where the two tribes and a half had originally settled. And in descending into a more external part of the mind, his purpose is to bring his regenerating power and operation down into our lower affections and thoughts, and into the words and actions of our lives. It is in the ultimate degree of the mind, also, that his power is most fully manifested. No doubt, also, the Lord's departure was on account of the death of John, to represent that the rejection of his truth deprives the guilty mind of his presence. The Lord, therefore, when he went into a desert place, not only knew, but intended, that the multitude should follow him, as they eagerly did. To follow the Lord is to follow the teachings of his truth, and imitate his example ; to go out of the cities on foot is to live a life of natural obedience from the doctrines of truth.

14. Those who follow the Lord will find the truth of the Divine promise, that if they draw near to him he will draw near to them. *And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.* As these great multitudes represent the numerous affections and thoughts of the natural mind, which have sought to be elevated to a more interior communion and conjunction with the Lord, he whom the activity of evil had caused to retire inwards now comes forth to communicate the blessings desired and so much needed. When he saw the multitude he "was moved with compassion toward them." Jesus, as the Divine Man, cannot be moved with compassion, for he is mercy itself. His compassion is said to be moved when it moves us—when it works in us penitence and humility, a sense of our own inherent destitution, and a sincere desire to be replenished with the blessings of spiritual and eternal life. And here we may point out the reference to the two essential attributes of the Lord's divine nature. For "to come forth" refers to the activity of his love, while "to see" refers to the activity of his wisdom ; and, again, to be "moved with compassion" has reference to the saving operation of his love, while "to heal their sick" has reference to the saving operation of his wisdom.

15. When the Lord had healed their sick, *and when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past ; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.* The disciples did not yet understand, or

did not on the occasion reflect upon, the Lord's infinite resources. But these circumstances were ordered, as they are recorded, to convey a spiritual lesson. The suggestion of the disciples describes the state of the regenerate while they are yet in an obscure perception of the truth, signified by evening, which leads them to think that man must acquire good by an external way, meant by going away into the villages, and by his own power, meant by buying themselves victuals. They are like Israel in the desert,—they turn to Egypt, instead of looking to heaven, for the supply of their wants.

16, 17. *But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart.* The disciples did not perceive the Lord's meaning: their hearts were yet hardened. When the Lord said, *give ye them to eat*, they looked to themselves, and thought of their own small store, without reflecting on the Lord's power and resources, and more especially on what he himself had just commanded them to do. *And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.* The bread and fish signify the spiritual food, consisting of good and truth, which sustains the soul. They here signify the remains of goodness and truth; and the miracle, with all the particulars connected with it, contains a most beautiful description of the way in which these are brought out, and increased, and appropriated, so as to make them the elements of the spiritual body—of the life and character. The disciples are here to be considered as sustaining a twofold representation. On one side they represent the interior affections of the natural mind, where the remains of good and truth are stored up; while the multitude represent the exterior affections, among which the increase of these remains are distributed. The interior natural principle, where remains are stored up and preserved for future use, is more specifically pointed out in John's account of the miracle, and is signified by the "lad," who had the five loaves and two small fishes. On the other hand, the disciples represented the truths proceeding immediately from the Lord, as the Truth itself, and the fountain of all blessing.

18. When the disciples told the Lord of the scanty means they possessed—but five loaves and two fishes—*He said, Bring them hither to me.* This is the first, and an all-important condition of spiritual increase. Stored up during early life, good and truth remain in the mind as the means of commencing and forming the spiritual life in mature years; but they never enter into the life until, in obedience to his command, they are brought to the Lord, or until the things we have learned and imbibed relating to the Lord and to eternal life

are turned to him as their Author, and are acknowledged to be his.

19. When remains, and, by their means, the mind that contains them, are turned to the Lord, and are thus consciously connected with him, he can bring into orderly arrangement the principles of the natural mind, represented by his commanding *the multitude to sit down* (or recline) *on the grass*. Grass signifies the lowest kind of knowledge, and the people sitting on the grass represent the arrangement of truths in knowledges. Another significant act follows. The loaves and fishes that had been brought to the Lord he now *takes*. The Lord's taking the loaves and fishes signifies to adjoin to himself, as the essential Good and Truth, the good and truth of remains in the human mind. And then, *looking up to heaven, he blessed*, to represent the opening of the spiritual mind—the heaven of the inner man, and the descent through it, from the Lord's Divine Love, which is the Father in heaven, of that mercy and peace which bless our acquired good and truth with spiritual life, and give them the power of supplying all our spiritual wants, and satisfying our highest desires. When the Lord had blessed, he *brake* the bread, *and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude*. This breaking of bread is a beautifully significant act, and has descended from the earliest times, when every act had a distinct and understood meaning. In those times bread was broken, when given by one to another, symbolically to express the imparting of one's own good to another; or when one piece was broken among many, it expressed the communion of good; and in both cases it was given and received as a token of brotherly love and conjunction. And such was the meaning and the purpose of the breaking of bread in the early Christian church. When, therefore, our Lord brake the bread, he symbolically expressed his love for his people; while, by distributing the broken bread among the multitude, he expressed his desire that they should be conjoined to him, and also to each other, by their reception from him, and their partaking with each other, of a common good—the good of love to him and to one another. The Lord gave the loaves to the disciples to distribute to the multitude, to represent that his good is communicated through heaven and the church, by which it is accommodated to the different states of human reception, and, more abstractly considered, that his gifts descend by distinct degrees from himself to his creatures. In the particulars recorded in these two verses we may observe a circle, or an ascending and descending series, of operations. The loaves are brought by the disciples to the Lord. By him they are, as it were,

raised from earth to heaven, whence they descend with the blessing of eternal love, to be given, thus enriched, to feed the hungering souls of those who occupy the sphere from whence they came.

20, 21. We now come to that part of the transaction which places it, in the list of miracles, as one of the greatest. *And they did all eat, and were filled.* Here was a mighty work. Ten thousand fed to fullness by a provision sufficient for a few persons! This miracle is no doubt of the same character as that of the manna, that for forty years daily fed the ten thousands of Israel in the desert. Nor is the miracle very difficult to explain. When we know that creation is an out-birth from God, that the order of creation is from spirit to matter, and that matter is but the natural form and covering of what is spiritual, we can see that material forms may at any time be instantaneously produced by an extraordinary influx of Divine Truth from the Lord through the spiritual into the natural world. We need not, however, suppose a creation of new matter, or of something out of nothing; for the spiritual principle descending into the sphere of nature clothes itself with the substances already existing, concreting that which was previously abstract or diffused. This implies, of course, a creation, and therefore a divine power; and this our Lord possessed. What act could be more appropriate for the Lord Jesus Christ to do than to multiply the loaves and fishes? "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John i. 3). It is, however, with the spiritual meaning of the miracle that we have mainly to do. Spiritually regarded, it tells us of a work of divine goodness and wisdom not less wonderful, and still more interesting to us, than the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. It tells us that the remains of good and truth, small though they be, and inadequate, as the acquisitions of youth, to supply the spiritual wants of the full-grown man, are yet, when called forth into use, and brought under the influence of him by whose providence they were implanted, capable of immense and indefinite increase; so as to be not only sufficient to supply the immediate demands of the soul, however great, but to leave a remnant greater than that from which the supply was produced. For *they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.* The twelve baskets of fragments that remained signify fulness of instruction and appropriation. The quantity left indicates the abundance of the supply. Naturally, the abundance of the fragments of a feast is not of necessity a true index of the quantity consumed. Spiritually, however, the more that is taken the more there is left. The more we appropriate, the more

fragments remain to be gathered up into the receptacles of the mind, that nothing that God has blessed and multiplied may be lost, but that all remains may be stored up in the affections of the will, of which the baskets are the types. Baskets denote things of the will, because they are vessels to contain meats, and because meats signify celestial and spiritual goods, and these are of the will. It is worthy of remark, that the multiplication of the loaves and fishes was not effected by a single act, so as to produce the necessary quantity at once, before the food was distributed, but was increased in the eating, to teach us the momentous truth, that spiritual good is multiplied in the using. It is like the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal: one continued to flow while there was a vessel to receive it; the other never failed while there was a use that required it. The extent of the demand but increases the supply, for the source is infinite. Of the few loaves and fishes, *they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.* These signify all who are of the church in truths from good: men, those who are in truth; women and children, those who are in good.

22. After performing this miracle, *straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.* The circumstance which comes now to be considered is of a singularly interesting character. It manifests the Lord's divinity in a most striking manner, and teaches us a lesson of humility that it is most important for us to learn. We need not dwell on the particulars that merely resemble those that have already been explained. The leading features of the narrative are the Lord's walking on the sea and Peter's unsuccessful attempt to imitate his Master's example. The scene presented before us in this and the next verse is entirely different from that which we have just contemplated. Here we have the Lord alone upon a mountain, the disciples on the sea, and the multitude sent away to their own homes. This separation between those who were so near to each other is attended with results which are descriptive of the Christian's experience in corresponding circumstances. Changes of state like the present, though painful, are beneficial. They are under the directing hand of Providence. And so the Lord constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and go before him unto the other side. They were now passing over into Canaan, and were therefore progressing from a less to a more perfect state.

23. *And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there*

alone. The Lord's sending the multitude away, as well as the disciples, while he himself went up into a mountain apart to pray, presents to our minds, if they are in any degree enlightened by his truth, a scene of solemn grandeur, which we may see shadowed in our own active duty and experience in corresponding circumstances, when all lower thoughts and feelings are dismissed, and we ascend into the holy mountain, to seek communion with God in contemplation and prayer. The Lord's desire for this communion was inconceivably ardent; his prayers were inconceivably fervent; the union he sought with God was inconceivably intimate. When we reflect that the Divinity with whom he sought to be united was the Divinity that dwelt within him, how much more intense must all his human feelings have been than any that mere man ever experienced! Apart from its connection with the other particulars of the history, the scene here presented to our view is sublime and impressive. Jesus in the mountain, alone all night, and in prayer! As the Lord was truly man as well as truly God, the feelings that prompted him to withdraw from the world, and spend a night in solitude and prayer, were real human feelings; and his doing so is instructive to us as human creatures, who are to learn from his example. It teaches us that, however useful and innocent our life may be, we yet require occasionally to raise our minds above the cares and temporalities of the world, that we may be alone with God, and enter into solemn communion with him. These were among the means by which the humanity of the Lord progressed towards that perfect union with his Divinity, which is the origin and the pattern of the union of the external with the internal in ourselves, and our consequent conjunction with him; and a similar course is necessary for us, who have a corresponding work to perform. Nor is this lesson from the circumstance at all inconsistent with, or even separate from, the representative character of our Lord's actions. The representative does not lessen, but greatly exalts the actual. While we understand that all these events are transacted spiritually in the human mind during regeneration, we see that if the Lord is really in our understandings and hearts as the Truth and the Life, his Spirit will constrain us to do as he has done, while passing through the very states which he underwent. Not that we are to imitate the Lord with a presumptuous literality, but to follow at that distance which our finite nature and our feeble powers enable us to do. To have these events realized in our experience is the object of the spiritual sense which they contain. To have the Lord's saving truth exalted in our hearts—to have it there alone as our only ruling prin-

ciple—alone from worldly, but not from that heavenly love which is its true life, and to which its aspirations ascend,—this is to realize in our experience the scene presented to our minds in the Lord's going up into the mountain. There may, indeed, be obscurity in this state, for all prayer implies a desire for comfort and illumination; and in some cases it is the evening, to be followed by the night, through which we long for the morning.

24. But while the Lord was on the mountain in solitude and prayer, his disciples were in the ship; and *the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.* We have here a representative description of the lower region of the human mind, as subjected to the trial of temptation, when agitated by conflicting passions—when the wind is contrary, and the sea is tossed with waves and sometimes even raised into a storm that threatens to shatter our frail bark, or swallow it up with every living affection it contains. Temptation is a conflict between good and evil, thus between the good affections and evil passions excited into action by an influx from the kingdom of darkness, which, like the wind that raised the waves in the sea of Galilee, is contrary to our progress towards the holy land.

25. *And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.* The disciples had spent the night in tribulation, but the dawning of the day brings them relief. The Lord descends from the mountain, and comes to them walking on the sea. We may perceive in this beautiful and evidently symbolical incident a historical representation of a matter of Christian experience. The Christian disciple has sometimes the experience of a state at once of outward tribulation and inward peace. The Lord, with his divine truth, may be in the inward man, raising the affections and thoughts to heaven, while the spirits of darkness may be exciting the lusts and passions of the natural mind, and producing a feeling of apprehension almost amounting to despair. And this sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. This sense of danger arising from tribulation, and the tribulation itself, are the result of the difference and separation, or want of correspondence and conjunction, between the internal and external man, or the natural and the spiritual mind. But these tribulations are permitted for the purpose of producing the desired correspondence as the means of conjunction. It is when the tribulation has so far produced this effect that the morning dawns, and the Lord descends from the mountain of the inner man, walking upon the very element whose tempestuous heavings had caused the

danger and alarm, to give the troubled soul a sense of security and promise of deliverance. And the correspondence and connection between the spiritual and the natural is expressed by the fourth watch—a number which, like two, signifies conjunction.

26. *And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit: and they cried out for fear.* The sphere of the Lord's immediate presence sometimes troubles the mind and inspires fear. The feelings of the disciples arose, however, partly at least, from misapprehension. They saw, but perceived not. They saw the form, but did not perceive that it was the Lord who had come to rescue them from their perilous situation. They supposed it to be a spirit or apparition. In spiritual danger arising from temptation, when the mind is in the dim twilight of intellectual perception, the truth is seen, but not understood; and not only not understood, but misunderstood, and seen rather as a phantom to terrify, than a real being to comfort. Sometimes, too, conscience invests an object with a shape and character which are the coinage of its own apprehensions, the Nemesis of its own state. The disciples were in such extreme fear that they cried out; and, as the utterance of an oppressive feeling brings relief, so, when spiritual fear finds expression, the mind is prepared for deliverance. The extreme or ultimate of any state of spiritual trial opens the way to a state of tranquillity. But while considering this circumstance in its spiritual sense, we must not pass it over as a literal fact.

27. *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.* By a word, the deepest fear was turned at once into the highest joy. So do the Scriptures describe, as well as represent, the transition from one extreme to the other in the experience of the righteous. "Light shall arise in the darkness, your sorrow shall be turned into joy," are among the promises to those who are plunged by spiritual tribulation into darkness and anguish of spirit. And this is but the reaping of a harvest which they have themselves prepared; for "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." The Lord's night upon the mountain prepared for the deliverance he was now about to afford his suffering and terrified disciples; for it is when the truth has been exalted in the inner man, and more fully united with its own good, that it can descend into the outer man, and first walk in safety and majesty upon its turbulent waters, and then hush the wind into silence, and the waves into profound repose. How assuring and comforting in the midst of the storm must be the voice of one who has so often helped

us hitherto, our confidence in whom has grown out of our experience! And even when the eye, as the emblem of the intellect, may be deceived, as was Mary Magdalene's, yet the ear no sooner hears the familiar voice than recognition, with all its joy, ensues. "It is I: be not afraid," is sufficient to cheer the heart in its deepest despondency, as must have been the experience of the disciples.

28. *And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.* Among the disciples there was one who, unlike the rest, was not satisfied with being restored to confidence from a state of alarm, and willing to wait till the Lord should come to them into the ship, but whose eagerness to meet his Divine Master prompted him to ask to be invited to come to him on the water. Peter represented faith, or that reception of the truth which makes the Lord the object of faith. When that disciple said, "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water," he wished to do naturally what we, through faith, desire to do spiritually in corresponding circumstances. When the truth is revealed to us through the affection of truth, our intellectual zeal is excited to attempt what we are not always able, because not prepared, to perform—to come to the Lord on the water—without reflecting sufficiently whether our faith is strong enough to support us on its troubled waves, and enable us to make our way to the Lord through the angry element that he, in his strength, is able to tread upon.

29, 30. Yet the Lord, in his providence, sometimes permits us to try our strength, that we may discover our weakness. Jesus indulged Peter's impetuous temper by inviting him to *Come*. Nor was there anything inconsistent with his love and truth in answering Peter according to the disciple's love and faith. The Lord desires that all should come unto him, and the attempt on our part is often the only effectual means of teaching us the causes of our failure and the conditions of success. Peter's attempt to walk upon the sea has left on record a lesson that will teach humility wherever the gospel is preached. *When Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!* How strikingly does this represent a feature in our Christian conduct and experience! Peter in the ship was bold and confident; but when he came down from the ship, and planted his footsteps on the angry sea, he became timid and doubting, and then he began to sink. While we are in doctrine, and think and speak from it, we have great faith in ourselves, which assumes to us the appear-

ance of faith in the Lord, and we suppose that in the strength of that faith we are able to do anything. But when we come down out of doctrine, and enter on the labours, and face the difficulties and trials of life, we soon find that doctrinal faith and practical faith are two different things. This untried, and so far merely intellectual faith, may endure for awhile, as Peter's did, for its first impulse carries us forward and upholds us for a time; but when we see the wind boisterous, the thoughts excited into turbulent commotion by the influence of the kingdom of darkness, fear seizes the mind, and we begin to fail. This experience of our weakness is the lesson the Lord intends to teach, by permitting us to make the trial. And it has the good effect of leading us to feel our need of the Saviour, and to call upon him to save us. When we can be brought by experience to such a sense of our feebleness as to cry out from the depth of broken and contrite hearts, "Lord, save me!" we have arrived at a state of mind far nearer to the kingdom of God than when we boldly, in self-confidence, confronted the danger.

31. We therefore find that when Peter cried out for the Lord to save him, *immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him.* That hand, able to save to the uttermost, is ever ready to be stretched out to take hold of the perishing sinner, or the self-confident disciple, when the Lord's power is sincerely and humbly invoked. The divine power has been brought savingly near to us by the Lord's assuming our nature; but before his power can be manifested and magnified in our salvation, it must have an humbled mind and contrite heart to act upon. The Lord's power is always with us, but it can only be manifested in our weakness. It is through our sense of the need of his support that he stretches out his hand; and through our desire to be saved that he takes hold of us. When the Lord had saved Peter, he administered the loving and gentle reproof, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* The Lord's words implicitly teach that, if Peter's faith had been sufficiently strong, he might have walked upon the sea. The Lord's reproof should remind us that failure in any attempt which has his sanction originates in want of faith, and in the doubts that arise in our hearts.

32. *When they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.* In this second time of calming the storm we see another instance of the Lord's power over the elements of the outer world, and have another assurance of his power over those of the inner also, whose tribulation he can still, if we but admit him into our hearts through love, and into our minds through faith. But the wind ceased when Jesus and

Peter came into the ship. When the Lord enters through faith into doctrine, or into our knowledge of his truth, the contrary influence of falsity ceases, and prosperity attends us in our religious life.

33. The miracle of making the wind cease had the happy effect of confirming the Lord's disciples in the belief in his divinity. *They that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.* Whatever this worship and acknowledgment included in the minds of the disciples at the time, we are instructed by the divine record that deliverance by the Lord produces in the mind a conviction of his being the true Object of worship, and leads to the profound worship of him as such. But when can we, as disciples, say, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God"? When the power of his Divine humanity has been displayed in working the truly divine miracle of restoring tranquillity to the mind, which the prince of the power of the air has been able seriously to disturb. But this title of the Son of God is also expressive of the principle of Divine Good in the Lord's humanity; so that he is the Son of God to us experimentally, when the good of his love has been received in our will, and has thus become the ruling principle of our life. And we worship him as the Son of God, when our worship is not only directed to him as love and goodness, but when it springs from his love and goodness in our hearts. We can only worship the Lord, as he is in himself, from what he is in us—only as far as his love is in us can we worship him as Love.

34-36. *And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garments: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.* No sooner did the ship reach the western shore of the lake than the Lord's work of mercy was renewed, in healing the multitudes of sick that were eagerly brought to him from all parts of the surrounding country. The scene of these cures is called the land of Gennesaret. The sea of Galilee, or of Tiberias, was named also the lake of Gennesareth. Gennesareth was in lower Galilee, and in it was Capernaum, the spot to which, according to John (vi. 17, 24, 59), Jesus and his disciples came. As lower or southern Galilee signifies the internal of the external man (ch. ii. 22), Gennesareth must signify a division of this region of the mind, the particular of which is meant by Capernaum. Gennesareth represents the natural affection of truth, but of truth connected with good, because called the *land* of Gennesareth, which may therefore be considered as representing the good

of natural truth. This receives confirmation from Gennesareth, the ancient Chinnereth, having been part of the lot that fell to the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xix. 35), which tribe represented the quality of temptation by which man overcomes, and by which, therefore, the internal is united to the external man. This multitude of particular miracles are such as have been already explained, with the virtue derived from the Lord through touching the hem of his garment. The cure of the diseased represented the removal of evils and errors, by which our faculties are restored to a healthy state, and enriched with goodness and truth; and touching the hem of the Lord's garment signifies taking hold of him through the lowest truths of his Word. Virtue never fails to come forth thence to the humble and contrite heart: "as many as touched him were made whole." This eagerness of the people of Gennesaret, and of all the country round, to collect all that were diseased, arose, no doubt, from the effect of his miracle of feeding the multitude; and shows the result of the inward reception of the Lord's goodness and truth, in creating a desire to have outward evils removed, and producing that faith in the Lord the Saviour which is necessary to his working a cure.

CHAPTER XV.

1. This chapter commences with recording one of those transitions, from the faith of the simple to the unbelief of the learned, which are of frequent occurrence in the gospels. *Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees*,—those, spiritually, who are principled in falsities and evils. *These were of Jerusalem*, to indicate that they represent such as are in the interior doctrines of the church, which Jerusalem represented. Yet those who are in the doctrine of the church can oppose the truth, as these rulers of the Jewish church opposed themselves to the Lord.

2. They assailed him in this instance through his followers. *Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.* It is surprising how much importance men of cultivated understanding can attach to outward forms and ceremonies, which are but the shadow, of which religion is the substance, and are nothing without it. The Jews had, indeed, ceremonies prescribed to them by their law, and these they were bound to observe. But the ceremony that formed the subject of the present

question was a "tradition of the elders." These traditions are like parasites, that live upon the body that produces them. Like things of the imagination, that are treasured up in the memory without any view to use, they are rather hindrances than aids to vital religion. This washing of the hands was but a sign of that kind of purification which the natural man practises—the washing of the hands instead of the heart. Washing the hands was, indeed, a testification of innocence; but when it was practised as a virtue in itself, the neglect of which was a sin, it then became the emblem of an outward assumption of purity to which there is no corresponding condition of the heart. The demand of the Lord is, "Wash thy heart from wickedness;" the command of the elders is, "Wash thy hands as an appearance of innocency."

3-6. The arbitrary and hypocritical rites of the Pharisees were set aside by the Lord, the object of whose teaching was to induce his disciples to cleanse the inside, that the outside may be clean also. When, therefore, the Jewish authorities asked him why his disciples transgressed this mere ceremonial rite, he demanded of them, *Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.* It may be useful to understand what this transgression consisted in. The Divine law required children to honour their parents; but the Jewish authorities had placed the claims of the church above the claims of parents. Anything devoted to the church was sacred, and could not be diverted to any other purpose. By this law unnatural children were able to refuse the claims of their parents for aid, on the plea that anything by which they might be profited by them was already corban—that is, a gift, devoted, though not yet given, to the service of religion. Thus the priesthood made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition. But what is the spiritual evil to which this corresponds? The father and mother whom God commanded children to honour are, spiritually, the Lord and the church. In an abstract sense they are the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom. To honour these is to reverence and serve them; and we reverence and serve them when we love God and keep his commandments. But when we exalt our own natural love and wisdom above those of

God, and devote that to the service of man, or to our own service, which we ought to devote to the service of God, we make the Divine commandment of none effect. And we do more if we evade the requirement of God's law under the pretence or in the name of religion. We then profane what is holy ; for we make religion itself an apology for sin.

7-9. The Lord, therefore, concludes his address to the Pharisees by calling them *hypocrites*; for such conduct is hypocrisy, which is mocking God with outward service, while the heart is devoted to self and the world. The Lord, therefore, proceeds to expose such heartless wickedness. *Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips ; but their heart is far from me.* The mouth and the lips signify the thought, which they are instruments for expressing, and the heart is the will. When the will or love is far from God, and devoted to what is opposite to him, as the Supreme Love and Wisdom, what is the service of the lips, proceeding from the thought, but emptiness and profanity? Worship in such a state is vain. For what is Divine worship but vanity, when the doctrines we teach, the principles that rule us, are the commandments of men—the dictates of our own natural lusts and worldly prudence?

10-13. Turning to and calling the multitude, the Lord summed up the discourse he had delivered to the Pharisees in a parabolic statement of the doctrine he had been teaching. *Hear, and understand. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.* When the Lord had delivered this parable, the disciples came to him and said, *Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.* The Lord's Father in heaven is the Lord himself as to his divine love or goodness ; and no good in the human mind but that derived from the Divine Good can remain, but must, in the judgment, be rooted up. "There is none good but one, that is God." From the one Good all real good is derived, as a stream from its fountain, as a branch from its parent stem : and the stream must dry up, and the branch must wither, that has not its source or its root in the Divine Love.

14. Yet where hypocrisy exists there is no ground to work upon, with the hope of producing reformation, especially when it is considered that evil is united to and defended by what is false. Our Lord therefore said, *Let them alone* : and added, as a reason, *they be*

blind leaders of the blind. Their blindness was not that of involuntary ignorance, but of voluntary error, or rather deliberate falsification of the truth. A blind understanding led a blind will, and both fell into the pit of infernal falsehood, as the prelude to the pit of everlasting perdition. This is Pharisaic blindness—blindness of understanding and blindness of heart. The understanding is the eye of the mind, and was given as a guide to the will. The light of the body is the eye; but if the eye be not single, and if the light that is in the intellect be darkness, how great is that darkness!

15-16. *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.* That to which the apostle referred was the parable the Lord had delivered to the multitude in relation to the Pharisees, and which we have passed over, to consider it as our Lord explained it. When the Lord addressed the parable to the people, he prefaced it by saying, as he so often did, "Hear and understand;" and he now asks the disciples, on whose behalf Peter spoke, *Are ye also yet without understanding?* And this Divine inquiry is intended, like all that the Lord addresses to his disciples, to awaken in them reflection and self-examination, for the purpose of preparing them understandingly to receive the knowledge they desire to obtain, and dispose them to receive the truth at the Lord's mouth.

17-18. *Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.* The lesson which our Lord here teaches is most instructive. The mouth signifies the thought or the thinking faculty, and the heart signifies the will. That which entereth in at the mouth is everything that enters into the thought from the world; but that which proceeds out of the mouth from the heart is that which the thought expresses from the will. How is it that what enters in at the mouth does not defile, and that what comes forth from the mouth does? That which enters into the thought, but is not permitted to enter into the will, but is thrust out or rejected as unclean, does not defile the man; only that which is freely chosen, and so admitted into the will, and is thence brought forth into the life, defileth a man. This is a truth of very great importance, because of great practical value. It serves as a guide to determine what is sinful and what is not sinful in the operations of the mind. We have two faculties, a will and an understanding; and nothing is imputed to us, because nothing becomes our own, till it has obtained the joint consent of both. The understanding is given us to examine and judge whether

anything that presents itself from without, or even anything that rises as an impulse from within, is good or evil, and to tell us whether, therefore, we should accept or reject it. The subject which our Lord speaks of is the admission or rejection of evil. Now, there are many evil suggestions and impure images that obtrude themselves into the thought from the world, both directly and indirectly—both from what we read, and hear, and see, and from what is already in the memory, having entered through the senses. We cannot altogether prevent these entering, nor would it be well if we could, for the mind is thereby exercised, and may be perfected. Their entering the thought does not defile us. It gives us the opportunity of discovering their character, of ascertaining whether we like or dislike them, of knowing ourselves, and exercising self-denial, if we are disposed to do so. If we condemn the evils that thus obtrude themselves into our thought, and resist any rising desire they may provoke, that which entered “in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught”—is rejected as unclean, and so separated from the life. The evils which are thus resisted and cast out never enter into the heart, and therefore never come forth out of the mouth, and therefore do not defile the man. They rather tend to purify him; for an evil condemned is a good justified, and an evil refused is a good accepted. This is plainly taught in Mark vii. 14, where it is added that this going ‘out into the draught purges all meats; which evidently means that good of every kind is purified by this exercise of the mind. The understanding is an alembic in which the affections are purified; for, when subjected to the operation of the thoughts, the evil is detected, and may thus be separated from the good to which it adheres, and which it defiles. But, on the other hand, if we admit evil into the will, and bring it forth into the life, this is, indeed, to defile ourselves. In the heart there are inherent tendencies to evil of all kinds. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Such is the testimony of him who made man, and knows what is in man. By nature, man is nothing but evil; and if he remains natural, his heart is in the disposition to bring forth those hereditary evils into act. Yet hereditary tendencies to evil are not condemnatory. Inherited evil is involuntary, as in the case of infants and little children, who know not the nature of evil as sin. Before evil can become sin it must have the sanction of the understanding: it must be known to be evil, and to be sin against God. Only the evil that comes forth from the heart through the understanding or the thought is sin in the sight of God. Our Lord, therefore, says those things that proceed out of the mouth

come forth from the heart. The mouth is the thought, and the things that proceed out of the thought are the things that defile the man. It is not their being *in* the heart, nor even their coming *out* of the heart, that defiles the man ; but their coming into act out of the heart, with the consent of the understanding, that defiles the man. It is their coming out of the mouth which gives evils their sinful character.

19. *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts (or reasonings), murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* The seven general classes of evils here mentioned by the Lord all merit the most profound consideration, especially on account of their connection with each other in their internal sense and signification ; for "evil reasonings," which is the first class, denote a perverted state of the will and understanding, through self-love and the love of the world ; hence come, secondly, "murders," or the destruction of charity ; thirdly, "adulteries," or the perversion of good ; fourthly, "fornication," or the perversion of truth ; fifthly, "thefts," or the claiming to self what belongs to the Lord ; sixthly, "false witnessings," or the calling good evil, and evil good ; seventhly, "blasphemies," or the total rejection of what is divine. What a catalogue of evils is here ! These evils exist in the world, and therefore must come forth from the heart, which is their only fountain. And what a corrupt fountain must that be which spontaneously produces them ! Yet the sin does not consist in their being there, but in their being allowed to come forth into act.

20. *These are the things which defile a man.* Whether we consider them as natural or spiritual, they are such sins as pollute the soul ; and it may be well to observe that the natural sin is not overlooked or under-rated by attending to the spiritual evil. Indeed, the natural sin is grounded in the spiritual evil, the spiritual being the cause in which the natural originates ; for the spiritual sense of the Word, properly considered, contains the knowledge of causes, as the literal sense contains the knowledge of effects. The spiritual sense of this series of evils which the Lord enumerates exhibits the evils in their real character. It not only shows that every sin originates in the spirit, but it points out the particular spiritual evil in which every particular sin has its origin ; and it teaches us further, that the only effectual way to prevent natural sin is to resist the spiritual evil. If they are not rooted out by being resisted from spiritual principle, but are only restrained by worldly considerations, they remain and defile the man—that is, the inner man, which is the real man ; and when he casts off his outer covering, and appears in the eternal world, all

his spiritual impurity will be disclosed. These truly are the things that defile a man, *but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.* "O Jerusalem! wash thine *heart* from wickedness."

21. *Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.* Tyre and Sidon represented the interior and exterior knowledge of spiritual things, or of things good and true. The description of Tyre in Ezekiel xxviii. answers to its representative character. "With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures. . . . Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering." But as Tyre and Sidon were situated on the borders of Philistia, and were near the sea, they signify knowledges of a relatively external kind. More especially was this the case at the time of the gospel history, for Hiram, with his Sidonians, who had hewed wood for the temple, and his Tyrians, who had wrought in brass for it, had been long dead, and the plains were now inhabited by ordinary Gentiles.

22. *Behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts (or borders), and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David.* This woman was one of these Gentiles; she was not, however, ignorant of the Lord being the promised Messiah, and was therefore actually in possession of the knowledge which Tyre and Sidon represented. She entreated the Lord to have mercy on her, and this she sought for the sake of her daughter, who was *grievously vexed with a devil.* Her daughter, like the daughters of Canaan mentioned in Genesis xxviii. 8, signify an affection for truth, but from a ground not genuine. By this we mean an affection sincere but unenlightened—the affection of a well-disposed but uninstructed mind. She comes to Jesus, and appeals to him as the son of David, a name which is expressive of his divine truth, and entreats him to show mercy to her daughter, which, spiritually, is to ask that the Divine truth may enter into the human love of truth and goodness, and deliver it from the evil whose presence and power it laments. But the peculiar and interesting part of this miracle is the apparent inattention of the Lord to this loving mother's prayer, and his apparent reluctance to extend his beneficent aid to the poor sufferer. No one who reads this relation with any reverence for the Lord and his Word, can for a moment doubt that there was a purpose—a wise and merciful purpose—in his manner of acting towards the Canaanitish woman; and those who believe in the spirituality of his Word, know that the record contains some hidden spiritual meaning. His seeming

inattention to the woman's prayer was no doubt to increase her fervency and her faith. But in the spiritual sense, her being a Gentile furnishes a key to the meaning of the Lord's demeanour towards her, so unusual, and so unlike himself. There is one other instance like it in the New Testament, which serves to account for and explain it. When the Lord was asked by Pilate "What is truth?" he gave him no answer. It has been said that Pilate did not wait for an answer—a human inference for which there is no good ground. The reason the Lord did not answer was, that Pilate was a Gentile, and was not in a state to receive a direct answer to his own question. Rather, he represented the Gentiles who have a desire for truth, but have no immediate divine revelation, and cannot therefore be answered without preparation, even by the Word itself. One purpose of what the Lord did when on earth was also to teach his church and people, in all future ages, how their states retard or accelerate the manifestation *in* them of the love which he ever and infinitely has for them. It is our state that hinders, not his will that holds back, any good thing that we ask or need.

23. When the woman cried to him for mercy, *he answered her not a word.* How strange soever this may seem, it is plain the Lord intended it only as a trial. He himself knew what he would do. But he also acted in this manner to represent that there are states in which prayers return into our own bosom, and the Divine oracles give out no sound; when some evil or imperfection in our mind prevents, for the time, that communion with the Lord which gives the heart a sense of his love, and the understanding a perception of his truth, which conveys the assurance that he is indeed our deliverer from the power of the devil. If our prayer proceedeth not out of feigned lips, but expresses the real desire of the heart, "importunity" has the promise of ultimate success. To our earnest prayer the Lord may answer us not a word, and yet our redemption may be nigh. When the agonized mother continued to plead with the Lord for her daughter, *his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.* The disciples now add their prayers to the petition of the woman; for they wished their Master to do as he was wont—to send the supplicant away with the assurance of a cure. The disciples representing divine truths as revealed in the Word, their beseeching Jesus on the woman's behalf is expressive of the mind's looking to the Lord through the truths of the Word, which have been received and acknowledged. This, therefore; is a step in the progress of the regenerate life.

24. Still, this appeal does not succeed. The mind, though receptive of the truths represented by the disciples, is not yet prepared to receive the Supreme Truth, which the Lord himself is. So he answers, *I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* The lost sheep of the house of Israel are the spiritual affections of charity which have departed from the fold of the shepherd, or from under the guidance of heavenly truth, which alone can lead them in the way to heaven, which is their true sheep-fold. And to restore these—which was to seek and to save that which was lost—was the object for which the Lord was sent into the world; for divine love sends divine truth to redeem and save. But this affection was in the mind of the supplicant herself, and it was to awaken and draw this affection into connection with himself that the Lord thus addressed her; for in every mind there are some remains of these spiritual affections, and through them the Lord enters the willing mind.

25. When the Lord had uttered these words, which, though they do not express a positive denial, give but little ground for hope, *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.* Utterance, though not encouraging, gives more hope than silence. And, indeed, the Lord speaking spiritually describes the voice of truth speaking in the heart. And does not this voice sometimes tell us, in our anguish of spirit, that we are not included in the number of those whom the Lord came to seek and save? But this should not tempt us to utterly despair. To doubt the Lord's mercy may arise from a sense of our own unworthiness; to disbelieve it arises from a denial of the divine perfection. Such doubts, when they arise in the minds of the penitent, only stimulate them to more earnest and persistent prayer, with the persevering use of all other means. The woman, who had followed the Lord, now comes before him and worships him, entreating his help. Thus his seeming refusal to cure her daughter only increased the depth of her humiliation and the earnestness of her prayer.

26. Still, these deep movings of the spirit within her do not bring her the desired relief. *He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* Literally, this sounds somewhat harsh in our ears; yet we know how much tenderness there may and must have been in the tone in which it was uttered. Nor does the language itself seem to have been regarded as offensive by her to whom it was addressed. Times and usages give a peculiar sense to such expressions. There is, however, a spiritual ground for its being employed. Those out of the church were called dogs, because dogs correspond to those who are natural, and even sensual, as sheep

do to those who are spiritual. Expressing himself in the sacred language of correspondence, the Lord applied this name to the Gentile woman without any purpose of reproach, much less of contempt. "The children's bread" is the good of innocence such as it is in those who are spiritual; and this cannot be given to those who are only in the good of innocence such as it is in those who are yet natural.

27. But the woman showed, by her willingness to accept the epithet which Jesus had applied to her, that she possessed true humility, and that she acknowledged the truth of his declaration. She therefore said, *Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.* To be content with the crumbs is to be content with the least of the divine mercies—the smallest measure and lowest degree of the good which the Lord bestows; for the bread on the table signifies spiritual good, but the crumbs that fall from the table signify natural good, or good in the natural mind from a spiritual origin; the crumbs falling from the table, and being eaten under it, expressing the idea of good derived from the internal and appropriated in the external. This was the good, therefore, which was adapted to the woman's state, and that which she was content to receive; and so it brought her to a state capable of receiving what she had so perseveringly and trustingly sought.

28. When, therefore, she had made this speech, which bespoke as much wisdom as humility, *Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Her faith was great, because grounded in humility and love, and confirmed by trial and perseverance; and through that faith *her daughter was made whole from that very hour.* That very state which brought her mind into conformity with her Saviour's will was that in which her daughter was delivered, and restored to soundness of mind and health of body.

29. *And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee.* From those in the external knowledges of good and truth, he turns or accommodates himself to those who are in a more interior state. *And went up into a mountain, and sat down there*—the symbol of love—that from the depth and ardency of his love he may dispense the blessings of his goodness, as from the mount he delivered, in his memorable sermon, the lessons of his wisdom.

30. *And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them.* Here, again, these maladies represent the different kinds of spiritual infirmity with which the souls of

men are afflicted ; the lame, those in whom good and truth are disjoined ; the blind, those whose understandings are in ignorance of the truth, or in error ; the dumb, those who are not in the acknowledgment of truth ; and the maimed, those whose faculties and powers are impaired.

31. The Lord cured the numbers of diseased and afflicted, *insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see : and they glorified the God of Israel.* The wonder excited in the multitude implies the admiration of the affections, arising from the experience of the Lord's healing and restoring power, and the exaltation in the heart, of the Lord in his humanity as the origin of these blessings.

32-38. When Jesus had performed these beneficent cures, he turned to the multitude, for the purpose of feeding them. So, when the Lord removes our evils, he communicates his goodness. This miracle resembles that recorded in the previous chapter, and does not require to be explained, further than it contains points of difference. It seems less wonderful than the other, since the number of people was smaller, and the number of loaves was greater. Spiritually, this difference is very significant, and shows at once a reason for this miracle, which some critics are disposed to identify with the other, and the important relation it bears to the first. In the other miraculous feeding of the multitude there were five loaves and five thousand men ; here there are seven loaves and four thousand men. The fragments that remained also, though naturally less, are spiritually more. Twelve baskets were gathered up on the former occasion, and seven on this. Now, five signifies remains, and a few ; but seven signifies what is holy, and at the same time ample, complete ; while the number four, like two, signifies conjunction—the conjunction, that is, of the will and the understanding, and of goodness and truth. Seven is a holier, if not a more complete number than twelve, and has more relation to a state of good, like the Sabbath, from which its holy signification is derived. The second describes, therefore, a more advanced state than the other, and so renders this more complete as the representation of such a state. It is mentioned by the Lord that the multitude had now been with him three days, and had had nothing to eat—three days describing an entire state of truth ; that is, the multitude had been led by the Lord through a circle of intellectual instruction and self-denial, meant by their fasting or having nothing to eat, and now they were brought to a state of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and were about to be filled with good in union with truth.

39. When the divine Saviour had *sent away the multitude*, thus fed with the bread of heaven, he *took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala*. This place is famous as the town of that Mary who has become the type, if not the pattern, of all that is most loving and devoted to the Lord. Yet, in reference to the people generally of the place, it has not so exalted a signification, or, rather, the principle it represented is lower in degree than when the name is coupled with that of Mary. Magdala seems to signify a principle of natural good. Mary, who represented celestial good, when called, as she always is, Mary Magdalene, represents celestial good in natural good, or the union of the highest and lowest good, which forms the most perfect state and character. When the Lord went by ship to Magdala, he performed a natural journey, which represented a spiritual progression, by the doctrine of truth, to natural or external good—a progression in the mind which brings his divine truth, and his divine presence and influence, down, by means of knowledge, into the outward life.

CHAPTER XVI.

1. Again we find the adversaries of Jesus present, and at their daringly evil work of tempting him. And if we look within our own hearts, and into our own experience, shall we not find too many of these subtle foes of the Lord's love and truth? *The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven*. We have already considered a similar instance of this (xii. 38). It was there shown that a sign is some wonder that acts directly upon the understanding, whereas a miracle is a wonder that acts directly upon the will; and that Jesus refused a sign, because it is contrary to divine order, and would be most injurious to man, to carry absolute conviction to his intellect by any evidence that would leave his heart unchanged; and that, therefore, no sign is given but the sign of the prophet Jonas, because this is a sign of regeneration, which is the only real confirmation of the Lord's truth to the mind. The additional particulars in the present narrative are very interesting. The former demand was made by the scribes and Pharisees; this is by the Pharisees with the Sadducees. And as the Sadducees, though less hypocritical, were more material and infidel, so the present indicates a tempting of the Lord from a more determined negation of his truth, while requiring a sign that might

convince them against their will. While there is this difference, there is an important addition, which is contained in the 2d and 3d verses.

2-4. *He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather : for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day : for the sky is red and lowering.* The reason our Lord expressed himself thus was, because evening and morning signify his coming. And so the Lord says to the Pharisees, *ye can discern the face of the sky ; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?* The church being then devastated, a superficial serenity prevailed, because its members lived securely in an evil life, concealed by false persuasions ; this was their evening, when the weather was fair and the sky red. But when they had come to know the Lord, but denied and persecuted him, then was their morning, when the sky was red and lowering. This is true of the individual in corresponding states. While he lives without God in the world, he has that kind of serenity which arises from the absence of concern for eternal life and of spiritual temptation ; but when, having come to the saving knowledge of the Lord, the false and evil principles of the natural mind rise in opposition to him, then does the horizon become red and lowering, charged with the elements of an impending storm. If he endures the shock, it will clear his moral atmosphere, and make his day bright and heavenly ; but if, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, he will not see the signs of the times—signs of his own state—then will he harden himself in a state of guilt, and become like the hypocrites whom the Lord accuses of wilful blindness. The final consequence may be that solemn one here recorded : *and he left them, and departed.* Beware lest this departure be for ever.

5, 6. *When the disciples were come over to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread, then Jesus said to them, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.* We forget to take bread when we neglect to provide ourselves with the spiritual good by which the soul is fed. It is because we do not sufficiently hunger after the true bread that we forget to take it when we pass over to the other side ; for the disciples were now in Canaan, the type of the church and heaven. It is then we are to “ take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees,” because it is then we are most liable to be tempted to accept the false for the true bread, and to admit it into our hearts. It is then, therefore, that we are to beware of this leaven.

7. But the disciples did not understand what the Lord meant. *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no*

bread. The Lord intended to direct their minds to something higher than they themselves were yet prepared to perceive. He therefore proceeds to remind them that although they had forgotten to take bread, he did not require to warn them against taking of the bread of the Pharisees. Had they forgotten the two miracles of the loaves and fishes, with which the Lord had fed so many thousands, and how many baskets they took up? He who had done these wonders could supply the bread which they had forgotten, without the necessity of taking of the leaven of the Pharisees. Then understood they that he did not bid them beware of the leaven, but the doctrine of the Pharisees, of which leaven was the symbol. And what is the lesson it teaches us? That the Lord warns us against false doctrine, of which we are to beware, especially when our moral goodness is not present to our minds as a safeguard. But even then, if we call to remembrance the manifestation of the divine mercy, in giving us spiritual good in all fulness, then the Lord, speaking to us through the remains of good stored up within, at once enlightens and comforts us. The whole of this relation shows that divine language is expressed in the natural world according to the correspondence which exists between natural and spiritual things.

13, 14. The next subject that occurs in this chapter is one of the most interesting and important that occurs in the whole of the New Testament history—Peter's famous confession of the Lord. Jesus, we find, goes to Cæsarea Philippi, one of the most northern ports of Palestine; and as he approaches the borders, he asks his disciples, *Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?* The Lord thus led his disciples to reflect and decide on the great question, as to who the Lord was that had come into the world; and the first question was to ascertain what men thought of him. These were not men of the world generally, but men of the Jewish church; for their opinions respecting the Son of man were such as only the members of the church would form. Some thought the Lord to be John the Baptist, some Isaiah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. None, it appears, acknowledged Jesus to be what he really was. Many thought him to be a prophet, but none thought him to be *the* prophet. Some thought him to be the forerunner of the Messiah, but none thought him to be the Messiah himself, although it is doubtful whether those who thought Jesus to be John the Baptist thought John to be the Elias who was for to come. Spiritually understood, a prophet signifies doctrine from the Word, and John the Baptist signifies the Word itself—that is, the Word as existing in the church, but not

the Word, or the very divine truth itself, which was made flesh. Every one of these opinions, even the highest, made Jesus human and finite. Another remarkable fact in all these opinions respecting Jesus is this : all those persons whom they supposed the Lord to be, were men who had once lived on the earth. Jesus they therefore believed to be one of those holy men raised from the dead. They were of those, therefore, who sought the living among the dead, as, indeed, all do who seek or place Jesus among finite beings as one of them ; for all finite beings are in themselves dead, having no life in them but what they derive every moment from God, who is the only being who has life in himself. And Jesus was and is that being, for he said, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." All these opinions of Christ, therefore, were and are of the earth earthly.

15, 16. Well then might Jesus turn from all these conjectures and inquire of the disciples, *But whom say ye that I am ?* And now comes the true and ever-memorable answer. *Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Let us see the true and full import of this confession. The acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ was literally the acknowledgment of him as the Messiah—the Saviour whose coming into the world had been the theme of prophecy from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Malachi. And whatever had been foretold of the Messiah, either as to his character or work, was included in that acknowledgment. Spiritually, the Christ is expressive of the Lord's character as the Essential Divine Truth, by whom the world was created, and by whom, as the Incarnate Word, it was to be redeemed. The confession of him as the Son of the living God is the acknowledgment of him as having been the begotten of God, as the child born into the world by the virgin Mary. And this acknowledgment of his Divine paternity is, properly considered, the acknowledgment of his being God, and, of course, the supreme and only God, as to his divine nature, and the true and only Son of God as to his human nature. For there can be no God but one, and that which is begotten of God must, so far as derived from him, be divine, and one with himself. But the Lord, as born of a human mother, was, of course, so far as he partook of her nature, merely human, that is, finite. His internal man or soul, as being from the Divine Father, was divine or infinite ; but the external or body, as being from the human mother, was human or finite. Now, this merely human part was gradually glorified, and this glorification was completed by the passion of

the cross; and when the Lord rose from the dead, he rose in a humanity wholly and purely divine. This is the humanity that is, in the complete and exclusive sense, the Son of God. And Jesus became the Son of God by glorification, as we become sons of God by regeneration, by being born of God. Jesus was *begotten* of God when he came into the world, and he was *born* of God when he went out of the world. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. He then ceased entirely, and for ever, to be the son of Mary, and was solely and purely the Son of the living God. Not, of course, that he was, according to the crude and erroneous notion, a distinct divine person from the Father, but that his humanity was divine, and one with his eternal divinity, as the soul is one with the body. The writer of the Hebrews seems to have had a clear view of this great truth when he spoke of Jesus, as represented by Melchisedec, as being "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (vii. 3); for the Lord was himself the Father as to his divine nature. He had no mother, for he entirely ceased to be the son of Mary as to his human nature; and in himself he has neither beginning of days nor end of life; for he is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. Such is the great truth confessed by Peter—the truth of Christianity, which comprehends in itself the whole of salvation, as the design and result of the incarnation.

17. *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.* The Lord here teaches that this great truth cannot be seen and acknowledged by mere human wisdom grounded in the human will. Flesh and blood—the will and wisdom of man—cannot reveal this truth to any human soul; and hence it is that mere human reason cannot see the divinity of the Lord's humanity, but can only see Jesus as the son of Mary, and sometimes even as the son of Joseph. The perception of this truth must come from God out of heaven, entering as divine light through the interior of the human soul. And, indeed, its true and spiritual acknowledgment comes in mostly, not from the light, but from the love of God, not from divine light in the intellect, but from divine love in the heart. This love in the will of the inner man, in our heart of hearts, is the Father in heaven, by whom alone it is revealed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He is to us the Christ as the Divine truth in our understanding. He is to us the Son of God as the Divine good in our will.

And the interior knowledge of this makes us blessed, for it has in it all the blessings of redemption and salvation.

18. This blessing is not, however, left to be inferred. *I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church.* We need not dwell upon the mistaken notions and false applications of this declaration of the Lord to Peter, or rather to Simon Barjona, for here Simon's name was changed to Peter. It was as Simon that he made the confession, but it was as Peter that he became the foundation of the church, and the keeper of the keys of the kingdom. Simon signifies hearing, hearkening, and obedience, and is therefore expressive of faith as grounded in the affection of truth in the will. Jona, which literally means a dove, signifies the principle of spiritual love or charity; so that the name Simon, son of Jona, is expressive of faith derived from spiritual love, which is charity. But his name was changed to Peter in consequence of the confession he made of the Lord as the Son of God; for Peter, literally a rock, signifies the truth. As Simon is expressive of faith in the will, Peter is expressive of that clear perception of truth in the understanding which gives to faith the evidence of intellectual sight. When from the heart we have made confession of the Lord as the Son of God—as God in his humanity—this great truth becomes in the mind the sure foundation, the chief corner-stone, on which all the principles of the church rest. Peter represents faith as well as truth; and, indeed, the one implies the other, for truth has no actual existence in the mind except as the truth of faith. Thus the spiritual sense teaches, that what the Lord addressed literally to Peter is spiritually applicable to all whom Peter represented—to those who confess the Lord from the heart, and trust in him with the confidence of a true and living faith. Abstractly, it is applicable to the principle of truth and the grace of faith themselves, so that it is upon them in the heart and mind of the believer, and not upon him personally, that the gifts are conferred. The heart's confession of the Lord as the Son of God develops itself into a living faith in his truth in the understanding, and this change in our state is analogous to the change of Simon's name to Peter, and the change of Jacob's name to Israel, by a further development of the spiritual principle, and advance in the spiritual life. When from being Simon we become Peter, the truth of Jesus becomes the rock on which he builds his church; for he, as the eternal truth revealed to and dwelling in a sincere faith, is that on which all Christian graces and virtues repose as on a foundation. These graces and virtues constitute the church in the human mind. And when we have the true founda-

tion of the church within us, then do we receive the divine assurance—*and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* Jesus came into the world to overcome hell and hold it in subjection. And when he himself is the foundation, how can the power of hell prevail against the building that is reared and that rests upon it? This assurance implies, that the powers of hell make the attempt to overthrow the church in the mind of the Christian disciple. Of this the Lord's disciples, and Peter in particular, had sufficient experience after this assurance was given; but they found, with the exception of one who never had this foundation in himself, that the Lord's strength was sufficient to enable them to overcome the greatest assaults of the enemy. And such will be the experience of every Christian who carefully preserves the same sure and tried stone as the foundation of his hopes.

19. With this power of resisting the gates of hell there is also given to the Christian the power of opening the gates of heaven. *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* As there is a connection and series in the internal sense, we may see it here. Evil resides in the natural mind, which is meant by earth in the Word; and, indeed, evil constitutes hell; so that the natural mind, in its unregenerate state, is a miniature hell, the image of the greater. In the natural mind are the gates by which evil enters from the world and the kingdom of darkness, and by which it goes out to assault the good of the kingdom we have received from God. These are the gates of hell in our own minds that assail the church when it has been built upon the Rock of Ages. And it is when, by successful combat against evil, we have shut these gates of hell in the natural mind, that we can use the keys of the kingdom to open the gates of heaven in the spiritual mind; for the shutting of the one is the opening of the other. The keys of heaven are not actually given to us till we have resisted evil and shut the gates of hell. It is by the natural truths, precepts, and laws of the Word, and, indeed, by those truths that say, "Thou shalt not," that we resist and overcome evil, and so close the gates of hell. But it is by the spiritual truths of the Word, and those laws that say, "Thou shalt love the Lord above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself," that we are enabled to open the gate of heaven. Repentance shuts the gates of hell; holiness opens the gate of heaven. These spiritual and eternal truths are the keys of the kingdom, and they are given to us when we have faithfully employed the prohibitory laws of the letter of the

Word in resisting evil. The keys of the kingdom were given to bind and to loose. This mode of expression is a Hebraism for prohibiting and allowing, as authority and power are meant by having the keys. In the spiritual sense, binding and loosing are expressive of very important acts in the regenerate life. By earth and heaven, as we have already seen, we are to understand the natural and the spiritual mind, or the internal and the external man. To bind on earth is to restrain and control the evil lusts of the natural mind, and to loose on earth is to give liberty and free action to its good affections. We are to bring our bad thoughts and affections under subjection to the authority of divine truth ; and by the power of the same divine truth we are to deliver our good thoughts and affections that are imprisoned and oppressed. For in the natural mind, in its unregenerate state, evil rules and good serves—the natural rules the spiritual, the temporal the eternal. Thus the state of man is inverted, and regeneration restores it to order, which consists in the lower serving the higher. The keys of the kingdom give us the power of binding the evil and loosing the good, giving dominion to the good, and reducing the evil to subjection. Whatsoever is bound and loosed on earth is also bound and loosed in heaven. One of the grand features of regeneration consists in the spiritual and natural minds being brought into harmony and unity, and this is effected by bringing the natural into correspondence with the spiritual, the earthly into harmony with the heavenly. In man the spiritual mind acts and the natural mind re-acts. In his unregenerate state the natural re-acts against the spiritual, and so overcomes or neutralizes its action ; when regenerated, the natural re-acts in obedience to and in harmony with the spiritual. Whatever, therefore, is bound and loosed in the natural mind is bound and loosed in the spiritual mind. Not that evil ever actually gains admission into the spiritual mind, but the effect is the same as if it did ; for every unrepented evil in the natural mind turns into evil the good that flows into it from the spiritual mind. But when the evil is bound in the natural mind, the effect is that it no longer perverts the good that flows into it, so that what is bound on earth becomes bound in heaven. On the other hand, the good affections and thoughts in the natural mind, being loosed from bondage, become loosed and free in the spiritual mind also ; for good can flow into the natural affections and thoughts, and act through them, so as to come forth, as it ever desires to do, in words of truth and works of goodness. This may be seen by the analogy between the less and the greater. We

know that no one can enter heaven unless he is made heavenly while he lives upon earth. Only those persons who have fought the good fight, and have bound the evil and liberated the good in themselves, can ascend into heaven. In like manner, only those things that we have loosed and bound on earth will be loosed and bound in heaven; for our works follow us. No evil can be bound, no good can be loosed, in the other world, that is not first loosed or bound in this. So is it in our own heaven and earth. As men are made angelic on earth before they become angels in heaven, so our thoughts and affections must be made angelic in the natural mind before they can exist as such in the spiritual mind. As there is not an angel in heaven who was not once an angelic man upon earth, so there is not an angelic principle in the spiritual mind that was not first an angelic principle in the natural mind. That is first which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. When we speak of a work being done on earth before it is done in heaven, or in the natural mind before it is done in the spiritual, we mean that it has no positive and permanent existence in the higher till it is done in the lower. No work is complete till it comes into its ultimate state. The reason our Lord came into the world and assumed a natural humanity was, that he might operate from first by last principles, and so accomplish the work of redemption. And having while on earth bound hell itself, and loosed mankind from spiritual bondage, and glorified his humanity, he ascended far above all heavens. And now he has the keys of hell and of death; and he it is who opens, and no man can shut; and who shuts, and no man can open. He it is therefore who binds and looses in us, and to whom belongs the glory.

20. When Jesus had delivered and expounded this great truth of his kingdom to his followers, when he had been acknowledged by them openly in his true character, and had delivered to them the keys of his kingdom, *Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.* The time was not yet come for the full preaching of this truth to the world. But there is a sense in which it applies to us also. This injunction is to be understood in a similar way to that which he gave to some when cured of their diseases—to tell no man that he had done it—that this truth could not yet be received rightly and profitably by the natural man—meant by the men without—the Lord's humanity being not yet glorified to that degree which corresponded with the degree of life and receptivity in which they were. The disciples afford an example of this themselves, on the very subject which the Lord next introduces to them;

for although it seems evidently to have made an impression upon them, and was several times repeated to them, they had so entirely forgotten it that even its fulfilment failed to bring it to their remembrance. Yet there were reasons for this truth being made known at this time to the disciples themselves.

21. *From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.* This was one of the means by which his purpose in coming into the world was to be effected, yet the Lord now only began to show it to those who were to be the instruments of preaching Christ and him crucified, yea, rather, risen again. This shows that it formed no part of their first preaching of the gospel. Their commission then was to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and to heal the sick and cleanse lepers. The preaching of the gospel in the fulness of its spirituality and glory was yet to come. Jesus only now "began" to show unto them the mystery of the cross, and through this the majesty and glory of his kingdom. Gradually, and wisely, and tenderly, as they were able to bear it, did the Lord unfold unto them the mysteries of his kingdom. Through Peter they had confessed the grand truth that he was the Christ, the Son of the living God, and they were now prepared to hear, though not yet to understand, the ultimate means of his glorification. In all this we see the progressive unfolding of the Christian principle in the mind of every true Christian, the history of the disciples being the history of every true follower of the Lord. When a truth is once received and acknowledged, it begins to unfold itself. The great truth of the Lord's being the Christ, when once received, must work itself out into a practical principle. Between the reception and the realization of this truth stands the cross—first, as an offence to the intellect, and then of terror to the heart, but finally to become an object in which to glory, as the symbol of the gate of life.

In directing the disciples to look forward to the cross, Jesus told them he must go to Jerusalem, out of which it cannot be that a prophet perish. Jerusalem represented the church. The Lord went up to the holy city, not to provoke the hostility of the Jewish priesthood, but to represent his entering into the interior states of good and truth, which were the necessary parts of his glorification. The opposition which there assailed him was the inevitable result of that awful perversion of the sanctities of religion which then had desecrated the holiest place. Jerusalem—or, rather, the elders, chief

priests, and scribes of the church there—represented also the perverse religious element in our own minds,—the old life, with its lusts, errors, and prejudices, that opposes itself to the Lord's new life in the soul, especially to the humiliating means by which it is to be perfected, and against which the natural mind revolts. The Lord, indeed, directs his disciples to look beyond these means to the glorious end, when he should be raised again the third day. But at this stage the disciple cannot look to the end; he does not relish it, and he cannot comprehend it. He questions what the rising from the dead can mean. He cannot see Christ's glory as an end, so long as he cannot see his suffering and death as means. He understands nothing of these things. They are hid from him. Yet it is necessary that the disciple should hear them, that they may be laid up in his mind as knowledge, to be brought forth when the time comes for him to realize them as truth.

22. We now see how it was that *Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.* Peter here, as is usual, represents faith, but it is intellectual faith, and so far faith alone, and therefore a false faith. The offence of the cross is one of universal experience in the early stages of the Christian life. The cross is repugnant to our unrenewed nature; and the old man, yet unsubdued, casts his malign influence over our new faith, and darkens our confession of Christ with a denial of his sufferings, and therefore of the true glory that lies beyond them.

23. The Lord therefore *turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.* The Lord turned to Peter, to bring the direct light and full force of his truth to bear upon him, to disclose to him the depth and malignity of the error he had expressed, and, calling the apostle by the name of Satan, commanded him to get behind him, as an offence unto him. The gravity of Peter's error is evident from the severity of the Saviour's language. Yet this is to be understood of the sentiment rather than of the man. It is evident from Peter's speech to his Divine Master, that he knew nothing of the true nature of the Lord's redemption. He was a fitter type of the disciple who has yet learnt nothing of the true nature of the cross of Christ in himself. The Lord called Peter Satan, to indicate the origin and character of man's offence at the cross. Satan is the name which is applied to designate the spirits of darkness who are in false principles, and to express the root of false persuasions in our own minds. Peter still represents faith, but a false faith—faith alone—

which practically deprecates the passion of the cross. This was the Lord's final victory over all the powers of darkness, and at the same time the full union of his humanity with his divinity. This being unknown to those who are in the faith of what is false, our Lord said further to Peter, "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

24. How appropriate and instructive is the address which the Lord next delivers to his disciples! *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* Peter had deprecated his Master's suffering the death of the cross: the Lord now tells his disciples that if they would come after him, they must themselves endure it. This strikes at the very root of our offence at his cross. We are offended at the idea of Jesus suffering, because we ourselves are unwilling to suffer. As the Lord himself was to suffer many things, so we are to deny ourselves, and take up our cross; for we must, like him, resist and subdue evil, as the means of acquiring goodness. We must also follow him, by living according to his truth and after his example. We are to deny ourselves by resisting self-love; we are to take up our cross by crucifying the lusts of the flesh; and are to follow the Lord by forsaking all, and devoting ourselves to his service. The duty of taking up our cross involves the bearing it even to the death of our corrupt selfhood.

25. The Lord therefore proceeds to say, *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* The seeming paradox contains a very plain and momentous truth. Love is life. The life of the natural mind is the love of self and the world; the life of the spiritual mind is the love of the Lord and the neighbour. It is not, therefore, the same life that we save and lose, nor that we lose and find. He that saves the life of selfish and worldly love loses the life of love to the Lord and the neighbour; but whosoever for the Lord's sake loses his carnal and worldly life gains spiritual and eternal life. These two lives are present in the mind of every disciple in the early period of the regenerate life. Were it not so, there would be no conflict; for all conflict is between opposite loves, thus between opposite lives. It is the carnal life and the spiritual life that contend with each other. The contest continues till one is overcome, and one yields up the dominion to the other, when that which conquers becomes the animating principle of the whole mind and life. Our Lord speaks in the same way respecting himself. Of his own life he says, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). That which he laid down

was not the same life that he took again. The life he laid down was that which he inherited from his human mother, and the life he took up was that which he inherited from his Divine Father, and which became the life of his whole humanity by glorification, completed in his resurrection.

26. The Lord brings out his meaning and his lesson more fully in what he now says. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Truly the soul, or the life (for the word is the same), is more precious to a man than the whole world, and nothing would he take for it in exchange. If a man will not give his natural life for the world, how much less should he be disposed to give spiritual and eternal life in exchange for it. If spiritual life is as much superior to natural life as natural life is to the whole world, how ready should we be to lay down the natural, that we may take up the spiritual, which is also eternal. The life to be laid down is self-love, and the world that profits nothing is the love of the world; thus the two constitute the whole natural man.

27. A powerful reason for laying down the life of self-love, and rejecting the love of the world, is the certainty of final judgment. *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.* A general judgment is no doubt meant in these words, but not such as is generally expected. The words are commonly understood to refer to the end of the world, when all the dead shall be raised, and judged to heaven or hell. This notion is derived from a misunderstanding of the Scriptures, which nowhere teach that the world shall have an end, nor that the bodies of the dead shall be raised, nor that this world is the scene of the judgment. All judgment takes place in the spiritual world, upon the souls which have passed out of the natural world, and are still in the intermediate state, and at the end of the church, which is meant by the end of the age. We need not, however, take up the subject of the judgment in the eternal world, in which all are judged according to their works, but will consider the Lord's words in their purely spiritual sense, as being applicable to the regenerate. The Lord introduces the subject of his coming to judgment, to teach us that when we have taken up our cross, and resisted the life of selfish and worldly loves, and have placed above them the love of God and the neighbour, the Lord will come as a judge, to effect a separation between the evil and the good, and assign each a place according to its character. The Son of man is the Lord as the Divine truth, which is the principle

that judges; for the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, *because* he is the Son of man (John v. 21, 27). Yet the Lord never judges from truth alone, separate from love; therefore he is to come in the glory of his Father, or of his own divine love, and of angels, which are the truths of the Word and of heaven. These come to the man who successfully resists evil, and give the reward of righteousness and peace for the labours of self-denial which he has performed.

28. The Lord concludes by giving this promise: *Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* That coming could not be at the end of the world. The declaration must be spiritually understood. The Lord is, in regard to the general church, speaking prophetically of the last times, which are the last states of religion, both as to purity of doctrine and life. In John xxi. 22 we read that Jesus said to Peter, respecting John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" and we read that a saying went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. Did John tarry till the Lord came? Those did whom John represented. This, therefore, was spoken of John in his representative character, as the Lord had previously spoken to Peter as a representative man. The beloved apostle represented the principle of love, but of practical love, which is charity, and he therefore represented, also, those who are in this love, and continue in it to the end. Those who should not see death till they had seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom are those whom John represented. The Lord's meaning is, that amidst the general corruption, when even faith itself should perish, some remains of love and charity should survive, till the time of his second coming, to form the rudiment of a new dispensation. It is persons of this character, also, that see the Son of man coming in his kingdom; for they who are in charity see the truth and acknowledge it, and the Lord's truth is the Son of man; and the Son of man comes in his kingdom when his truth is admitted into the mind, and entrusted with the government of the will and understanding. In the particular application of the Lord's words they relate to the regenerate, to whom the Lord comes as a Judge and a Saviour. Love and charity are the principles in the minds of the regenerate which see the Son of man coming in his kingdom; and the Lord provides that some of these shall be preserved in every mind, and shall not taste of death till they see the coming of the Son of man. It is through these that the Lord at his second coming enters into the mind, and it is among these that he sets up his kingdom.

CHAPTER XVII.

THIS chapter records the Lord's transfiguration, which gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory, and foreshadowed the coming splendour of his resurrection and ascension, when the humanity, now partially glorified, should be wholly divine. It is a fitting sequel to the subject of the preceding chapter. There the Lord was confessed, here he is exhibited, in his true character. There he began to reveal to his disciples something of his sufferings and death; here he manifests before them something of his succeeding life and glory. There he presented to them the Son of man in his weakness and obscurity; here in his power and majesty. In this, too, we shall find instruction for ourselves individually, both in connection with preceding states and as a distinct subject of experience.

1, 2. The relation begins by saying, *And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them.* How significant is this mystic number of six days, as pointing to the states of labour and self-denial that precede and usher in the state of succeeding rest and peace, when the beatific vision is opened to the soul's spiritual sense! These preparatory states are the subject of the preceding discourse. After these have been completed, the glory of the Lord is revealed. But why is it that this glory is revealed only to these three of the disciples? Did not the rest require this assurance and confirmation of their faith in Jesus? Did they not deserve it? The cause is spiritual. These three disciples represent the three cardinal graces, which, in a manner, include all the others, or to which they all belong. Peter, James, and John represent faith, charity, and good works. It was for this reason that these three were selected by the Lord to accompany him on particular occasions, and as one, and the most important, of these, on the occasion of the Lord's transfiguration. This teaches us that those who are principled in faith, charity, and works are those who, after their six days' labour and trial in the vale of humiliation, are raised by the Lord into the mountain of his love and holiness, and there enabled to see the Lord in the splendour of his glory, in the divinity of his humanity.

2. In the form in which he appeared on the mount *his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.* The glory in which the Lord appeared on the mount, so entirely different from the ordinary appearance he presented during the time of his humiliation, is an evidence that his frail humanity covered a glory that required

only to be unveiled to be seen by those who were prepared to behold it. The glory which he exhibited was not that of his divine nature, for no man can see God as he is. It was the glory of his humanity in which the Lord was seen on the mount of transfiguration. But how should his humanity exhibit itself in so different an aspect from that which it usually presented? The humanity of the Lord could not have done so, had it been the same as that of an ordinary human being. The humanity of the Lord was derived from a Divine Father as well as from a human mother. Internally, therefore, his humanity was divine from his birth, and during his life it became externally divine also, on the same principle and in the same way that during regeneration our external becomes gradually formed to the image of our internal. At the time of the transfiguration the Lord's humanity had become so far glorified as to be capable of being seen by the eyes of his chosen apostles. The apostles themselves were prepared for the sight. Their preparation consisted in opening their spiritual sight; which was simply to place them for the time in the state in which man is when he lays aside his material body and becomes an inhabitant of the spiritual world. Such a change may be effected in an instant; but there are indications of a gradual change of state in those who saw the Lord in his glory. Luke records that "Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory" (ix. 32). The appearance which Jesus presented was not, therefore, any glory that was shed upon him, but a glory that was inherent in him, and was but a manifestation of a degree of the fulness of glory to which he was advancing, and in which he afterwards appeared to John in Patmos, when "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters;" and at the sight of whom John "fell at his feet as dead" (Rev. i. 14-17). Such was Jesus in himself when he appeared to Peter, James, and John. The appearance he then presented is full of meaning. The Lord's face signifies his divine love, and his raiment his divine truth. And the Lord's love is as the sun, which in itself is pure fire, and his truth is as the light proceeding from it; for the Lord in himself is pure love or goodness, while divine truth flows from him as light from the sun.

3. While the disciples saw Jesus in his glory, *behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.* These two men were eminent representatives of the Word. Moses represented the histo-

rical Word, and Elias the prophetic. We are told by Luke (ix. 31) that they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem"—that is, of his redemption and glorification, which was completed by the passion of the cross. Their talking with him represented that the whole Word, both historical and prophetic, treats of the Lord and the glorification of his humanity. In many parts of the literal sense of the Word, the Lord's coming and his work in the flesh are openly treated of; but in the inmost or celestial sense, the Lord's glorification is the only theme. This may seem surprising, but there is a sufficient reason for it. The written Word is not only a revelation, but an emanation, from the eternal Word, and contains within it divine life and light, divine good and truth. The written Word in its essential nature is therefore divine, its spiritual and natural senses, known to angels and men, being no other than a vesture which covers its ineffable divine glory, and makes it perceptible to finite minds. Before the incarnation, the Lord, as the eternal Word, was clothed with a vesture which made him visible to angels; but when he assumed humanity in the world, he covered himself with a garment which enabled men to behold him. The natural humanity, in which the eternal Word appeared in the world, was analogous to the natural sense of the written Word; and then the written and the incarnate Word corresponded to each other from first to last. As the vestures in which both the written and the eternal Word clothed themselves, so as to be visible in heaven and on earth, were taken from the finite nature of angels and men, they necessarily consisted of all that constitutes angelic and human nature, and therefore of angelic and human thought and affection. As the Lord's life was a fulfilment of the Word, the Word must have been a revelation or history of his life. The whole Word, then, both historical and prophetic, must have treated of his glorification; so that Moses and Elias could talk with him of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. And the disciples who are able to ascend with the Lord into the mount of transfiguration, may still hear them talk with Jesus concerning that work of infinite love and mercy in which they have a spiritual and eternal interest.

4. When the disciples beheld this glorious sight, *Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* In Luke's account it is remarked that Peter spoke thus, "not knowing what he said," an evidence that he spoke under a higher influence than that of his own thought—from

divine inspiration. And the sentiment and purpose are worthy of their divine origin, and are those of every devout mind when the glory of the Lord is revealed, by the opening of his holy Word, in its spirit and power. "It is good for us to be here," must be the sentiment of every regenerate soul when the Lord is seen in his Word, and when its relation to him and his beneficent work for the redemption and salvation of sinners is open to the spiritual sight. And the making three tabernacles in the mind for these divine and saintly guests is expressive of a desire to build up in the inmost of the soul a tabernacle for the Lord, as God in his humanity, and in the mind and life tabernacles for Moses and Elias—habitations for the Lord and the holy principles of his Word to dwell in. When the regenerate will is a tabernacle for the Lord's love, and the regenerate understanding is a tabernacle for his wisdom, and a regenerate life is a tabernacle for his holiness, the purpose of Peter is accomplished.

5. But, *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.* The literal sense of the Word is as a cloud, for it veils the glory and moderates the light of its internal sense : the cloud of the letter is dark or bright according to the state of the mind that looks upon it. The letter of the Word is a bright cloud when illuminated by the indwelling light of the spiritual sense, which is when its truths are spiritually discerned. Such is the cloud that overshadows the disciples who have seen the Lord in his glory. It is out of this cloud that the divine voice comes which proclaims to us who and what he is whose glory we have beheld, for all revelation comes from the Word ; and, indeed, from its literal sense, but from the literal sense illuminated by the light and glory of its spiritual sense. And what is the divine testimony respecting Jesus that proceeds from this bright cloud that overshadows us on the mount ? The voice out of the cloud said of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son." The truth thus declared from heaven is the same that Peter had so recently uttered upon earth. We have already examined these divine words as uttered at the Lord's baptism (ch. iii. 17). The Father, we have seen, is the Lord's divinity, and the Son is his humanity, which are actually related to each other as Father and Son. Viewed more interiorly, the Father is the Lord's love, and the Son is his wisdom ; for wisdom is the offspring of love. The Father and the Son are therefore the divine and the human in one person—love and wisdom, life and light, in Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness dwells. The Father also says of the Son, "In whom I am well

pleased." The Father's pleasure in the Son is the satisfaction of the divine in the human, as the power of effecting man's salvation. This is the pleasure of Jehovah which should prosper in the hands of the Messiah (Isa. liii. 10). The love of the human race was the love which prompted the Lord to accomplish the work of redemption ; and this work finds its reward in the salvation of men. How lofty and weighty, then, the command, " Hear ye him ! " He is the power of God, the wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24) ; he is God manifest in the flesh ; he is the Divine Wisdom, in which is the Divine Love ; he is the Fountain of every saving grace, the Author of every saving virtue ; and he alone hath the words of eternal life. Then let all who would know the truth, and obtain this life, hear him !

6. The effect of this divine voice on the disciples shows what effect it will have on all who receive it sincerely. *When the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.* Hearing the voice is expressive of the Divine love entering into the will and its affections ; and this produces profound humiliation and holy fear, meant by falling on the face and being sore afraid. Prostration and fear also imply the renunciation of our own will and wisdom, and a consequent sense of our unworthiness and nothingness in the presence of Him to whom belong all goodness and power.

7. When we thus profoundly humble ourselves, and renounce self-righteousness, and present ourselves before the Lord in our own inherent weakness, he can exalt us in his own power, and inspire us with the love which casteth out fear. *And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.* To arise in the Lord's might, and rejoice in his love, this is the privilege of those only who practically acknowledge Jesus to be the Lord of life and glory. The touch of Jesus is the communication of his power, the inflowing of his Spirit into the lowly mind. To arise spiritually, is to raise the affection from earthly to heavenly and divine things ; and to fear not, is to have the confidence of a sincere and living faith.

8. *And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.* The view which the disciples had of the Lord in his glory, and of Moses and Elias, was given them by the opening of their spiritual sight. The closing of their spiritual sight shut out the glorious spectacle, and they saw Jesus only, and him as he was wont to appear amongst them. In the spiritual sense these words teach an exalted truth. When, after being raised up by the Divine power from the dust of humiliation, we lift up the eyes of our understanding, we see no man but Jesus only. He to us is all and in all. He is also the all

of his Word. Moses and Elias may testify of him, but he himself is the only true witness. He testifies by them. He is the truth itself, which, when all human mediums and finite forms have been removed, remains alone the sole Object of love and perception.

9. Here again, in the vision, as in the confession, of Jesus, silence is enjoined on the disciples. *And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.* The disciples representing the affections and perceptions of the spiritual mind, the divinity and glory of the Lord could be perceived by them, because the Lord's humanity was already so far glorified as to be capable of being brought down to their degree of perception. But as the multitude, even the believing multitude, represented the affections and perceptions of the natural mind, these were not to be told of the confession and vision, because the Lord's humanity was not yet so far glorified as that this truth could be brought down to the apprehension of the natural mind. The Lord's glorification was completed in his resurrection, and hence the command to tell the vision to no man till the Son of man was risen from the dead. This, too, is our experience. In us the transfiguration must precede the resurrection. As with the Lord the first took place in the spirit, and the second in the body; so in us the first takes place in the spiritual mind, and the second in the natural; and in each, acknowledgment must arise from actual reception. The truth exhibited on the mountain of the inner man cannot be imparted to the outer man, till that truth has come down to his state and apprehension—till after the Lord has there risen from the dead. We have an exemplification of this law in the circumstance that only the three leading disciples were taken up into the mount to see the transfiguration, the rest of the disciples being left below.

10. The disciples now put a question to the Lord. *Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?* The scribes would demand, "How can the Messiah be come, when Elias has not appeared?" The disciples believed in Jesus as the Messiah, but saw and felt the difficulty about Elias; for they themselves evidently knew not the truth on this subject—that the prophecy was fulfilled in John the Baptist. And for what purpose were they allowed to remain in ignorance on this point till after the transfiguration? Because it represents the experience of every disciple who follows the Lord in the regeneration. The Christian disciple does not truly understand the means till he has attained the end. When he is with Christ in the mount, it seems to him as if a new light had broken in upon his mind,

the coming of which no herald had ever proclaimed ; and that a new joy had sprung up in his heart, that no experience had ever taught him to expect. He can say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).

11-13. Nevertheless, no state of light and joy, however much it may exceed our previous states of knowledge and experience, is without its harbinger. In every coming of the Lord to the mind, his way has been prepared by the truths of his Word, however unperceived their agency or silent their operation, as they are in the days of infancy, childhood, and youth. Our Lord, therefore, answers the inquiry of his disciples by saying, *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.* This restoration of all things is the forming in the human mind of the rudiments of all states which can afterwards exist by being developed and perfected by regeneration. To all who have reached maturity Elias hath already come, even although *they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed*,—for the corrupt selfhood too often, and to some extent always, treats the Lord's messenger as the Jews treated John the Baptist. *Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them*,—for this hostility of the proprium continues till it dies together with the Lord's body, that the new man may rise with him from the dead. But this rising from the dead is also unknown to the disciple ; indeed, it is, like every other actual state of life, hid from his eyes, so far as relates to its real character, till it comes into his experience. When the Lord had explained the prophecy respecting Elias, *Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.* The light of experience, shed back upon the path by which we have reached it, reveals the true character of the means and instrumentality by which the Lord has prepared it for bringing us to him, and him to us.

14-17. *And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed.* In his picture of the transfiguration, Raphael has skilfully introduced this case below the mountain, as a contrast to the scene of glory which was being exhibited upon it above. Nothing could more strikingly exhibit the spiritual glory of that great event, and the degraded state and deplorable condition of humanity which the Lord had come into the world to redeem. The Lord took human nature upon him, to deliver his human creatures from spiritual bondage and wretchedness, of which

this case presented so appalling and affecting a type. Below, we see fallen humanity in its utter helplessness as well as degradation; above, we behold it in its greatest power and glory, the pattern of that to which the Saviour came to raise it. And here, also, we see the absolute necessity of his immediate divine interference. For while the Lord is on the mount, the father has brought his child to the disciples, who are utterly powerless to cast the demon out. The Lord has now come down from the scene of his glory in the interior of the mind, to be present and diffuse his influence amongst the multitude of thoughts and affections in the natural mind; where, in man's unregenerate state, evil and disorder reign. But the subject relates to the mind in which regeneration has commenced, and is in progress. The kneeling father is spiritual love, producing profound humiliation of heart before the Lord, as the only deliverer of natural love from the infestation of evil and falsity. The son was a lunatic. Lunacy, or insanity, although it may be a physical disease, has generally a mental cause, which therefore it represents. The present cause was produced by the agency of evil spirits, who, indeed, in all instances, act through the evils of the human mind. There is a spiritual as well as a natural lunacy. We do not mean insanity on the subject of religion, but a spiritual derangement which incapacitates the mind for judging and acting sanely in spiritual things, however sound it may be in natural affairs. And as, when reason is dethroned, the will becomes rather an involuntary than a voluntary faculty—for there is no real volition without reason, no liberty without rationality—the mind becomes alternately the sport of ardent ungovernable feelings and of delusive thoughts. The poor lunatic, *ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water*. Those possessed by evil spirits were not responsible for what they did. Spiritual insanity, which is the result of internal possession, is different. Evil spirits can now have no more power over us than we give them. They cannot, at their pleasure, cast us into the fire of evil and into the water of falsity; we run into them of our own accord. This freedom, however, may lead us into hopeless misery; for by long indulgence we may bring ourselves into the most complete thralldom to our lusts and imaginations. The cure of such cases requires more than ordinary means and agencies. The father of the child, as a reason for applying to Jesus, said, *I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him*. The Lord then exclaimed, *O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* As the subject comes up again, we need not speak of it here, further than to remark, that the Lord's words of

lamentation and reproof have reference to that twofold condition of the mind so often treated of in the divine Word, and of which several instances occur in the present relation. The youth was lunatic and sore vexed, and often fell into the fire, and into the water; and the Lord calls the generation faithless and perverse, and asks, "How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?" All these refer to the two faculties of the human mind—the will and the understanding—and to the principles of which they are receptive. Faithless has relation to the want of truth or faith, and perverse to the want of good or charity; and the Lord's question, "How long shall I be with you?" relates to the Lord's presence with man by the good of his love; and the question, "How long shall I suffer you?" has relation to his presence with man by the truth of his wisdom. But to show that in judgment the Lord remembers mercy, he follows his reproof by saying to them, of the child, *Bring him hither to me*,—at once showing compassion, and his desire that his creatures should act reciprocally with him in his will and operation to save.

18. *And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.* The Lord's rebuke contains in it the power of divine truth; and when this finds faith as a medium, which we learn from Mark ix. 24 it did with the father of the child, evil cannot resist it. The devil departs, and the mind is restored from that same hour, or the state of the reception of the power of the Lord's truth in faith, which the hour signifies.

19, 20. When the disciples saw the Lord eject the evil spirit, they asked him privately, *Why could not we cast him out?* He answered, *Because of your unbelief.* The disciples to whom the father brought his child were those who had remained with the people on the plain below, while Jesus and the three went up into the mountain. When the disciples are regarded as thus divided, the three represent the cardinal principles or graces of religion, while the others represent the subordinate common principles that belong to them. When in the inferior or natural mind, amongst the natural thoughts and affections, away from the higher principles and from the Lord, who dwells more immediately in them, they cannot act with effect on the evils of the natural mind. The reason is, because of their want of faith; for effective faith is from the presence of internal in external principles. The Lord said unto them, indeed, that if they had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they would be able to *say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place*, and it would obey them. The mustard seed is faith in which there is love, which is life. No matter how

small the truth is which men know, if that little has the germ of heavenly love within it, it will perform any work, even the rooting up and casting out of self-love—the mountain which faith removes. But had the disciples no faith of this character? Those who formed the life of their faith were separate, and these, who had been left below, could do nothing without them. Yet the lesson which the words of our Saviour teach is one that may be profitably studied and practised by every one,—that a living faith finds nothing impossible. Indeed, possibility is on the side of virtue. All power, and consequently all possibility, belong to God and to those who co-operate with him. All is possible that is according to order. To the faithful, therefore, who live according to divine order, nothing is impossible.

21. Jesus expresses this, in reference to the disciples, with the reservation, *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting*. Prayer is the aspiration of the internal man to God; fasting is the turning away of the external man from the world. The combined effect of these must be to expel the worst of demons, for what can be more conducive to thorough reformation than seeking strength from God to resist the devil? Spiritual lunacy can be removed by no other means. The demon by which the child was possessed represents a life of evil of a grievous kind. And though, naturally, a child was not capable of any grievous evil, yet, spiritually understood, a child being expressive of innocence, the demon by whom the child was possessed must represent the opposite of innocence, which is malignant evil. This, it is evident, cannot be removed merely by grief on account of its existence, or on account of the want of the opposite life of innocence and goodness. Fasting, therefore, here means a steady abstinence from every act in which the evil disposition would seek to vent itself. This is the fasting enjoined as effectual for the casting out of the worst of demons. But this is more than man is able to do of himself. Therefore prayer is mentioned as equally necessary with fasting; or looking to the Lord is ever to be united with abstinence from evil by man as of himself. Doing both, he will be enabled to surmount the greatest obstacles; and no evil so direful but may thus be cast out, as to its influence on the mind and conduct, for ever.

22, 23. While they abode in Galilee, Jesus instructed the whole of the disciples on that subject which he had begun to teach the three as they descended from the mount of transfiguration. It is unnecessary again to dwell on this prediction, further than to consider why it should have been imparted to the disciples in Galilee. And as Galilee represents the natural mind, and the Lord's suffering and

death have more especial reference to the glorification of the natural or ultimate of his humanity, he chose the corresponding place to reveal it to his disciples.

24. *When they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? The tribute money was a tax levied for the support of the temple service, but not imposed by the law of Moses. The Jews, though they hated Jesus, were not averse to accepting tribute from him. A corrupt church, while it despises and persecutes the truth, is willing to recognize the Word, so far as it can be made tributary to it, and subservient to its interests. But to be able to make the Word tributary to a corrupt worship it is necessary first to obtain the sanction of some of its secondary truths, which is to come through Peter to his Master.*

25, 26. *When the Jews asked Peter if his Master paid tribute, He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? We see in this an illustration of the circumstance that the truths of the Word give different testimony according as they are looked at from without or from within, as they are interrogated by custom or by principle. We learn also that even the faithful, of whom Peter was a type, see the truth differently when they are in an external state, in intercourse with men, and when they are in an internal state, in communion with the Lord. Peter was without when he was asked and consented to pay the tribute money; it was when he was come into the house that, in reply to the Lord's question, he declared that kings levied custom, not of their own children, but of strangers. When Peter had given this answer, Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. The principle which the Lord lays down is one of much importance in relation to the church and its members, but one which the Jews had, as in many other instances, violated. By paying tribute or custom was signified to be subject or to serve, wherefore tribute was imposed upon strangers, who were not of the children of Israel, as is evident from the historicals of the Word. By the sons of Israel, among whom was the church, were signified the spiritual, and by strangers the natural; and the natural principle is subject to the spiritual and serves it, for the spiritual man is as a lord, and the natural man is as a servant; and since the natural are servants, and hence are meant by tributaries, therefore it was effected that neither the Lord nor Peter gave tribute, but a fish, by which is signified the natural man.*

27. But although the Lord did not acknowledge that himself or his disciples were tributary, he said unto Peter, *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.* The whole of the Lord's minute directions to Peter are significant and instructive. The sea, being a type of the Word in its literal sense, the fish of the sea are the natural truths which the literal sense contains. In the vision of the new temple seen by Ezekiel, the waters that issued from under the threshold of the house went down into the sea, the result of which was "a very great multitude of fish" (xlvii. 1-9). The opening of the spiritual sense of the Word, and its effect in communicating life to the truths of the letter, which by themselves are dead, are described by the river flowing into the sea. We spiritually obey the command, "go thou to the sea," when we go to the Word in our trials and emergencies, to obtain the means of relieving our troubles or supplying our wants. And we "cast an hook," into the sea when we intelligently search the Scriptures, with a confiding faith in the Divine promise that we shall obtain what we require, however much appearances may be against its fulfilment. What could be more unlikely than that the first fish that came to Peter's hook should carry in its mouth the coin that was required to pay the tribute money? What more unlikely, in our times of spiritual perplexity and need, than to find in the Word the very truth which shall relieve and comfort us? We must not, however, interpret the promise too literally. Not the first text that meets our eye, or comes up in our mind, is to be expected always to have the needed and promised piece of silver in its mouth. Not necessarily that which is first in regard to time, but that which is first in regard to state, brings us the tribute money. Truth must be first in our estimation before it can yield the desired supply. And when the truth that bears the treasure in its bosom has been, by the Lord's providence, brought to us, we must "take it up," or raise it out of the general treasure-house of the Word into the particular treasure-house of our own mind, and elevate it in our thoughts and affections. Then we must further "open his mouth," for the literal sense must be opened by right interpretation, to discover in it and obtain from it the treasure it contains, and which we require. The reason the Lord gave to Peter for paying the tribute money at all was, "lest we should offend them." The collectors of the tax, no doubt, knew nothing of the miracle that had been performed to discharge the debt which Peter had

mistakenly acknowledged ; they believed that his Master had paid it. And those who pervert order, by making tributary the children who should be free, are under a corresponding delusion. They pervert order, indeed, in themselves ; and it seems to them as if things spiritual and divine were tributary to them, when yet they themselves are only in the knowledge of what is spiritual ; and think they have drawn down wealth from heaven, when they have in reality derived it from the waters under the earth.

Before concluding, we would offer a remark on the miracle itself. It certainly is one of the most striking exhibitions which the New Testament supplies of the Lord's divinity. One who performed it by his own internal power could be no other than the omniscient and omnipotent, the ruler of the world and controller of minds.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. This chapter commences with an incident tender and beautiful in itself, and one in which, like so many others recorded in the gospel, the wisdom of the Lord Jesus is seen to flow as a living stream from the fountain of his love. Children of frailty, the disciples had been contending among themselves for pre-eminence, and they come to their Master, that he may settle the dispute, and ask him, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven ?* Each of the disciples desired to be greatest, and to rule ; none were willing to be least, and to serve. This is the condition of the natural man, and continues to be that of every man till he is brought under the dominion of him who was himself the least of all and the servant of all.

2, 3. In appealing to the Lord as the arbiter in this dispute, the disciples acknowledged his authority as supreme, and were disposed to abide by his decision. They expected, however, that he would decide for them what they had been unable to agree upon among themselves—which of them should be greatest in his kingdom. Great must have been their surprise and humiliation when *Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* This was a question that had not entered into their thoughts, much less into their discussion. Believing they had been called to the kingdom, they only concerned themselves about the stations of dignity they were to occupy in it. But the little child in the midst of them, and the Lord's few words,

told them that the love of dominion, which had led them to contend for the highest place, unfitted them even for the lowest; and that unless they were converted, and became as little children, they could not so much as enter into the kingdom of heaven. This conveys a most instructive lesson. Without conversion there is no salvation. The ruling love must be turned from self to the Lord, and from the world to heaven. But the disciples are also to become as little children. Born anew, they are to be innocent, confiding, teachable, in all things conforming to their heavenly Father's will. In the spiritual sense, the Lord's beautiful and significant act teaches us that innocence, of which a little child is the emblem, must be in the midst, or be the inmost, of all the graces and virtues that form the kingdom of heaven in the mind and life of man. Without conversion of the soul to God, and a childlike dependence upon him, no one can enter into his kingdom.

4. But the question of the disciples did not directly relate to what was required to gain admission into the kingdom, but to who should be greatest in it. It was necessary, and our Lord saw good, first to instruct them in what was required in order to their being admitted into the kingdom at all. Now he comes to the subject of their inquiry, concerning which they had contended among themselves,—“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” The Lord had already (ch. v. 19) taught his disciples that whosoever should do and teach his commandments should be great in the kingdom of heaven; this was the first time he had occasion to instruct them respecting who was the greatest. The same image that served to illustrate the nature of heaven serves to illustrate greatness in it. *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* Innocence is the grace which qualifies us for heaven, and our greatness in it depends on the depth and fulness in which that grace is received. Heaven most intimately dwells in innocence, and where there is more of innocence there is more of heaven; and he who is most deeply imbued with this, the essence of all heavenly virtues, must possess the largest share of all the excellencies in which heaven consists. As innocence is the essence, humility is the soil, of every grace and virtue. Our growth in grace is in proportion to our humility. The most humble is the most exalted, the least is the greatest. This is more than a figure. Every regenerate one has within him the old man and the new. The more the old man is humbled, the more the new man is exalted; he in whom the old is least is he in whom the new is greatest. The highest angels are they who have most completely humbled self; they are, therefore, the most

innocent; they are, spiritually, the little children to whom we are sent to learn wisdom, and like whom we must humble ourselves if we wish to be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5. They who are in this state of innocence, which is a state far removed from self and self-seeking, are pre-eminently in the Lord and the Lord in them. This is meant by the words, *Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.* To receive one such little child is to receive such a principle of innocence from the Lord; and to do this in the name of the Lord is to do so, not in outward appearance only, by a mere affectation of humility, but really and from the heart. And as in such genuine innocence the Lord himself dwells, it being only attainable by gift from him, it is evident that he who receives it receives with it the Lord himself, and with him every angelic grace and virtue.

6. Since the reception of this principle of innocence is of such indispensable necessity, no wonder that the rejection and destruction of it is attended with such awful consequences, expressed in the remarkable words, *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* The word offend is used in the sense of causing to stumble. Hence, in the spiritual sense, to offend one of these little ones which believe in the Lord, is wilfully to pervert and turn aside from his innocence one of the faithful; and also to pervert in ourselves any principle of innocence in which the Lord is, by turning to self, the world, and the flesh. The figurative expressions which follow describe the dreadful state occasioned. "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck," means, that it were better he had always remained confirmed in evil lusts and false persuasions—confirmation being meant by a millstone—so that no communication had ever been opened between his internal man and his corrupt external, the neck denoting the communication between them; and to be "drowned in the depth of the sea," is to be immersed in the false persuasions of the natural mind, and plunged, in consequence, into the abyss of woe. Dreadful as a confirmed state of evil is, it is yet less so than that which is incurred by perverting any divine principle—anything in which is innocence received from the Lord; because the state induced is one of profanation, which is far worse than any that can result from unmixed evil, when goodness and truth have never been received into the affections, and consequently are not sinned against and rejected, after having once been known and loved.

7. The Lord now exclaims, *Woe unto the world because of offences ! for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh !* To offend, we have seen, is to cause to stumble ; and an occasion of stumbling is given to the weak when one who makes a profession of religion acts in such a manner as shows that religion has but little influence on his mind ; and this takes place always in consequence of his religion not being genuine, because his heart is a stranger to the scriptural grace of innocence. From this cause what great injury has in all ages been done to the cause of religion ! But what is the reason of this "needs be" that offences will come ? Does it mean that there are any persons who are so utterly enslaved to Satan that they have no power to break their bonds, and *must* be the cause of scandal to the religion they profess, whether they will or not ? Nothing like this is meant. It is a certain truth that man has grace given to him every moment, by which he may turn from his evil ways and come to a better state, if he would make use of it, which also he has continual power given him to do. The meaning is, that Divine Providence sees it necessary, in order that man may be kept in a state capable of salvation, that he should be left at liberty either to cultivate sincerity in his religious profession or not, since, if it were attempted to infuse heavenly graces into him by compulsion, the injury would be still greater. But there is a possibility of becoming a stumbling-block in a different and still worse way than this ; and that is by designedly turning the simple from their integrity, by teaching them to imbibe sentiments subversive of the doctrines of genuine truth, or to indulge in evil practices that destroy or injure their capacity of receiving the heavenly graces of the Lord's kingdom. But whoever is guilty of such infatuation does it at his peril ; for it is expressly said, "woe to that man by whom the offence cometh !" Woe is an expression used in Scripture to express lamentation for any deplorable perversion of the sacred things of the church, and also to indicate the grievous penalties which they incur who are agents in such perversions. In the present case such penalties, it is declared, are unavoidable by those who have been the occasion of throwing a stumbling-block in the way of others. Woe is the result of offence even to those who stumble, for suffering is ever and unavoidably the fruit of sin. But the woe is especially to that man by whom the offence or stumbling cometh. This shows the wise and merciful discrimination which the Lord makes between degrees of guilt, as well as the difference of results arising out of the nature of the case itself.

8-9. But we do not need to go out of ourselves to look for the stumbling-block : the hand, and the foot, and the eye may offend us. And although this fact brings the criminality of offending home to us, it also affords opportunity of removing the cause of offence, which we are able to do by removing the offending member. *Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee . . . and if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.* Every one can see that this is not to be understood and acted on literally, and yet that it teaches us the lesson of self-denial. We have already considered a passage similar to this in the Lord's sermon on the mount (ch. v. 29), where it is shown that by removing the offending members is meant to prevent the intentions of the mind from coming into act. There is, however, some difference between the two passages. In the sermon on the mount the order in which the members are mentioned is the reverse of that which is observed here. And as the first in a series gives its character to the whole, we conclude that the precept, as given in the fifth chapter, where the eye, a symbol of the intellect, is mentioned first, relates to the spiritual class ; and that, as it occurs here, where the hands and feet, symbols of the will, are first spoken of, it relates to the celestial. In regard to the place of punishment, there it is hell, here it is hell-fire ; and as fire is emblematical of love, the fiery hell is that where the love of self reigns, and this is opposite to the highest heaven, where love to God is the ruling principle.

10. Since innocence is that which is to be restored, it is that also which above all things is to be preserved. How important, then, the warning, *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones!* We are guilty of this when we despise innocence and simplicity. Some regard these excellences as weaknesses, and are therefore little inclined to cultivate them. But the warning here is not to the natural man, but to the spiritual ; and is intended to guard him against allowing anything of self-conceit and self-confidence to insinuate itself into his mind, which cannot fail to injure or destroy that purity of heart which enables him to see God. Hence the reason the Lord gives why we should not despise one of these little ones. *For I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.* No doctrine of Scripture is more clearly taught than the ministry of angels. Unconscious as we are of their presence, we are constantly attended by these celestial beings, who are mediums through whom the Lord conveys his gifts to us, and instruments by whom he protects us against the spirits of darkness. The angels

attendant on men are such as are suited to their state and character. Infants and little children are attended by angels of the highest heaven, and these constantly see the Lord as a sun; for they are in love to him, and in innocence, and this is meant, in the sense nearest to that of the letter, by their always beholding the face of the Father. The face of the Lord is the divine love which was in the Lord, consequently the essential divinity, which is Jehovah; for the Father was in him, and he in the Father, and they were one. But in the purely spiritual sense these words mean that the Lord, as to his divine good, is in the good of innocence; for the good of innocence is meant by a little child, and the Divine good by the face of the Father. Whether, therefore, we regard the Lord's words in the immediate or remote sense, the warning is solemn, and should teach us to take heed that we despise not either the infant innocents or the innocence of which they are the emblems.

11. The words which the Lord now addresses to his disciples do not, in their natural sense, seem to be connected with the subject on which he had been instructing them, but, when it is spiritually considered, will be found to have an intimate relation to it. *The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.* In these beautiful words how strongly is expressed the intense ardour and boundless universality of the Divine love! Who can read or hear them without being in some measure impressed by the love which breathes through them, without beholding his God and Father in the amiable light in which they so plainly present him—as a God of boundless mercy, whose will is gratified when his creatures receive his saving grace, and, returning from their wanderings in the paths of evil, find their true home in the shelter of his arms? When it is said that the Son of man is come to save that which is lost, it seems plain that the words must refer, not so much to persons as to principles, or rather to one grace, which it was the Divine purpose to restore, and the restoration of which to its true place in the human heart is the restoration of man to a state of salvation and happiness. Innocence was that which man lost by the fall, and innocence was that which the Lord came to restore by his redemption.

12. The Lord illustrates the truth he had been declaring, by a parable. *How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?* There is a beautiful truth in this as illustrative both of the Lord's love and the unity of his flock. What love does it bespeak in the Infinite to

come down from heaven, by assuming human nature, to seek those who had wandered from his fold! In the Lord's sight angels and men form but one flock, having one fold and one shepherd. Their safety and felicity result from their unity. When one sheep wanders from the fold, the whole flock suffers. If man's happiness is dependent on his connection with angels, the happiness of angels must be proportionally dependent on their connection with men. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, there must be sorrow in heaven over those who live on in impenitence. The shepherd is therefore represented (Luke xv. 4) as leaving the sheep in the wilderness, when going to seek the wanderer whose feet had stumbled upon the dark mountains (Jer. xiii. 16). Look now at the subject in its individual application. The Lord comes down from heaven to earth, in us, when he comes from the internal down into the external, there to seek and restore the affection of innocence and charity, which had been lost in consequence of having separated itself from the corresponding principles in the internal. The remains of heavenly principles are preserved in the internal of every one, but the external in every one goes more or less astray. The shepherd leaves the ninety and nine, and goes after that which is lost, that he may restore it to the fold, and make that completeness which can only result from the union of the principles of the internal and external man.

13. *And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.* Why should there be more joy over the lost one recovered than over those who remained in the fold? Because the affections of the inner man find their true joy only in their connection with the corresponding affection of the outer man. While the internal affections are alone, they are like the ninety and nine sheep left by the shepherd in the wilderness; and it is not until he has returned to them, bringing the lost sheep upon his shoulders, and restoring it to his fold, that there is joy in heaven; for the Lord's rejoicing is his glory imparted to us and felt in us. It is evident that the Lord cannot rejoice more in one than in another; but when we know that what is spoken of in the Word as his feeling is to be understood as his love as it affects us, we can see both the propriety and instructiveness of the language of inspiration.

14. *Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.* The parable of the lost sheep had been delivered to illustrate this truth. It embraces within its meaning and purpose the bringing of little children ultimately to the

kingdom of heaven, and imposes upon parents and others concerned in the education of the young, the church as a body included, the duty of devoted attention to their true welfare; for what God wills, he requires our agency to effect. But how is this result to be secured, but by securing a state of innocence? We cannot, it is true, by the best teaching and example, make the salvation of a human being a matter of certainty; but we, no doubt, can do much to promote it. And the best way to do our part in this important work is to cultivate in our children, and no less in ourselves, the innocence which makes men the children of God. The more of this celestial grace we have, the more we are of the character of those "little ones" of whom our Lord says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." How beautiful, how tender is the love which expressed itself in the words of the Lord regarding little children; and how anxious should we be to be able to feel and act according to it!

15-17. But the Lord turns to a duty seemingly of another kind, and one most difficult to perform—the duty of forgiveness. *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.* We need not expect to pass through life without both giving and receiving offence. We must carefully distinguish between real and fancied injuries. The sense of injury is often the result of sensitive self-love. When we are satisfied that our brother has really trespassed against us, our conduct in regard to him is to be regulated by this law. We are to tell him his fault personally and privately. If this rule were acted upon, much scandal would be swept away, and our social atmosphere cleared of one of its most pestilential vapours. *If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.* We must, of course, have told him his fault for the purpose of gaining him. And this implies that we have told him the truth in love—neither magnifying his fault nor showing resentment against him on account of it. And we must be desirous, not only of gaining him as a friend, but gaining him as a Christian brother—gaining him from his evil, and thus gaining him to God as well as to ourselves. If this effort fail, and we are convinced it has failed through no fault of ours, we are then to seek the aid of others. *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.* These are not intended to be simply witnesses against the offender, but they are to witness between the parties—to see that the complainant has acted justly and kindly in his cause, as well as to testify on what ground the effort to gain his brother has been unsuccessful. These also are understood to be

brethren, and to use their brotherly influence to effect an amicable adjustment of the difference. *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.* The church must exercise a firm but temperate discipline, that a sickly sheep may not be unnecessarily driven from the fold, nor a diseased one be allowed to remain in it to infect the whole flock. So much on the literal sense of this important law. We now turn to its spiritual sense. In the spiritual sense, brethren are those who are united in the bond of charity, and belong to the household of faith. Abstractly, brethren are the principles of charity and faith themselves ; they are also the will and the understanding, and also the internal and the external man. The trespass in this case is a trespass of charity against faith, or of faith against charity, and is one that takes place in ourselves. Nor does this deprive it of its personal application, for it is just in proportion as we commit this inward sin in ourselves that we are liable to commit the outward sin against a brother. But can charity and faith sin against each other ? True charity and faith cannot, but these graces exist in their perfection in no human mind, and the corruption that adheres to them sometimes makes one offend against the other ; and as there is offence, so may there be reproof ; for charity may act undirected by faith, and faith may act uninfluenced by charity. Every act of self-reproach is an instance of this. It is our faith reproving our charity, or our charity reproving our faith, for some trespass it has committed against its brother. These are called the acts of an accusing conscience, and they are rightly so called. Conscience is formed by the union of charity and faith. So far as this union extends, so far conscience exists ; and conscience condemns acts done contrary to its dictates. How does the law, to tell the offending brother alone, apply in this case ? It teaches us that in any disagreement that may arise between our charity and faith, or, what is the same, between our will and understanding, we are to employ the one who has received the offence to correct the one who gave it. If our will acts against our understanding, so as to cause a breach of charity, we are to employ our understanding to convince and gain the offending brother ; and if our understanding gives way to doubt or error, so as to cause a breach of faith, we are to employ the will to correct our understanding ; and the desired result is that, by removing the cause of offence and estrangement, the two may be reconciled. If this first and direct attempt fail, the next step is to seek for aid and testimony from the truths of the Word. "One or two" of these mean truths of faith

and truths of charity. These are to be employed, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. The two witnesses have been explained to mean the will and the understanding, and the three to mean will, understanding, and action. Men will be judged from the testimony of these three, or from the witness of two. But in the purely spiritual sense the two or three witnesses are the goods and truths of the Word. And the idea here set forth is, that if evil or falsity cannot be removed by the action of its opposite good or truth alone, testimony is to be sought from collateral goods and truths, that every word may be established. If the evil or error do not yield to this, the ultimate appeal is to the church. As the church includes all who are in the goods and truths of religion, the church, spiritually, signifies all these goods and truths themselves. To tell the complaint against an offending brother to the church is to call in the whole testimony of the Word; and if this do not succeed, then the resisting member is to be rejected, as opposed to all the laws of goodness and truth, of heaven and the church. In the nearest application of this law, understood in reference to those who are being regenerated, the offending brother is not positive evil or falsity, but spurious good or truth, or the principle of charity or faith. Spurious good is good which is not united to truth, and spurious truth is truth not united to good; so, spurious charity is that which is not united to faith, and spurious faith is that which is not united to charity. So far as either of these is spurious, it trespasses against the other; and so far as either is genuine, it endeavours to correct and seek reconciliation with the other. But if the spurious principle is so opposed to the genuine that it cannot be brought into compliance and agreement with it, it must be rejected, as having in it no real agreement with either the good or truth of the church, which is meant by being an heathen man and a publican.

18. In connection with this disciplinary law, there is again introduced the declaration of the Lord to Peter, after his confession of Jesus as the Christ. *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* In explaining these words as they occur in ch. xvi. 19, we have seen that heaven and earth are the internal and external man, or the spiritual and the natural mind. Whatever is bound and loosed in the external, is bound and loosed in the internal. By this the internal and the external are brought into agreement, and so form one mind. This result follows the establishment of an agreement between good and truth, charity and faith,

will and understanding; for, in reality, good and charity and will are internal, and truth and faith and understanding are external. Our Lord, we may conclude, introduced this statement here for the sake of the connection which the truth it teaches has with the present subject. The internal and the external of the mind being the brethren who may offend and be at variance with each other, we are here instructed that the way to bring the internal and external into harmony, is to bring the external into order, by binding and loosing the principles that require these operations—to bind the evil and set the good at liberty. This subject our Lord continues to treat of in the words which now follow.

19. *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* These words clearly instruct us that whatever man can do for himself amounts to no more than putting himself in the attitude in which the mercies that the Lord is ever willing to bestow can be imparted to him, but that everything really good that he enjoys is afforded him as a free gift from the Lord alone. When man asks, that which he needs is done for him of his Father who is in heaven. We need not insist on the necessity of prayer; the point here that demands our attention is the promise, that the harmonious petition of two or three shall secure an answer. There is a special lesson taught in these divine words. It does not follow that every prayer that two on earth may agree to offer shall certainly be answered; but the two that are meant in the spiritual sense *must* agree in the prayer, both in him who prays in his closet and in every one who prays in the church. Numbers, as we have seen, do not mean quantity, but quality. The number two denotes conjunction or union, and as all conjunction results from love, which is the same thing as goodness, the number two denotes the quality of a thing in respect to goodness. The number three denotes what is full and complete, because there are three essentials, answering to love, wisdom, and use, or to soul, body, and operation, which enter into the constitution of everything that exists,—from the Lord himself—in whom this unity is called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to man, who was created in his image and likeness, and to everything in creation, all of which, in some way or other, bears a reference to man. And as this threefold arrangement of everything in the universe is the result of the eternal laws of divine order, which are the laws of divine truth, therefore, as the number two, in a good sense, denotes the quality of a thing as to good, the number three denotes

the quality of a thing as to truth. The number two here bears its primary signification, that of conjunction, and also its secondary signification, that of good; and the meaning of the declaration is, that if man desires anything good, not with a divided but with a united mind—that is, if he desires it with the whole heart, and asks it from the Lord from such desire—he shall obtain it. Whatsoever is asked from a state and principle that is truly good, and from the conjunction of goodness and truth in the mind, as this is under the control of the man himself, signified by the two being agreed on earth touching anything they shall ask, shall assuredly be done for us of our Father which is in heaven,—the term Father being used to denote, not another divine being separate from the Lord Jesus Christ, but the divine love of his own essence; divine love being the universal Father, and it being from that love as its only source that any and all good can be experienced and received by man.

20. To those encouraging words the Divine speaker adds the reason of this assurance: *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* These words do assuredly, in the sense nearest to the letter, convey the promise of the Lord's continual presence with his church, wheresoever any branch of it, however small, is assembled in his love and fear; and thus illustrate the advantage and necessity of united worship. But in their purely spiritual sense the words carry on the same general subject respecting effectual individual worship as the preceding verse, and teach us that, in everything good and true that is genuine, in the mind of man, the Lord himself is present, filling it with his divine life, and making it fruitful of continual and eternal peace and blessedness. The two gathered together, we have seen, are goodness and truth conjoined; the three signify a state that is full and complete, in consequence of the good in the will and the truth of the understanding being determined to action. The name of the Lord is his nature and quality, and is applied to whatsoever is truly from him, and by which, therefore, he is truly worshipped. And where there are such states as have been described, deriving their character from the Lord's nature and quality, there is the Lord himself, with all his divine perfections, ever filling with his divine fulness what has been received, and eternally conjoining the happy subject of it with himself.

21, 22. Peter, who had heard the Lord speak of one brother trespassing against another, now inquires of him, *Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy*

times seven. Considered literally, the Lord here teaches unlimited forgiveness. He does not mean to inculcate forgiveness to a brother who is always sinning and repenting. The Lord's words are to be understood to inculcate a merciful and forgiving disposition, an ever-readiness to forgive, in imitation of him who is mercy itself and forgiveness itself. The same truth is taught in a higher degree in the spiritual sense. Here, too, forgiveness is to be perpetual. The inclination of truth to good and of good to truth is to be constant, and the desire for union to be unceasing. The numbers seven and seventy times seven express the character of this forgiveness, as well as its extent and constancy. Seven is a holy number. And our Lord's answer to Peter's question implies that we are not only to forgive from the holy principle of faith, which Peter represented, but from the most holy feeling of love, which Jesus expressed,—for this name is expressive of the Lord's love, as Christ is of his truth.

23. The momentous lesson which the Lord delivered on the subject of forgiveness he now illustrates by a parable, and one of the most instructive and edifying that occur in the Word. *Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.* The king is the Lord, his servants are the human race; more specifically, they are the professing members of his church, who, being in possession of the Word, and thus in the knowledge respecting the Lord and their duties, are more peculiarly qualified to be his servants: and in the particular sense, all the principles which are from the Lord in the human mind. The king reckoning with his servants denotes a state of reflection, into which man is brought when regeneration commences, upon his spiritual state and his prospects in eternity, with the anxiety which arises upon a perception of his deficiencies, and of his consequent liability to eternal ruin. No one who has learnt from the Word something of his true state, of the eternal world, and of the innumerable benefits he has received from the Lord, can, if he ever reflects at all, avoid regarding himself in the light of a debtor who owes to the Lord all that he is or has. And when he reflects further upon the use he has made of the Divine mercies, he must be strongly blinded by self-love and pride indeed, if he does not feel how ill a requital he has made for such benefits, and how impossible it is that he should ever make such a requital for them as they deserve. When he reflects upon the matter, under the illumination of divine truth, he will perceive that, while the talents with which he has been intrusted have been confided to him for this one end—to enable him to attain eternal life and happi-

ness—he has directed them chiefly to worldly and transient objects; and that though he may have laid up treasures for himself in this life, he is not rich towards God. Such must be the reflections of every man when first awakened to a serious consideration of the things of eternity. The excitement of such reflections as these, by an influx from the Lord himself, is the experimental form of the king's reckoning with his servants.

24. *And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.* Its being said that one was "brought unto him," denotes the first perception in the mind of man of the infinite obligation he owes to the Lord. This debtor owed his lord the debt before he was "brought unto him;" just as man has received from his birth immense natural and spiritual endowments, whether he ever reflects thereon or not; but the bringing the servant under the eye of his lord, in the character of a debtor to this great amount, expresses a vivid perception awakened in the mind of man of the state in which he stands.

25. It is found that the debtor, while he owes this incalculable sum, has *not to pay*, which denotes the perception which man has in this state of trial—for such it is—of his nothingness and worthlessness. This is a perception that these talents have not been put into the bank, or employed in any other profitable way, so that the Lord, at his coming, might have received his own, and that with usury. The consequence is, that *his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.* This denotes a further perception, presented to the mind of man in this state, that he is liable to have all the ennobling excellences of his nature taken away, and to be consigned, a wretched slave, to the regions of eternal darkness; and that this must be his lot if he makes no better a return for the Divine bounties than he has hitherto done. The lord's commanding the servant to be sold does not mean that the Lord is disposed to exact with severity all that is due to him; but it denotes a perception, on the part of man, that such consequences as are here stated must follow from a perseverance in a course of impenitence. Although the servant is a great debtor, yet he is considered as being still in the service of his lord; by which we learn that, notwithstanding man's rebellion and ingratitude, still, until he has finally confirmed himself in his refusal to make that return to his bountiful Lord and Saviour which his mercy requires, he is regarded as being in his service—a subject of his kingdom. To be sold is to be entirely alienated from the service of so good a Master, which is

perfect freedom, and consigned irrecoverably to the dominion of another master, all whose servants are most abject and cruelly-treated slaves; in other words, to be consigned to the dominion of hell and the powers of darkness. And not only is the servant himself to be sold, but his wife, and children, and all that he has. The man and his wife denote the two leading and general powers of the mind, which are the will and understanding; his children denote all the sentiments respecting what is good and true that are spontaneously produced in the mind from the activity of the will and the understanding; and all that he has denotes all determinations to action thence resulting, and everything of a lower degree that belongs to his mind. For these to be sold is to be for ever alienated from the Lord and his kingdom: it denotes a state in which the will is utterly incapable of loving anything but what is evil, which it regards as its only good, and the understanding is incapable of any apperceptions but what are fantastical and false, which it regards as true; and in which, whatever sentiments are produced by the activity of these principles are of the same perverted order, to which everything that has a place in the mind tends, and which it confirms.

26. The parable proceeds to describe representatively the effect produced in the mind by the discovery that has been made to it of its state, and the dreadful ruin to which it is exposed by its neglect of the duties it owes in return for the great mercies received. This is expressed by its being said, *The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.* These words express the dread that has been excited by the view, before perceived, of the lost state in which man is while he remains immersed in merely natural pursuits, without any regard to higher things; and they also express the first commencement of a desire and attempt to make the return required by the Lord for his mercies, accompanied with most earnest supplication to him for a continuance of those bounties without which man can do nothing. The servant's falling down before his lord denotes deep humiliation on the part of man before his God, with those feelings of the heart without which no real humiliation can exist, which are, that in and of himself he is utter worthlessness and helplessness. To worship the Lord from this state is to acknowledge, with lively conviction, that all good is from him alone. To say to the Lord, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," is to entreat to be allowed to continue under the government, not of divine truth alone, as is the case with those who are condemned, but of the Divine goodness and

mercy, being the result of a perception that nothing but pure mercy in the Lord can bear with the multiplied provocations of man. And to say, "I will pay thee all," does not mean to undertake to cease to be a debtor to divine bounty, for this no man can do, and no man in the possession of his reason can think he can do it, but it denotes an engagement to make that return for boundless mercies which the Lord accepts as payment,—which is to appropriate by actual life the good which the Lord offers to our acceptance, living to him alone, or making the pure goodness and truth of which he is the author the supreme object of our affections, and referring all our mercies to him, in heartfelt gratitude and love.

27. Nothing, however, it is evident, was yet done by the convicted servant—this type of man in general—towards the payment of his debt, beyond entreaties and resolutions. But how were these accepted? *Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.* Here we have a true picture of the boundless universality of the Lord's divine love and mercy towards every individual of the human race. Great as are our delinquencies, the Lord freely remits them all, not imputing our transgressions unto us. And this he in fact does whether we are sincere penitents or not—whether we remain immersed in our evils, or, in compliance with solicitations for our real welfare, we relinquish them, and accept his saving graces indeed. That such is the unbounded nature of the Lord's mercy is evident from the part of the parable which now follows.

28. *But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.* It is important to mark the transition of state here expressed by the significant act of the servant, after the tender scene that had taken place between him and his master,—the servant "went out." All that has hitherto been recorded of the servant and his lord is descriptive of a transaction that had taken place in the mind; the conviction, the remorse, the prayer, the forgiveness, have as yet been acts of the inner man. The concurrence of the outer man is necessary to give effect and endurance to these inward operations; the thoughts and affections of the mind must be confirmed by the words and actions of the life. It is not how we think and feel, but how we speak and act, which determine our real state. How different may we be in our conduct, when we "go out" into the world, from what we are when within in our closet,—when the internal man, which is in immediate connection

with heaven, is active, and when the external man, which is in immediate connection with the world, is active! When it is so explicitly said of the servant that he went out, it is intended to express descent from an interior into an exterior state; and that in this state he was not prepared to bring the mercies he had experienced into act, and to exhibit that love and disposition to forgiveness which, he had just learned, dwell so infinitely in the breast of the Lord, whom man ought to take for his pattern, is evinced in the manner in which he immediately behaved. His fellow-servant whom he found denotes the external man as to the faculty of receiving divine grace from the Lord; for that the external man has also such a faculty must be evident, otherwise it never could be conformed to the image of the internal, and then man could never be regenerated and saved. The one hundred pence which this servant owed to the other denotes the fulness of the capacity of reception in the external or natural man; the number one hundred denoting fulness, and a penny, or denarius, denoting what is peculiar to the natural man—all the truths suited to its nature, and, in fact, all its capacities and talents. The hundred pence, then, have a similar signification, in regard to man as a natural being, to that which the ten thousand talents bear to the whole man, more particularly when he is regarded as a spiritual being. And these hundred pence are said to be owing by this fellow-servant to the first, because all man's capacities as a natural being are designed to minister to his use as a spiritual being; or because all the endowments of the external man are designed to be subservient to the spiritual man, and are considered as the property of the internal. The second servant has the same relation to the first servant as the first has to his lord. As the internal man receives his gifts and endowments immediately from the Lord, the external man receives them immediately from the internal. Strictly speaking, the internal man receives his endowments from the Lord immediately, and the external receives his endowments from the Lord mediately through the internal; as we should say, the soul receives life directly from the Lord, and the body receives life from the soul. But the internal man has no more right to claim these endowments of the external man as his own, than he has to claim as his own those which he has received immediately from the same Divine source of all power and virtue. Yet this, we find, is what he does, and what man is prone to do. This claim is meant by its being said of the servant that he laid hold of his fellow-servant. And the way in which he laid hold of him was by taking him by the throat—literally, he strangled or choked him. How

strikingly does this expression present to us what man does when he desires to possess the gifts and endowments of his natural man in a disorderly manner, not submitting them to higher ends, or enjoying them in dependence on the Lord! For the neck, as we have seen (v. 8), denotes the communication between the internal and the external man; wherefore, whatever intercepts the passage by the neck from the head to the body represents the closing of the communication from the internal man; and as natural death results in the one case, so spiritual death results in the other. Such interruption, then, of the communication between the internal and external man is represented by the one servant taking the other by the throat, or choking him. And the words with which the merciless creditor accompanied his significant action, "Pay me that thou owest," imply more explicitly still a demand on the natural powers for all the enjoyments they can give, and a determination to arrogate all the endowments of the natural man to ourselves, as if we had a right to indulge unrestrictedly in all the pleasures they can afford—as if to live as merely natural or animal beings were the sole end of our existence. In this state, also, whatever divine graces may have been internally received will all appear as if they belonged to the natural man; and hence, in the demand, "Pay me that thou owest," is included an idea as if all that man had in any way received from the Lord were his own, and a claim to himself of merit for every good, whether real or apparent, that he possesses.

29. But, it may be asked, is man, then, to make no use of his natural endowments? Are all natural pursuits prohibited by religion, all natural pleasures regarded by it as criminal? The Lord has given an answer—"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." The same doctrine of the allowableness of natural pursuits, when kept in subordination to spiritual ones, and that it is then only that man's natural endowments are truly valuable to him, and afford him true enjoyment, is taught in the fellow-servant's answer upon being thus roughly handled. It is said that he *fell down at his feet*, by which is signified acknowledgment that the faculties of the natural man are designed for man's use; and he *besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all*; being the same words as the other servant had used when called to account by his Lord. In that case they implied a determination and engagement on the part of man to fulfil the duties required of him by the Lord; here the meaning must necessarily be modified to adapt them to the case of their being given to a fellow-servant, who denotes,

not the man himself, but a certain faculty of his mind. Here, then, they express the great truth, that man's natural powers only render him their proper use when he does not arrogate them to himself, and apply them merely to minister to his natural man without regard to anything further. The request, "Have patience with me," denotes a perception, which is even in this state communicated to man, that he is not to subject his natural endowments to this cruel bondage: and the promise, "I will pay thee all," denotes the further perception that in this case he will derive from them that just use which they are given to afford; that when they are made subordinate to eternal ends, they convey the greatest delight that can be derived from them, at the same time that they conduce to the well-being and support of his internal man, and thus to man's true happiness.

30. This limited, though in reality more full use of the faculties of the natural man does not satisfy the desires of man while he is in this external state: unless he makes his natural gifts his all, it appears to him as if they were nothing. This is represented when it is said of the first servant that *he would not accede to his fellow-servant's request*. On the contrary, he *cast him into prison till he should pay the debt*; by which is meant, that when man regards external and worldly things only, he makes the endowments of his natural man slaves to his perverted lusts and corrupt inclinations, and that while he continues to view these as his all, he is always requiring of them more assistance in the prosecution of his gross pursuits than they are able to give. He deprives them of their proper liberty by turning them from their proper use, and continually regards them as his debtors, to whose service he has an unbounded right.

31. However, it appears, through the divine mercy of the Lord, that these abuses, which, if they continued unchecked, would destroy the man entirely, do not pass unnoticed, and divine means are employed to bring the sinner to a sense of his error. There are *fellow-servants*, we find, who note what is done, and who bring upon it the animadversions of the lord. These other fellow-servants denote all the truths which man has received in his mind and memory from the Holy Word, and from the Lord by means of the Holy Word, whether immediately or otherwise. By these the principle called conscience is formed in the mind, and with them and it there is a communication still preserved with the Lord and heaven. For as man of himself is utterly corrupt and evil, it is evident that the Lord cannot communicate with anything that is man's own; wherefore there are insinuated into the mind of every one knowledges of divine truth, and affections

therewith conjoined, which are not man's own, but are of the Lord with him. From this source it is that a sense of pain and remorse is often felt when man falls into the practice of evil, or confirms himself in the inclination of the natural man alone; and into these the Lord can flow, to operate what is necessary for man's reformation, so far as he does not decidedly confirm himself against it: if he does, after a time, the truths received from the Word become in a manner abolished from his mind, and the remonstrances of conscience, having long been stifled, at last cease to be made. The pain then which is first felt when man plunges into evil and disorder, after his mind has been furnished with such knowledge from the Word as might teach him better, is denoted by its being said that the fellow-servants, when they *saw what was done, were very sorry*, their sorrow denoting contrariety between the man's conduct and the dictates of divine truth.

32. But this not being sufficient to withhold him, it is necessary that he should be subjected to a severe discipline, which is denoted by the servants telling their lord, and his rebuking and punishing the servant. *Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me.* This evidently denotes the perceptions communicated to man of the enormity of his conduct—a conviction of the judgment which is based upon it by the Divine truth; and bitter indeed are the pangs of conscience which are endured by this conviction. “O thou wicked servant.” What can this imply, when pronounced by the Lord, but a declaration and discovery of his own utter depravity and liability to eternal ruin! And what can it imply as apprehended by man but a perception of the corruption of his entire nature both by inheritance and choice—a perception that in himself he is indeed nothing but evil! “I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me.” This evidently is a bringing to mind of the pure mercy of the Lord, which giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and which is such as requires nothing of man but a desire on his part to receive it. This is introduced to point out what is the conduct which is plainly the duty of man, and without a compliance with which even the boundless mercy of the Lord is not sufficient for his salvation.

33. For the Lord adds, *Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?* This instructs us that man is to make charity the rule of his conduct as to his external man, even as the Lord acts from love towards him, and is willing to communicate charity to his internal man. Certainly nothing can be stronger, more pathetic, more impressive, than the mode in which

this remonstrance is stated in the literal sense. It is impossible to convey in a more forcible manner the precept, that man is to cultivate in his bosom the feelings of charity and forgiveness. And to remind him of this duty, he has the Lord's divine words before him, "*I forgave thee all that debt.*" Does it not assure him of the constant presence of the Divine mercy, love, and forgiveness, from whence he may take as much as is sufficient to enable him also to act under the principle of love, and so to remove his evils that they may be forgiven or remitted indeed.

34. The consequence of man's not doing so is stated in its being said, *His lord was wroth.* Such expressions do not mean that there really are any vengeful passions in the Source of all good, but by such language the contrariety between the state of the wicked and the Lord's divine love is what is intended, and their inability to view him such as he really is, because they do not receive his love in their own hearts and minds; for it is always through the medium of his own state that man forms his interior ideas of the Divine nature. So, by the expression of the Lord being wroth, we are taught that when man plunges into evil, or desires to enjoy the powers of his natural man to promote merely selfish designs, he so averts himself from the Lord that he can no longer, as before, enjoy an inward perception of him as a God of love, remitting his debts and deficiencies. Before this can be restored, states of severe temptation are to be undergone; for it is only by means of temptations that evils can be removed from the affections, so that the heart shall lust after them no longer. This process is what is described by its being said that the lord *delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.* The payment of all that was due unto him, in this view of the subject, is that species of payment which is that alone which the Lord requires, which consists in the grateful acceptance of the Lord's mercies, the appropriation of them to the use for which they are given, and the return of all to the Lord, in the sincere acknowledgment that all are from him. But should man determine to continue in the confirmation of his evils, then these words describe, not the temptations by which evils are removed, but the desolations by which he is deprived of every real good which he had received, and every noble faculty which he had abused; and the payment of the debt is then to be understood in the other sense which we have seen it bears,—that of the resumption, as it were, by the Lord, of all the endowments which man continues to pervert. When once evil has been confirmed in the mind, it can only be removed by the discipline of temptation; and

removed it must be before good can become predominant, and the man prepared for a state wherein good ever reigns. So when once any good or truth has been received in affection, and confirmed, it only can be removed, if evil obtains the mastery, by desolations; and it must be removed before the wretched victim can be consigned to his final home in the abodes of darkness; and if it cannot be removed, it is because a state of profanation has been induced, which is attended with worse horrors even than one of unmixed evil.

35. Since, even at the best, evils once confirmed can never be removed from the interiors but by painful temptations, how strongly should come home to us the divine words with which the Lord makes the application of his parable,—*So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.* In the natural sense this teaches us that we cannot be in the reception of the Lord's love towards ourselves, but in proportion as we are in the exercise of charity towards others. And, spiritually, we are reminded by it of the necessity of putting away evils, by man himself, in order to their removal and remission by the Lord. In the Lord's prayer we are desired to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" thus the forgiveness of debts by us is prescribed as the measure of the forgiveness which will be awarded to us by our Divine Judge; and we are in the strongest manner forbidden to look for forgiveness on any other ground, when we are even commanded in our prayers to recognize the unalterable nature of this rule of the Lord's divine order. The meaning is, that so far as we have ourselves power over our conduct and inclinations, we are to regulate them by the dictates of the laws of eternal truth and goodness. Now we have such power over all that belongs to our natural man. We can control our actions so as to refrain from the commission of actual evils. We can control our inclinations and thoughts so far as not to encourage and wilfully dwell upon such tendencies or imaginations as we know to be evil. So far as this, we can spiritually forgive our brother his trespasses; we can make good or charity our rule of action, and remit or remove whatever would violate it. So far then our heavenly Father will forgive our trespasses; will remit or remove the tendencies and lusts towards evil which exist in our interior, and will pass upon us eventually the judgment of charity and mercy.

CHAPTER XIX.

Two most momentous questions are settled in the present chapter—one on the nature of marriage, the other on the conditions of salvation. To hear the truth on these subjects from the lips of Him who created man, and who came to restore him, and thus to redeem marriage to its primeval purity, and man to his original order and happiness, is a privilege one should greatly prize.

1. *And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan.* This describes a progression of the Lord's love or goodness in man from the external, which is Galilee, to the internal, which is Judea, through the knowledges of good and truth, which is Jordan. Yet it was only to the coasts of Judea that the Lord came, implying an elevation of the Lord's love, not into the internal itself, but to its externals or borders.

2. Here the Lord, as was his wont, engaged in works of benevolence. *Great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.* Those affections and thoughts in us that follow the Lord with a desire to be freed from their hereditary and acquired infirmities, and to be elevated by him, and into conjunction with him, are restored to soundness, and brought into heavenly order, so as to fit them for useful and happy activity.

3. But where good is present, there evil shows itself. *The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?* When the good affections and thoughts are attracted to the Lord for instruction and teaching, the evil are excited into opposition, seeking too often to overturn the authority of divine truth by insidious reasonings. Like Satan among the sons of God, the Pharisees, or some other enemies of the truth, are sure to appear where the good and faithful assemble. But these attempts are turned by the Lord to advantage, and are made to end in the clearer perception and fuller confirmation of the truth. And such is the result of all the doubtings and reasonings of our rebellious selfhood, if we are faithful to the Lord and to our own best interests. The questions here raised by the Pharisees, and answered by the Lord, are of great importance as general principles, and deserve our most serious attention. The question about the law of divorce has already been considered in ch. v. 31, where the Lord himself introduces the subject. It is only necessary here to notice the opinion and practice in the Jewish church which gave rise to the present question. As Moses assigned no precise cause of divorce, it came to be a question among

the Jews of a later period what were the legitimate causes of divorce, or whether a man might not put away his wife for any cause whatever. The difference of opinion on this question came to be represented by two distinct schools of divinity among the Jews, one of which restricted the causes of divorce to what was scandalous and dishonourable, while the other held the husband's displeasure to be a sufficient reason. When the Pharisees came to the Lord it was to hear which of these opinions he maintained.

4, 5. When the Lord answered the Pharisees he did not so much as notice their opinions and disputes, he did not even go back to Moses to point out the true meaning of the law on which their different opinions rested. Instead of referring to the temporary law of divorce, he went back to the primeval law of marriage, and showed that both creation and the law of the Creator rendered the bond of marriage indissoluble, except for one cause. *Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?* These divine words establish marriage on its original and true foundation. The man and the woman were created for each other, and their union was designed to be spiritual, like their nature, and eternal, like their existence. Of all God's creatures man only was formed in his image and likeness. His image and likeness are stamped upon his whole nature and constitution. And as God in the beginning made them male and female, the Divine image has a profound reference to the characteristic difference on which their union rests. The man may be said to have been created in the image of God, and the woman in his likeness. The double resemblance in which man is said to have been formed can only be understood when it is known that God in his essence is Love itself and Wisdom itself, and that man was created to be a recipient of love and wisdom from God. God's wisdom in man makes him God's image; God's love in man makes him God's likeness. In order that male and female might be so closely united as to be "no more twain, but one flesh," the man was created to be an image of God and the woman to be a likeness: in other words, the man was created to be a recipient and a form of God's wisdom, and the woman to be a recipient and a form of his love. And as love and wisdom in God are perfectly united, so love in the woman and wisdom in the man were designed to become so intimately united as to be spiritually and eternally one—the image of the union of Love and Wisdom in God. The image in the man and the likeness in the woman aspire after union.

The union of love and wisdom in the Divine mind gives rise to this aspiration after union in human minds. And two whose union in marriage has been the result of this united aspiration, untainted by impure desires and unworthy motives, are those whom God hath joined together, and whom man may not put asunder. We have spoken of the nature of marriage, as derived from its first and highest origin in the union of love and wisdom in the Lord, but true marriage has its immediate origin in the union of love and wisdom, or of charity and faith, in the minds of the married partners themselves. Those only who are in the heavenly marriage of love and faith are capable of that union of heart and soul which is true marriage. True marriage is a spiritual union, and it is evident that none but the spiritually-minded can be united in true marriage. No wonder, then, that divorce was so common among the Jews, who were a natural-minded people; nor is it surprising that in the world there are so many unhappy matrimonial connections. Unhappy marriages do not result so much from unsuitable pairs, as from ill-conditioned individuals, who could not be happy partners in marriage under any circumstances. If one or both of the parties in the marriage covenant have neither the principles of true union nor the elements of true happiness in themselves, how can the bond that unites them be otherwise than superficial or galling? True and happy marriage can only exist in connection with true religion. Such marriages, and such only, are spiritual and eternal: for that only which descends from heaven can ascend to heaven again, and that only which comes from the Eternal can endure for ever. The remarks we have made upon marriage, as the union of male and female, of a youth and a maiden, drawn to each other by love truly conjugal, has, to some extent, anticipated our exposition of the Lord's words according to the spiritual meaning. The subject of their spiritual sense is the union of love and wisdom, or of charity and faith, in the human mind, of which we have already spoken. This union is the marriage to which heaven is compared, and which makes heaven, for heaven is love and faith, and love and faith are heaven. Heaven as a place derives its character from heaven as a state.

5. The conditions on which true marriage, both as a union of principles and of persons, exists, are stated by our Lord in the purpose which he, as our Creator, had in making them at the beginning male and female. *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.* Marriage does indeed alter a man's condition, since it makes him the head of a

new household ; but more than this is involved in the Lord's words. Father and mother, in the internal sense, mean the nature which we inherit from our parents, which is comprehended in the two ruling affections of the natural mind, the loves of self and of the world. As the old nature which we inherit is meant by father and mother, the new nature which we choose is meant by the wife. The wife is the spiritual love of what is good and true, which the Lord provides for those who desire to become new creatures. It is the appointed order of our Creator and Regenerator, that we leave the old and cleave to the new. The husband and wife of this new and spiritual household are the new understanding and will which form the new mind, and thus the new man. This leaving of father and mother—this relinquishing of our corrupt selfhood—is equally necessary to our entering into spiritual and natural marriage; since, as we have seen, there is no true marriage but the union of the good and the true either in one mind or between two. In human pairs nothing is truly married but truth in the husband and good in the wife; everything opposite to these is the cause of division, not of union—of discord, not of happiness.

6. When two are thus joined together, *they are no more twain, but one flesh*. The Lord's declaration, both here and in Genesis, of the unity of husband and wife, is as striking as it is emphatic. "No more twain, but one flesh,"—what could be more expressive of two becoming one? Their duality is quite as emphatic as their unity. Man and woman are much more twain than man and man, or than woman and woman; and so much the more twain, so much the more one. They are not different shades of the same colour, but are complementary colours; rather, they are the two elements of light and heat, whose union is the origin of all colour. They are two parts of one humanity, each having what the other wants to make the perfect man. Sex is of the soul as much as of the body; and every thought and affection of the man is masculine, and every thought and affection of the woman is feminine, not copies, but counterparts of each other, so diverse are they. But their diversity is the ground of their unity. It is because they are so distinctly two that they can become so completely one. And when two, created by Infinite Love and Wisdom for each other, are united in true marriage, they are no more twain, but one flesh, being one man, having one will and one way. Of such may it be truly said that God hath joined them together. *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*. Without dwelling on this prohibition in reference

to judicial separations, let us rather advert to its more interior sense. In every sense and in every case marriage is of God, and separation is of man. God is the author of union, man is the author of division. Let us beware then of admitting anything of our own self-will into that which is of the Divine will. *What therefore God hath joined together, whether it be love and faith in our hearts, or husband and wife in our homes, let not man put asunder.*

7-9. When the Lord had thus shown that marriage, being of God, is not to be dissolved by man, the Pharisees objected—*Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?* To which our Lord answered, *Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.* Having already considered the subject and law of divorce (ch. v. 31), we need not enter on it here. The fact which the Lord here states, that the permissive law of divorce owed its origin to the hardness of heart of those to whom it was given, is most important. God, as we have remarked, never permits a lesser evil but to prevent a greater. To consider this subject spiritually, the dispensation of Moses represented the natural state of man as preparatory to the spiritual state. In that state there is no true marriage of goodness and truth; there is not conjunction, but adjunction, and this admits of loosing as well as binding. Yet this arises from there being as yet no spiritual will, but “hardness of heart,” which is a state at variance not only with man’s original state, but with the first principles of spiritual order, signified by “the beginning,” which spiritually means, not first in respect to time, but first in respect to state. With the spiritual man, therefore, there is no putting away, except for the cause of fornication.

10. But when the Lord had declared the indissoluble nature of marriage, the disciples themselves were astonished, and their Jewish prejudices being shocked, they said, *If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.* The disciples were as yet more Jewish than Christian in their ideas and character, and represented man in a transition state, while passing from his natural to a spiritual state. And to one in this state the pure truth relating to the heavenly marriage cannot appear as good, but seems to impose a burden that is heavy to bear—a bond that is inconsistent with true freedom. And so with the heavenly marriage of love and faith.

11. To this the Lord answers, *All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.* One would think there could be no great difficulty in admitting the rectitude of the law which the Lord had delivered. Yet the Divine law of marriage is repugnant to the natural man. The polygamy of the heathen world affords too abundant evidence of this; and the Jews themselves, who were natural men, were in the same gross and dark state in regard to marriage. Those only to whom it is given can see the true law.

12. The Lord proceeds to show who these are. *For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.* The eunuchs, then, are they to whom it is given to receive the Lord's saying respecting the law of marriage. Naturally, these are incapable of marriage. That the Lord intended to convey, under this imagery, some profound truth respecting those who become fit for his kingdom, is evident, not only from the declaration itself, but from the concluding remark, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it," and which more correctly means, "He that is able to comprehend it, let him comprehend it." Does not this direct us to a hidden meaning? The Lord's words yield a consistent and instructive meaning only in the spiritual sense. Otherwise, what can be meant by eunuchs born, made of men, and made of themselves? And yet in the spiritual sense all this yields a meaning as beautiful as it is edifying. By these are described the three classes of the regenerate—the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural. The celestial are meant by those who have been born eunuchs from their mother's womb; the spiritual, by those who have been made eunuchs of men; and the natural, by those who have made themselves eunuchs. The womb signifies celestial love and innocence; and they who are eunuchs from their mother's womb are those who are born again into a state of celestial love, which is love to the Lord. Man signifies the understanding; and those who are made eunuchs of men are those who are regenerated into a state of spiritual love, which is love to the neighbour. Those who make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake are those who acquire truth in the memory, and by a life according to it are regenerated into the good of obedience. The description of male purity which our Lord here gives is analogous to that of female purity given in the Revelation (ch. xiv. 4), where the regenerate are described as virgins, who have not been defiled with women, and who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. As men

signify intellect, and women will, these two different descriptions of masculine and feminine chastity relate to purity of intellect and of will, or of thought and of affection ; and, combined under one view, describe the regenerate mind, or full man, as consisting of the new understanding and will, or the new heart and the right spirit, which God creates in those who suffer themselves to be born again from above.

13. When we understand the passage as relating to spiritual purity, and the different degrees of excellence to which the regenerate attain by subduing the lusts of the flesh, we can see the connection of the subject with the incident which immediately follows the Lord's discourse. *Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray.* The distinguished place which little children hold in the gospel history is one of the most beautiful of its truly human features. It is but natural that these little innocents should stand forth prominently in a history which begins with the birth of the infant Saviour as innocence itself incarnate. This bringing of little children to Jesus represented the ascription to the Lord of all the innocence we have received from him, that his blessed influence may descend through it into our hearts and minds. This is spiritually to bring little children to Jesus, and to ask him to lay his hands on them and pray. *And the disciples rebuked them.* Little sympathy had they with these little innocents, because as yet they had little of that spiritual innocence of which these little ones were the types. And they exemplified in their conduct the character of that principle and state which they represented. The Lord's love flows immediately into innocence in the will, and not into it through intellectual good or truth ; and therefore the disciples, who as yet represented these intellectual principles, rebuked those who brought the little children to Jesus.

14, 15. *But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them.* These gracious words, how much do they express, how much do they teach ! The innocence of infancy and childhood is a remnant of that which existed in paradise—the only good, perhaps, that has survived the fall ; not that this innocence has been transmitted, but that the capacity for receiving it has been preserved. In the innocence of childhood we see a faint outline of what man has been, as well as the shadow of what he may become, by being created anew, and restored to the image and likeness of God. We see in it, moreover, something of that which the Lord can infuse into the human

mind when the selfhood is not active, and which he does impart to the angels of that heaven with which infants are connected, and through which their innocence descends. We may learn, lastly, how much we are influenced by innocence, through a disinterested love for little children, which our Lord exhibited in such perfection. Only the disinterested love for children can have this effect. The natural, as well as the spiritual, may adopt the first half of the Lord's address to his disciples, "Suffer little children to come unto me;" but the spiritual only can use the second, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The true love of little children is for the sake of their innocence as the gift of heaven, and for the sake of leading them to heaven by the innocence with which heaven inspires them. Their innocence is the object of all true love, and their happiness in heaven is the end of all true education. It is on the innocence of childhood that the Lord still lays the hand of his Omnipotence, to keep the little ones under his influence and protection, and lead them if possible to the kingdom of heaven. "And he laid his hands on them," and departed thence. And this brings us to a new state, and introduces us to a new subject.

16, 17. *And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* The subject of this inquiry is, like that of the Pharisee on marriage, so important as a plain and practical truth, that we propose to view it first and principally in this aspect. We have first to consider the young man's salutation of the Lord—"Good Master;" and what has been considered the Lord's refusal of the title in his answer—*Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.* These words are capable of two literal interpretations compatibly with the divinity of the Lord. Either the Lord speaks with reference to the intelligence of his questioner (who probably had no idea of the relation that Jesus had to God), and wishes to remind him that, if such a teacher be called good, it can only be from his having and exhibiting any of the goodness of him who alone is good; and then the words (so far from denying that the Lord was good) tacitly assert that his goodness must be from God, and might lead the questioner to suspect a higher character in the Lord than he presupposed. Or, the Lord speaks under the human consciousness of his not yet complete oneness with the Father—that is, realizes at the time the view that the Essential Divinity is alone goodness, and that it is not yet, or then, conscious of being one with the Father. In any case it does not follow, because the Lord asked him why he called him good, that the Lord refused to be so

called by any one. Suppose an emphasis on the *thou*, and the question would not in the least imply a refusal to be so called. We only mention this last as an argument, for there is no emphatic *thou* in the Greek. Or place the emphasis on *why*, then the sentence need not imply any refusal. If the questioner were one whose heart, as known to the Lord, did not love keeping the commandments, to ask him why he called the Lord good might be due wholly to the character of the questioner. It has been well observed that the Lord calls himself (John x. 11) "the Good Shepherd," which is itself sufficient to convince us that he could not intend to refuse, as too exalted for him, the title of "Good Master." The design of the Lord was rather to excite in the mind of the young man who uttered the salutation, and in the mind of every one who reads it, an inquiry as to the real import of the term in reference to Jesus. As if the Lord had said, "Thou callest me good: there is none good but one, that is, God. Dost thou acknowledge me to be that one—to be that God who alone is good?" Such Jesus was, and such the acknowledgment of him as the Good legitimately implies. He is the supreme, the only Good, and as such the Giver as well as the Teacher of eternal life. The Lord's words, more literally rendered, are—"Why askest thou me concerning good? there is one good, God." This does not, however, materially affect the sense, or the ground of the opinion or argument we have noticed. The Lord, we know, questioned men to excite them to reflection; and the demand which he here makes is one which it is most necessary every one who proposes to be a disciple of Jesus should answer for himself.

But the Lord, without waiting for a reply to a question which every one will answer according to his state, proceeded to give an answer to this momentous inquiry; and that answer contains one of the most momentous truths which the Lord ever uttered or revealed. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* It is most worthy of our consideration that this question should have been providentially put to our Lord, who, as the Saviour, was best able and entitled to give the full and final answer. And his answer, stating the condition of salvation, is in harmony with the often-repeated declaration, that he will judge every one according to his works. It is true that faith is also given as a condition of salvation: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31); and some, supposing that faith and works are opposed to each other, have, to reconcile these two apparently opposite statements, assumed that the Lord, in answering the inquiry of a Jew, stated the legal, but not the gospel

conditions of salvation. It is true that Judaism, as the dispensation of the law, is entirely different from Christianity, as the dispensation of the gospel; but the works of the moral law are not opposed to the faith of Jesus Christ. The conditions of salvation are the same under both covenants. The keeping of the commandments is as much a Christian as it was a Jewish condition of life. The difference is, that the Jew was to live according to the letter of the law; the Christian is to live according to its spirit. The old covenant was the law as written upon tables of stone; the new covenant is the same law as written upon the table of the heart. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people," (Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 8, &c.) This is the covenant under which we live, as expressed by our Lord when he said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."

18-21. When the young man had been told that he must keep the commandments, he inquired, *Which?* *Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This was a singular question, since the Lord's answer included the whole, and no partial obedience can be considered as the fulfilment of the law. Our Lord points out some which, however, may be considered as representing the whole; in the spiritual sense this is the case. To kill is to extinguish in one's self the love of good, which is life, and to commit adultery is to profane it; to steal is to alienate truth, and to bear false witness is to falsify it; to honour father and mother is to love the Lord as the supreme good and truth; and to love his neighbour as himself is to love good in another, and another's good as he loves his own. In the supreme sense, all these acts that are forbidden and required have immediate reference to our relation to the Lord; as for example, to steal is to claim for ourselves the merit of doing good and believing truth, which belongs to God only. And this is just one of the evils, as we shall see, of which the young man had been guilty. He had lived up to the standard of the law according to the letter. He could respond to the Lord's enumeration of the commandments, *All these things have I kept from my youth up.* He answered in sincerity, and according to truth, so far as he knew it. Our Lord did not dispute his claim to having lived a righteous life. Indeed, we are told (Mark x. 21) that the Lord regarded him with love, as he loves all sincere obedience,

however imperfect it may be. But that the righteousness of this man wanted the inward spiritual life which makes obedience perfect, is evident from its being unable to bear the test which Jesus applied to it, and by which all righteousness is to be tried. When he had declared that he had done all the things which the law demanded, he asked, *What lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.* Those who believe that the law is no longer a condition of salvation have supposed that the one thing this man lacked was faith. But from the requirement of our Lord it would seem as if he rather lacked charity; for the Lord did not ask him to believe, but to do—to sell his possessions and give to the poor. He had obedience, but he lacked charity or love; this he required to make his obedience perfect; and this was what the Lord demanded of him. He required him to give up the inordinate love of the world, and love his neighbour as himself. It is possible to fulfil with exemplary fidelity the whole law in the letter, without having the love of self and of the world removed from the heart. Obedience to the commandments comprehends two things—self-denial and active virtue, which is ceasing from evil and doing good. Nor is it necessary only to put away evil before the eyes of man, but to put away the evil of our doings from before the eyes of God (Isa. i. 16). And this evil is that which enters into our good deeds, and defiles them with the hidden impurity of our unregenerated nature. The young man, while scrupulous in his observance of the law, had never, perhaps, thought that he was still under the dominion of the love of the world. Our Lord, who knew his heart, touched this tender part, and immediately it shrunk as a punctured fibre, or as the apple of the eye when covered with a flood of light. Here was something to be undone and to do which he had never dreamt of as coming within the requirement of the law. To become poor on earth that he might be rich in heaven had not occurred to him as a duty. And, indeed, this is the difference between legal and Christian righteousness, and between the religion of the natural and of the spiritual man. Poverty of spirit is, however, that which the spirit of our Lord's teaching inculcates. For a man may even part with all his wealth, and yet not be poor in spirit. And on the other hand, he may be poor in spirit without parting with all his wealth, except it be the possessions which minister to his spiritual pride—the possessions that constitute his selfhood, which leaves the stamp of self on everything he does. Only those who sell this can follow the Lord; for he was

meek and lowly of heart, and those who follow him must take up their cross, and walk with him in patient self-denial, and in loving beneficence.

22. *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.* How natural is such an answer to one who had never dreamt that the love of the world as a ruling passion should be incompatible with the kingdom of heaven! Yet we are to observe that the young man did not, like some of those who questioned the Lord, depart impenitent and scoffing. He went sorrowful. He was desirous of entering into the kingdom of heaven, but was not yet prepared to make the necessary sacrifice. His great possessions he was not yet prepared to relinquish. These possessions included wealth of knowledge, but that knowledge was grounded in natural love; and it was this love which he was required to sell, that he might become poor in spirit.

23. When the young man had gone away sorrowful, unable as yet, because unwilling, to part with his great possessions, the Lord turned to his disciples, and said unto them, *Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* It is almost self-evident that the Lord intended to convey a higher than the natural truth in these declarations. In regard to wealth, he himself so far expounded his own statement by saying, that it was not possessing but trusting in wealth that excluded men from heaven. It is not, then, riches themselves, but the selfish or sordid love of them, that is condemned and is condemnatory. But this judgment not only applies to natural but to spiritual riches. Spiritual riches are the knowledges of spiritual things; for knowledge is mental wealth, and religious knowledge is but a higher kind, intended to minister to the purposes of spiritual life. But spiritual knowledge, like natural and material wealth, may be employed for noble purposes or used for unworthy ends. It may be treasured up, too, for its own sake, without a view to any useful end; or, what is more akin to the present subject, it may be considered sufficient of itself to secure a place in the kingdom of heaven. Those who thus regard knowledge are the rich, against whom the Word pronounces such severe judgments, and against whom heaven is closed; and their knowledges are the great possessions in which they trust, but which they must sell and give to the poor if they would have treasure in heaven. Knowledge, even of divine and spiritual things, is earthly treasure when laid up in the natural mind; and it prevents man from acquiring treasure in heaven or in the spiritual mind, till it is severed from the connec-

tion with his own self-love. He sells that which he hath, also, when he ceases to claim the ownership both of temporal and spiritual riches, and ascribes them to God, and employs them in his service. He who thus parts with his possessions, to become poor in spirit, exchanges empty knowledge for substantial goodness, and is raised by it from spiritual poverty to eternal wealth.

24. But trust in knowledge is vain. *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* They who think to enter heaven by their riches are they who think to perceive the truth of heaven by intellectual penetration alone,—differently from the apostle, who asserts that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. This is trying to make the camel go through the eye of the needle; for a camel signifies knowledge and science, and the eye of a needle spiritual truth. The natural cannot enter into the spiritual. No wealth or perfection of science can ever enable man to discover the things which are above nature. Spirit and matter are separated by a discrete degree, and are united by correspondence, and therefore have nothing in common. So is it with all natural and spiritual things. Those who attempt to enter into spiritual truth by merely natural means “carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to stand still” (Isa. xxx. 6, 7). To enter into spiritual truth from himself is to enter from without; to enter from God is to enter from within. In the one case, it is to endeavour to see spiritual things from natural light; in the other, it is to see them from the light of heaven. If men will but still their self-intelligence, and listen reverentially to the voice of God as it speaks to them through his Word, they will find themselves strong, and their efforts successful, when before they were weak, and were baffled in all their attempts. They will not need to give up science and silence reason; their scope will be increased instead of being diminished. For although reason, by means of science, cannot find out God, or discover the soul, or discern spiritual things, it can find in nature abundant means of confirming the truth on these subjects, when accepted from revelation. When spiritual truth is once admitted, science, which seemed only fertile in negations, is found to be boundless in means of confirmation. When “the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee; the multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and

Ephah : all they from Sheba shall come ; they shall bring gold and incense : they shall show forth the praises of the Lord" (Isa. lx. 1, 5, 6). When a man has admitted spiritual wisdom into his mind, all the wealth of science will be added to him for glory and praise.

25. When the disciples heard the Lord's declaration, that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, *they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?* It appeared to them as if the Lord had made entrance into his kingdom almost an impossibility. And this at first sight appears to every disciple to be the consequence of the law of order which our Lord declared. But this arises from their not understanding what the truth teaches on the subject. Our Lord therefore proceeds to explain it.

26. *But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible ; but with God all things are possible.* That which in its own nature is contrary to man is still more impossible with God than it is with men. But the opposition to order in this case consists in man attempting to do in his own way, and by his own power, what can only be done in God's way and by his power. Man fails because he begins from himself ; to succeed, he must begin from God.

27. *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee ; what shall we have therefore?* This is a question which faith may ask when it is able to make so honourable a declaration,—one that contrasts so favourably with the conduct of the young man. In those days, when spiritual states and truths were to be embodied in representative acts, those who became the Lord's disciples were sometimes required to leave all their temporal goods and homes, and follow him in his pilgrimages. We all have to forsake self and the world, of which these are the symbols, and to follow the Lord's divine example in a life of holiness. Can we, in the Lord's presence, say in truth, "We have left all, and followed thee"? It would be well for us were we able to profess truly that we had earnestly desired and faithfully endeavoured to do the disciple's duty. Then we might ask with humility, "What shall we have therefore?" Let us listen to the gracious reply.

28. *Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* This is an instance of the Lord addressing his disciples according to their own notions of things. They were yet in the belief that the Lord had come to restore Israel, and set up a

kingdom upon earth ; and the Lord here answers their question, according to their views and desires, by promising to make them judges in Israel. And thus it ever is that the truth of the Word falls into men's ideas. But, as in the present instance, that which they apprehend naturally when they themselves are natural, they apprehend spiritually when they become spiritual. The Lord's promise to the disciples speaks for itself, as to its containing a spiritual meaning, and being intended to have only a spiritual fulfilment. As the Lord's glorification was the pattern of human regeneration, those who follow him in the regeneration are those who become like him, by doing as he did. The life of regeneration is a life of humiliation, including suffering and the death of the old man. This humiliation leads to glory. And the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory when his holy truth, glorified in us, is throned on the highest affections of our hearts. The disciples, who represented all the goods and truths of the Word, derived from the Lord and ruling under him, sit on twelve thrones when these principles enter into and govern all our states of life. The Lord's throne is in the inner man ; the thrones of the apostles are in the outer man. The twelve tribes of Israel are spiritual truths in the natural mind, which are arranged by and under the general truths, meant by the apostles, and which arrangement is meant by judging. For the idea here presented is not that of a single act of judgment, at the time of the end, but continual judgment, like that of the judges of Israel. The Lord and his apostles are always judging, the keeping in order the thoughts and affections of the regenerate mind.

29. If the promise to the apostles to sit on thrones has an evidently spiritual meaning, that which follows it is still more evidently remote from a literal fulfilment. For the Lord continues : *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* By these are not, of course, meant a man's natural possessions and relations. He who requires us to love our enemies cannot command us to hate our friends. And, indeed, if anything like a literal compliance with such a requirement were meant, why should it be demanded of the man, or husband, and not of the woman, or wife ? But the truth is, the whole relates to the spiritual, and not to the natural life of the disciple. These members of his house are the principles of the old man, the hereditary and acquired qualities of his unregenerate nature. It begins with houses and ends with lands, and by these are meant the mind itself as to its

inmost and outermost recipient faculties. These faculties in our unregenerate state are perverted and corrupt, and their perversions and corruptions are to be rejected. The members of the household are merely natural affections of our unregenerate nature. Father and mother are the loves of self and the world, and brethren and sisters are the thoughts and affections derived from these. The wife is the ruling love which the understanding has chosen for and united to itself, and the children derived from this marriage are the worldly affections and thoughts that spring from this union. To forsake these is a positive duty; to forsake our natural relations would be a positive crime. But the promise is, that every one that forsakes them shall receive an hundredfold of the same. An hundredfold is the symbol of completeness and perfection. And the promise implies, that he who puts off the old man with the lusts thereof, and puts on the new man with his pure and holy affections, will find himself rewarded an hundredfold for the sacrifice he has made. But to receive this reward he must forsake these enemies of his own household for the Lord's sake. To forsake evil for his own sake—that is, for the sake of his own reputation or interest—is not truly to forsake it, but only to desist from it; but to forsake evil because it is sin against God, is truly to forsake and hate it. With the promise of an hundredfold is given also that of life everlasting. For this implies not only eternal life in heaven, which is the ultimate reward of the righteous, but new life and delight, as the result of new principles.

30. Our Lord concludes by saying, *But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.* Many that occupy the first rank in worldly, and even in religious estimation, shall be in the last place in the other life; while many of those who are in the lowest place here will occupy the highest hereafter. In the spiritual sense it teaches that regeneration inverts the state of man. It puts in the last place those things that were first, and in the first place those that were last. In his unregenerate state the world is first and heaven is last in his thoughts and affections; in his regenerate state heaven, which was last, becomes first, and the world, which was first, becomes last. And so with body and soul, nature and spirit, time and eternity. These, as ends, change places with man's change of state. In another respect, also, things that were first become last, and the last first. In the regeneration, states and principles change places, those first acquired becoming last, and those last acquired becoming first. Thus is it with truth and goodness, faith and charity, obedience and love. In the early stage of the new life, truth is before goodness, faith

before charity, obedience before love ; in the later stage the first of these becomes last, and the last first. Then are they in their right order, as they were in the beginning. And he who came to restore the order which man inverted by the fall has, in these words, pronounced and given the promise of paradise restored, when all things that are first in intrinsic worth shall be first in man's esteem, and those that are in themselves of least value will occupy the lowest place in his affections.

CHAPTER XX.

THIS chapter commences with the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. In the general sense it relates to the calling of the Jews and Gentiles, the Jews being meant by the labourers first called into the vineyard, and the Gentiles by those called at the eleventh hour. In a more interior sense, it relates to the universal call of the gospel, and the different characters of those who accept it. Those first called are such as claim merit for their works, and those called last, and, indeed, all who entered the vineyard after those first hired, are such as do good from charity and love. The character of the self-righteous is described by their bargaining for their hire, while the character of those who do good from charity and love is described by their being satisfied with the assurance of the householder that they would receive what was right, and by the murmuring of the first and the contentment of the others.

As every part of the Word in the internal sense relates to the regeneration of man, this parable is to be understood as descriptive of a certain part of that divine work. To see it in this application we must consider the transaction as taking place in the mind of one who has entered on the new life ; and the various persons mentioned in the parable are to be regarded as corresponding principles, in their relation to, and connection with, each other. These consist of three different characters—the householder, the steward, and the labourers. Then there are three different places with which these are more immediately connected—the house, understood, though not expressed, from which the householder went out, the vineyard, and the market-place. These correspond to certain principles, and to faculties of the human mind, to which they belong. The house denotes the will, the vineyard the understanding, and the market-place the memory ; and the householder, the steward, and the labourers are the three different

kinds of principles that respectively belong to these faculties, or are at least found in connection with them at that stage of the regenerate life which the parable describes. There are also three different times, and three different classes of labourers hired—those hired first, at the dawn, those hired during the progress of the day, and those hired last, at the eleventh hour. As these successive times denote successive states, the first is a state of obedience, the second a state of faith, and the last a state of love. Having presented this general view of the meaning of the parable, we proceed to consider the particulars of the parable itself.

1. The parable commences by saying that *the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard*. The kingdom of heaven is the Lord's government in the heart and understanding. The kingdom of heaven is formed in the mind by regeneration; therefore, whether we speak of the regeneration of man, or the establishment in his mind of the kingdom of heaven, it amounts to the same. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man, an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, because this going out of the householder at the early dawn describes the commencement of regeneration, or of that stage of it which is here represented. Regeneration, we have often had occasion to remark, consists in bringing the external man into conformity with the internal. The internal itself, indeed, has first to be reformed. But as the great labour of the regenerate life consists in regenerating the external, this is described in the present parable. This work is begun when a man, no longer satisfied with thinking and feeling within himself that religion is true and good, begins to carry it out in the business and the pleasures of life—to go with it into the market and the vineyard. It is then that the regenerating man, like the householder, *goes out*, by bringing his principles forth from their place in the interiors of his mind into the active duties of life, to call into action his lower faculties, with their acquirements, that by their means he may work out the true end of life, which is to bring forth the fruit of righteousness. The beginning of this work is the early morning, the dawn of actual regeneration.

2. The object of the householder in going out early was to hire labourers into his vineyard. *And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard*. We have said that the market where the householder went to hire the labourers is the memory. The labourers are the truths which have been acquired and laid up in the memory, but have not as yet been employed in the active labour of cultivating the higher faculties of the mind, with a

view to produce the good things of a useful and righteous life. In order to enable us to enter into the meaning of this part of the parable, a few remarks on that part of the process of mental development to which this parable relates, may be offered. Of the three faculties of the mind meant by the house, the vineyard, and the market, the highest and the lowest are the first developed. The will and the memory are the first of the faculties that come into active existence. It is well known that in children the will and the memory are active and powerful long before the understanding is in any great measure developed. Indeed, it is by the united action of the will and the memory that the understanding is formed. Children must will or love knowledge, that they may know, and they must know, that they may understand. It is for this reason that the young are inspired by the Almighty with the love of knowledge, and that they are gifted with a memory so capacious, to receive it, and so retentive, to retain it. The rational faculty is gradually developed during the years of early education; but it is not till a later period of life that it comes to such maturity and independent action as to make man, in the true and full sense of the word, an intelligent as well as a knowing creature. It is then, too, that he finds his previously-acquired knowledges as labourers that he can hire and send into his vineyard, to do the work of real life, in producing the fruits that God has ordained to be the means both of employing and rewarding the faculties that produce them. Now, as regeneration is a second and higher birth, the spiritual is an exact antetype of the natural life of man. The Christian has his infancy and childhood, and the early states of the spiritual man are as necessary as are those of the natural man to bring him to maturity—to bring him to the full measure of the stature of Christ. His first education, too, is of the same character as that of the natural man. He has first to learn the principles of the doctrine of Christ, that he may leave them and go on unto perfection. He must acquire truths from the Divine Word, and lay them up in his memory. There they remain for a time as knowledge, unemployed and unproductive. The beginning of regeneration, as an active or actual work, consists in, or is marked by, the calling forth of these knowledges out of the memory, and elevating them into the understanding, and there making them active labourers in advancing the interests of the soul, by contributing to the performance of deeds of charity. This is the hiring of the labourers in the market-place, and sending them into the vineyard. In agreement with this view, the labourers are waiting in the market-place, and ready and

even anxious to be employed; for it is the nature of the truths which have their origin in the God of truth, that they are not only adapted to perform works of good use, but that they have an inherent desire to be actively engaged in the labour of the spiritual life, but they cannot work in man's vineyard till he hire them. They have no power of independent action. They do not act, but are acted upon. They do not operate, but co-operate. Theirs is not action, but re-action. Action in this matter must begin in the will. And when the will of the inner man becomes active in the business of salvation, a man will find that the truths he has learnt will be ready to go and do the work which he requires to be done. Such is the state which is depicted in this instructive parable. When the householder went out to hire labourers, he agreed with the first he engaged to give them a penny a day. It is laid down as a principle in the Word that the labourer is worthy of his hire; for it is a law of divine order, and therefore of heaven itself, that every heavenly work brings with it its own reward. In the parable, the reward to be given by the householder to the labourers is a penny a day. The denarius, or silver penny, is the symbol of truth. But here, the penny which is the hire of the labourer is to be given by the householder to the labourers. As the labourers were to receive from the householder a penny a day as their hire, this is intended to express the idea that, when truths are raised out of the memory into the understanding, and employed in carrying out the purposes of the internal man, they receive their reward in a higher perception of truth, and this is communicated to them on the completion of every state that the mind passes through,—a state being meant by a day. There is something in the contract entered into between the householder and the labourers that illustrates the nature of the state of the regenerate man which this early period of the day represents. He agrees with the first-hired labourers for a penny a day, but there is no such agreement entered into with the others, who go on the simple assurance that they will receive what is right. We have said that the early morning, when the first labourers were hired and went to work in the vineyard, is the beginning of the regenerate life, when a man is in a state of obedience. He does good from a sense of duty. Good works are not to him as yet a labour of love. In this state the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt (Rom. iv. 4). He rests on the letter of the law; he must have his bond. He has not yet entered into the spirit of the law, which leads him to confide in the goodness of the Lord, and trust to be rewarded by his righteousness and bounty.

3-5. But another and better state succeeds this first and initiatory one. Besides the first, there were other labourers hired afterwards by the householder at different hours of the day. *And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.* The truths that have been received into the natural mind, and laid up in the memory, are not all called forth and elevated into the understanding at once. The truths themselves differ from each other, and the mind passes through successive states. Every general state consists of many particular states. The day advances from morning to evening; but besides the natural periods of morning, noon, evening, and night, we mark it off into artificial periods of hours and lesser divisions. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" So did our Lord teach that the day, whether understood as the day of probation or the day of a realized state of life, has a succession of lesser times, each having a distinct character and a different use and experience. The day in which the householder went forth to hire his labourers is divided here into periods of three hours. He went out at the third, sixth, and ninth hours. These advancing hours are expressive of advancing states, in which the particular truths suited to these states are desired and sought for, and therefore seen and chosen. Truths in the memory are like truths in the Word. When we search the Scriptures with a particular object, we see or attend to those truths only which relate to it. At another time, when our object is different, truths which before passed unobserved are readily seen and eagerly seized upon. So with those truths which have entered the memory, and there await the calls of the higher and active faculties of the mind—calls that are made and answered according to its changing and advancing states. But the successive times of the day here mentioned not only express successive mental states, they express also the nature, quality, or character of those states. The number three, whenever it occurs in the Word, is expressive of states of faith as distinguished from states of love; and this number, while it forms the first of the series, enters into the two others. Yet the more a number is increased, the higher the state which it describes; so that the present progression by periods of three is expressive of progress into higher or more interior states of faith and intelligence. The nature of the states through which the regenerate pass, and which are successively formed in them, is also indicated by the different hours at which the labourers were

hired. Three is expressive of a holy state, of which truth is the foundation and faith the superstructure. This state, once commenced, is purified by temptation, which is signified by the number six, and is perfected by experience, which is meant by the number nine.

6, 7. But another stage in the regenerate life, and the formation of another state of the heavenly life, follows that which has now been explained, and is described by the hour at which the last of the labourers were hired. *And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.* It seems as if the householder hired at the different hours all he found waiting in the market-place. After hiring some at day dawn, when he "went out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the market-place." Yet he asks those he found at the eleventh hour, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" and they answer, "Because no man hath hired us." Understood as it commonly is, the parable presents, in this particular, either a serious difficulty or a very extraordinary doctrine. If it relates to the calling of persons into the church, and the exercise of God's right to bestow the same reward on those who are converted at the last hour of life and those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, we are constrained to believe that these late converts are the victims of divine neglect, since they had remained all the day idle, only because no man had hired them. But if we understand the parable as applicable to every regenerate man, and as descriptive of the progress of his regeneration, we can see not only the consistency, but the beauty and truthfulness of the imagery. As the labourers in the market-place are the truths which have entered the memory during the early period of life, or, indeed, at any period of life before regeneration has actually commenced, the labourers hired at the eleventh hour not only may, but must, have been standing all the day idle. Those truths that are last called into the vineyard are really those which have been longest in the market-place, and have stood there all the day idle, because no man hath hired them. The truths that are last called out of the memory are really the first that entered it. We have more than once had occasion to remark that regeneration is a retracing of our steps back towards the Eden of our infancy; and that in this backward, or rather upward, progression, truths are called forth in the inverse order to that in which they were acquired,

and states are perfected in the inverse order to that in which they were formed. The rudiments of our best states are formed in our earliest life, and the best are the last to be realized. The highest state of the regenerate life is that which a man acquires when he returns to the innocence of his infancy, enriched with the knowledge and experience of his after-life. Then does he truly become one of those little children of whom our Lord said that of such is the kingdom of heaven. Those labourers, then, that were called into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, are the truths of innocence that have been in the mind from the earliest period of life—truths that were then implanted by the hand of the divine Householder himself, for he only reaps where and what he has sown, and sends forth labourers he has provided and prepared. Of these labourers it may be said that they have stood all the day idle; for the state of the regenerating man, during the previous stages of his advancement, has not been such as to require, or even admit, of their being actively employed, nor even of being observed as labourers standing ready to be engaged for active duty. The character of these truths, like that of those hired at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, as distinguished from that of the labourers first hired, is again expressed by the absence of anything like demand, on the part of the labourers, of the amount of wages they were to receive for the time they were to labour; but the assurance of the householder, that whatsoever is right, that should they receive, is held by them to be sufficient guarantee that they would obtain their due. If anything is wanted, besides the general scope of the parable, to point out the last of the labourers as the types of the truths of innocence, and their period of hire and labour as signifying a state of love and goodness, we may derive additional confirmation from the spiritual meaning of the hour at which they were hired. When the labourers are considered as symbols of persons, eleven signifies a state not yet full, but still a receptive state, such as pertains to well-disposed children. Therefore, when applied to the regenerate, it signifies the truths implanted and the rudimentary states formed during early life, and which, being the purest, because the freest from selfish feelings and worldly considerations, are the germs of the highest and holiest states that can exist in the human mind, and to which the regenerate can attain.

8. The kingdom of heaven having been thus gradually formed, and finally established in the human heart, the time has come for rewarding those by whose labours it has been established. *So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers,*

and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. There are some particulars in this part of the parable which mark the transition state which it describes. The householder is now called the lord of the vineyard, to express the idea that, in the regenerate, the internal man has obtained the lordship or dominion over the external, having succeeded in bringing external things into subordination to internal principles. Now, also, for the first time, his steward is introduced. He himself hired the labourers; the steward is commissioned to pay them their hire. We have said that the steward, as occupying a place and acting as a medium between the householder and the labourers, denotes the rational principle, which is a faculty or principle intermediate between the internal man, as a lord, and the external man, as a servant. The steward is himself a servant, yet he represents his lord; for the rational is but an interior natural principle, and exercises the power and authority of the spiritual principle in the natural mind, acting at the same time as a medium between them. There is an important reason for the steward being now first introduced into the parable. We have remarked (*v.* 2) that the will and the memory are more early developed and active than the understanding. The rational principle, indeed, is formed by the united action of the will and the memory, and partakes of the nature of both; and therefore is qualified to act as a medium between the internal and external man. As this, which may be called the second part of the parable, describes the influx of the internal man into the external, for the purpose of communicating to him something of his own perceptions and affections, of his own satisfactions and delights, as the reward of his labour, this influx of the spiritual mind into the natural is through the rational. The lord of the vineyard desires his steward to call the labourers and give them their hire. But this command is accompanied with the particular direction that the steward, in paying the labourers, is to begin from the last, and proceed regularly down to the first. There is here the introduction of a new arrangement among the labourers. The last hired are the first paid. The last labourers hired being types of the truths last acquired, and the truths last acquired, and the states of life formed by their means, being the highest and best, they come nearest in perfection to the principles of the inner man, and therefore they first receive the influx that descends out of the spiritual mind, through the rational into the natural.

9. *And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.* The silver penny which the labourers received from the householder is the perception, and with it the satis-

faction and delight, of what is spiritual and heavenly flowing from the spiritual into the natural mind. This is the reward of the labour by which the natural mind is brought into harmony with the spiritual,—that the perceptions and satisfactions of the spiritual mind are imparted to the natural, so that all the natural thoughts and affections become animated by a higher life, and as a consequence come into the possession of a clearer light and purer love, with their perceptions and delights. This is their reward; for the rewards of the religious life do not come from without, but from within. They come from the Lord, who is the fountain of happiness, as well as of everything that deserves the name of reward; but they come from him through the higher down into the lower faculties of our nature, and through the spiritual into the natural affections of our minds. And the delights of heaven can only be received in their true state into those principles in us that have been brought into conformity with the order and life of truth and love. Every truth that has been thus brought into connection with love, as its life and end, becomes receptive of the reward of its labour. Thus every man receives a penny, so that the measure of his joy is full.

10. *But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.* The first had made a special agreement to receive for their labour a penny a day, and would have been satisfied with their hire had they not seen others receive comparatively more. It is characteristic of the earliest state of the regenerate life, in which we do good from obedience, or when we do so much work for so much reward, that we are never satisfied with the reward we obtain. Our righteousness is meritorious, and in this state we think that our merit is never sufficiently rewarded. Yet, so far as respects the Lord, the reward is impartially dispensed. Every man receives his penny. Nor does this express only the impartial goodness of God in giving, but the equal capacity of men for receiving, the gifts of his mercy and grace. It is like the half shekel which every Israelite gave as a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, and respecting which it was ordered that the rich should not give more, nor the poor less (Exod. xxx. 12). But the first hired labourers, when they came to receive their hire, supposed that they should have received more. There is a show of reason in this expectation, but it is reason in favour of self, and would not be allowed, much less suggested, were self-sacrifice, instead of self-interest, concerned. Viewed in relation to the regenerate, it is highly expressive of the character of the state which it describes. The true

religious principle is, that the reward is not of work, but of grace. We are not rewarded for our work, but through it and in it. The divine power that rewards us through our works is the same power that enables us to perform them. Works that are not wrought in God can bring no reward from him, and for the reason, that the reward is in the work. So far, therefore, as we are hirelings, or do our work for the sake of hire as an end, so far will our expectations be greater than our deserts, and than our capacity of reception. Until we are in the heartfelt conviction that the least of the divine mercies exceeds all our deserts, and is of the divine bounty, we are in bondage to our own self-righteousness.

11, 12. But those who had expected more than their hire, *when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.* This murmuring of the labourers against the goodman of the house expresses contrariety between the external man and the internal. This contrariety was only on the part of the labourers first hired, these being the types of the first imperfect thoughts and feelings, or of the truths first received and not yet united to good, or the first faith not yet united to charity. But they murmured, not because the householder had been unfaithful to them, but because he had been charitable to others—because those who had wrought but one hour had been made equal to them, who had borne the burden and heat of the day. Yet, spiritually understood, the one hour's labour of the last was of more value than the whole day's labour of the first. One, in its best sense, is expressive of the principle of goodness. Truths are many, but good is one. It is the one thing needful—the one thing which the young man lacked, and without which his great possessions were but a hindrance to his entering into the kingdom of heaven. Without this, great labour, as well as vast wealth, is an obstacle to admission into the kingdom. Without it, work is tainted with ideas of merit, which lead men to grudge another's gain, and think they themselves are never sufficiently rewarded. Their work, too, is a toil to them. They bear the burden and heat of the day; the pride of self-intelligence makes labour burdensome, the heat of self-love makes it oppressive. Such as the self-righteous man is, such is every one in the earliest stage of his religious life, and such are the early principles themselves: they rise up and murmur against the higher and purer principle that rules in the inner man.

13. *But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no*

wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? In the individual application, this is to be understood as a perception of the inner man as to the quality of the natural mind, as still under the influence of self-interested feelings. The householder addresses the murmuring labourer as a friend, but this does not express the correct idea of the original; for the natural man is not yet in the state which makes him the friend of the spiritual, but is only as a companion, being in fact a hireling, because labouring for the sake of the reward. The householder, to the complaint of the labourer, answers that he did him no wrong, since he gave him the penny which had been agreed upon as his hire. The householder representing the internal, and therefore the right perception of the truth, his statement to the labourer, that he had done him no wrong, implies an interior perception and conviction of rectitude and justice in the abnegation of all self-righteousness and merit.

14. He therefore says to the labourer, *Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.* This expresses a perception that the natural man should be satisfied with what the spiritual had agreed to dispense to him; in other words, it expresses a spiritual perception that the natural desire of undue reward should be suppressed, and submission to the law of righteousness should be cultivated. In order to lead the natural man to this duty, the householder says to the labourer, "Go thy way"—that is, he counsels him to live in agreement with the truth, as the means of realizing it in practice. This will enable him also to see the justice, as well as mercy, of the householder's conduct, according to his words, "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee;" for it is the will and desire of love and goodness, which form the essential principle of the inner man, to bestow equally upon all the natural thoughts and affections the capacity of receiving and enjoying the reward of satisfaction and delight, which a grateful reception and faithful practice of the truth never fail to ensure.

15. The householder further appeals to the labourer's sense of right by demanding of him, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?* Here we find the principle laid down, that all reward—all the power of perceiving and receiving heavenly truth, with its joys and delights, which the natural mind can experience—is derived from the spiritual, and is indeed his own. And when the householder says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" we are instructed that all which the natural mind can enjoy ought, by the laws of order, to be dispensed according to or in agreement with the will of the internal man;

that is, that the spiritual will should rule over the natural will, and spiritual wisdom should guide and direct natural wisdom, but that the natural will and wisdom of man should not be allowed to dictate to and overrule his spiritual. And when the householder further says, "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" we are further instructed that the natural understanding, meant by the eye, is evil when it is under the influence of the natural will; and that in such case it opposes itself to spiritual good, which forms the will of the internal man.

16. The householder concludes by saying, *So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.* We have already explained the meaning of this first statement. The truths first acquired and the states first formed in the progress of the regenerate life are the most external and imperfect, and the last are the most perfect. When man is regenerated, that which was first becomes last, and that which was last becomes first; for that which is most perfect becomes first in his estimation, highest in his regard, while that which is least perfect he esteems least. It is according to order, also, that the principles we have acquired should finally have this arrangement in our minds; for that which is less perfect should be subordinate to that which is more perfect. We begin our religious life with obedience, we end with love, and when this state is attained, the last should be first, and the first last. The parable is summed up in the words, "For many be called, but few chosen." Whether this be true literally, in regard to the human race, as the called of God, is not necessary now to be discussed. According to the spiritual meaning, which we are now considering, numbers express quality, not quantity. Many mean those who are in truth, and few mean those who are in good; and the true are "called," while the good are "chosen." We are not to understand that those who are only called, but not chosen, are rejected or excluded from the kingdom, but only that they occupy the lowest place. We therefore find them spoken of in the Word as belonging to the army of the King of kings, for "they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. xvii. 14).

17-19. When the Lord had finished the parable of the labourers, he went up to Jerusalem, and taking the twelve disciples apart in the way, he told them of his passion. He said unto them, *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.* The

Lord told the disciples this after Peter's confession (ch. xvi. 21). But as an important addition is made to what he then said to them, not to break the connection, it will be well to explain the whole. "The spiritual sense of these words is, that divine truth in the church where mere falsities have rule, will be blasphemed, the truth of the church perverted, and its good destroyed. The Son of man is divine truth, which is the Word, and Jerusalem the church where mere falses and evils have rule. The chief priests are adulterations of good, and the scribes falsifications of truth, both from diabolical love. By condemning him, and delivering him to the Gentiles, is signified to adjudge divine goodness and divine truth to hell, and to deliver them to the evils and falses which are from it. Gentiles signify evils from hell which destroy the goods and truths of the church. To mock, to scourge, and to crucify, signify the blasphemy, falsification, and perversion of truth, and the adulteration of the good of the church and of the Word. On the third day he shall rise again, signifies the complete glorification of the Lord's humanity." This statement differs but little from that which we find in chapter xvi. 21. But to the general statement the Lord adds this particular information, that he would suffer many things from the elders and scribes, that they would deliver him up to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify. The Lord was now on his last journey to Jerusalem; and as the event of his passion drew near, he became more specific in his description of it. In adding the Gentiles, he introduces a new representative agency into the transaction; for the Gentiles represent evils, especially those of an external kind. But the Gentiles here mentioned are the Romans, to whom the Lord was delivered up by the Jews. And as the Romans represented the natural rational principle, the evil which they, as Gentiles, signified, is one of greater malignity than evil that proceeds from minds less instructed. The elders and scribes denoting interior evils and falsities, it is said of them that they shall condemn him to death; but as the Gentiles denote exterior evils, it is said that the Lord shall be delivered to them to carry out the purpose of the Jews, and that they shall mock, scourge, and crucify him—mocking having reference to the operation of evil, scourging to falsity, and crucifying to the combined action of both. But the Divine promise is given, "he shall rise again." Those very acts of direful hostility, intended to falsify all his claims and predictions, were turned into the means of their accomplishment, by their being made instrumental in finishing the Lord's great works of redeeming the world and glorifying his humanity.

20. *Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.* This incident shows how little the disciples knew at that time of the nature of the Lord's kingdom. Their views and hopes of an earthly kingdom were not yet overthrown. They had yet to endure the cross, and rise with the Lord from the dead. But they knew not yet what was signified by the cross, and questioned among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean. These things were mercifully hid from them. The event was now approaching that was to unseal their eyes and remove the hardness of their hearts. But even now, when all the powers of evil on earth and in hell were conspiring to make their last grand effort to prevent the establishment of his spiritual kingdom, the two sons of Zebedee, not the least among the apostles, were seeking, through their mother's agency, to obtain the two highest places in the temporal kingdom which they still believed he had come to set up. But theirs was the natural form of a spiritual ambition that lurks in the heart of every disciple. The disposition to be exalted to the chief seats is inherent in every fallen heart, and is carried into the religious life, where it never yields but to the cross, and never ceases to trouble till buried in the tomb with the Lord's body. But there is a higher sense in which this incident is to be understood, to see which we must raise our thoughts from the temporal kingdom of the disciples' early notions to the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, as it was about to become after his resurrection. And in this sense it will be seen to be an appropriate sequel to what precedes it. The Lord had been speaking of his death and resurrection, when his new kingdom was to be established; and the circumstance of the mother of James and John coming to Jesus, to ask that her sons might sit on his right and left hand, representatively describes an exaltation that has place in the new and spiritual kingdom of the Lord. The mother of Zebedee's children represents the church, and James and John represent charity in will and in act. The right hand signifies the good of celestial love, which is the good of love to the Lord; and the left hand signifies the good of spiritual love, which is the good of love to the neighbour. The true church, like the mother of Zebedee's children, still brings her two sons to Jesus, earnestly desiring that they may sit, the one at his right hand and the other at his left in his kingdom. It is the continual desire and effort of the Lord's church to see her children exalted to sit with the Lord in his throne. And the children of the church are comprised in the two classes whom the two sons of Zebedee

represented—those who are in charity and in the good of charity, and these are they who are capable of being exalted in the Lord's kingdom.

22, 23. But there is a condition that stands between this desire and its accomplishment, and which must be performed before men can truly understand the nature of their own prayer. *Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. 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?* The Lord's cup and baptism are inward and outward temptation. It is only they who "overcome" in these that the Lord grants to sit down with him in his throne, as he also overcame, and is set down with the Father in his throne (Rev. iii. 21). There is no way of being with the Lord in his glory without first being with him in his humiliation and sufferings. Therefore the Lord asked, "Are ye able?" *They say unto him, We are able,* to which the Lord answered, *Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.* This confirmation by the Lord of their testimony respecting themselves implies not merely the Lord's promise, but his power. With man alone it is impossible; but with God, during man's co-operation, all things are possible. The disciple can do all things by Christ strengthening him. But the Lord told the two that even this was not enough. He added, *but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father.* The Father is the Divine Love, the Son is the Divine Truth. The Divine Truth cannot exalt without the Divine Love. We must, indeed, drink of the Son's cup, and be baptized with the Son's baptism, for it is truth that is tempted, and that supports us in, and purifies us by means of, temptation; but we must also be receptive of the Father's love, for it is love that exalts us, or prepares us for true exaltation. It may be necessary to remark that the authorized version makes Jesus say absolutely that the favour the two sons asked was not his to give; but to make the passage express this idea a few words have been added in italics, the omission of which is all that is required to make the sense clear, as we have given it in the explanation. Jesus himself was and is both Father and Son; but when we know the spiritual meaning of these two names, we can see the peculiar force of the Lord's declaration, and the practical lesson to be drawn from it—that the Lord, from pure love and mercy, gives heaven to those who are in the good of love and of faith, thus who are in celestial and in spiritual good. When the Lord speaks of his Father, he means his own divine love; and those for whom the

kingdom is prepared of his Father are those who are principled in love to the Lord, which is the Lord's love in them.

24. *And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.* It is not surprising that the other apostles should be indignant at this request, seeing the whole of the apostles had disputed among themselves which should be greatest.

25-28. Our Lord took occasion from this to deliver one of those beautiful lessons which lie like most precious gems among the general truths of the gospel, and the brilliancy of which these exhibitions of human infirmity serve to display. *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* This expresses the true spirit of religion, as opposite to the spirit of the world. It is the spirit of Christianity, as it was the spirit of its Author. The practicability of the precept he has shown by his own blessed example, which enabled him to require of his disciples, "ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 15). True greatness is in usefulness, and usefulness is service. Outward greatness is but the outward sign of great usefulness. He is greatest who performs the highest use. In this sense the Lord was at once the greatest and the least; and that disciple comes nearest to his Lord in these characteristics who most nearly imitates his example. The Lord did not seek, nor did he need to seek, to be great. He was great. His disciples need not contend amongst themselves who shall be greatest. Each must work out his own greatness. He must not attempt to do it as the princes of the Gentiles, by exercising authority over them. This kind of greatness is a perversion of true greatness. It arises from exalting the external above the internal, the shadow above the substance of greatness. Wherever true order prevails, true greatness will rule, for the greater uses will be exalted to the higher place. We should seek greatness through usefulness; or rather, seek use, and leave the outward greatness that belongs to it to follow of its own accord. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." There is a spiritual sense in these divine words, which leads to the spirit and origin of the moral wisdom they

express. The mother of James and John represents, as we have seen, the church; and these two disciples represent those who are in charity and goodness, or in spiritual and celestial love, to whom greatness and exaltation belong. But these two brethren and the ten represent those who form the internal and the external members of the church, as Joseph and Benjamin and their ten brethren did before them. Their being designated as "the two" and "the ten" spiritually expresses their qualities: for two signifies conjunction, and those who are in the conjunction of good and truth constitute the internal church; and ten is expressive of truths, and those who are in truths form the external church. But each of us has internal and external principles in himself. Good and truth conjoined in the internal man form the internal of the church in us, and truths form the external of the church in us. And we know by experience that, in the progress of regeneration, the external man has indignation against the internal, as the ruler of the external as its proper subject. But the state here described is not one in which the rule of the internal is established, but in which it is sought to be established; and it is then that the indignation on the part of the external takes place. It is for this reason that the Lord warns them against imitating the princes of the Gentiles, who here denote evil exercising dominion over the natural thoughts and affections. The Lord said, "It shall not be so among you;" for in those who are regenerated all principles are in harmonious agreement. All those principles are not equally important, but all are equally necessary; and when all look to one end, and co-operate to produce one result, and each is in its right place, performing its proper use, good ministering to truth, and truth serving good, they have peace one with another. Those which minister are great, and those which serve are chief; for greatness is predicated of goodness, and chief of truth; and each has eminence in its own function and use.

But what in this application is the meaning in regard to the Lord's declaration, that "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"? Good, we have seen, is a minister, and truth is a servant; and good ministers to truth, and truth serves good. The Lord's humanity, before it was glorified, was a servant, because it was divine truth, and then the Son of man was ministered unto; but when the humanity was glorified, it was no longer divine truth and a servant, but divine good and a minister; and then the Son of man was no longer ministered unto, but ministered. And as this glorification of the humanity was the end of the Lord's coming, he came not to be

ministered unto, but to minister. There was another object of his coming. He came also to give his life (soul) a ransom for many. The term soul means the intellectual life in the Lord—the life of his divine truth. It was this life that the Lord gave as a ransom or redemption; for by the power of his divine truth the Lord redeemed the world. The giving his soul as a redemption is a kindred operation to his ministering; the first being expressive of the operation of his truth, and the second that of his goodness. Therefore is it said that he gives his soul a ransom for many, for many is predicated of truth, and of those who are in truth; for truths are many, but good is one. But let us look at this subject more especially in relation to ourselves. The Son of man is a servant in us during reformation, when truth is in the first place, and then he is ministered unto; but when we are regenerated, the Son of man is a minister in us, for then good is in the first place, and ministers; and then the truth of good ransoms or redeems us from all evil and falsity.

The miracle which follows exemplifies the redemption which the Lord came to accomplish, as indeed all his miracles did, each representing some specific result.

29. The Lord in his progress to Jerusalem had departed from Jericho. This place is well known as the first station of Israel on entering the promised land, and represents the first stage of introduction into the church. It signifies instruction, and also the good of life, for no one can be instructed in the truths of doctrine but he who is in the good of life. The great multitudes which followed him are those who seek instruction for the sake of this good.

30-34. As the Lord, followed by the multitude, was departing, *behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* A similar circumstance occurs in the ninth chapter (v. 27), but this is different in some particulars. Spiritual blindness is ignorance of truth. But these blind men were sitting by the way side; and as a way signifies truth, and sitting signifies a state of the will, this implies a disposition to know and live according to the truth. As we learn from the corresponding accounts in Mark and Luke, these men were begging; and to beg is to be dependent on others for the knowledge of truth, not having the power of procuring it for themselves. The desire to receive that power is expressed in the prayer of the blind men to Jesus, that he would open their eyes. They heard that Jesus passed by. Their first knowledge of his presence reached them through the ear—that is, through the

will, of which the ear is more especially the symbol. But they desired to see—to know by the understanding and the light of truth,—and they cried to him, that he might open their eyes; and he heard them, and restored to them the blessing of sight. *And they followed him.* They no longer sat by the way side, as poor dependents on the bounty of their fellow-men, but walked in the light and in the footsteps of him who is the way, the truth, and the life.

CHAPTER XXI.

1, 2. The Lord had journeyed from Jericho in his way to Jerusalem, performing his last journey in the same line, or between the same extreme points, as the children of Israel had done from the time of their first entering the Holy Land till their taking possession of Jerusalem. This resemblance was not accidental, and is not without a meaning. Both represented the same spiritual journey—the same heavenly and divine progression, from the lowest to the highest, in the last and supreme degree of the regeneration of man and of the glorification of the Lord. And that this last journey of the Lord to Jerusalem might represent his last progress towards glorification, he entered the holy city as a king, and took possession of its temple—the symbol of the temple of his body—and drove out the buyers and sellers, and in his house healed the blind and the lame. In these acts he represented the expelling from his humanity of the last remnant of hereditary evil and infirmity, and his dispensing from the temple of his glorified humanity the gift of salvation to his lost creatures. Such being the general import of our Lord's journey to and entry into Jerusalem, the particulars must be deeply interesting. *And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.* Mount Olivet was the symbol of celestial love, or love in its highest degree; and Bethphage, which means the house of figs, was the symbol of natural love, or heavenly love in the lowest degree. In the gospel by Mark, Bethany is also mentioned, and the three signify good of all the three degrees, celestial, spiritual, and natural. This completeness is here to be understood, though it is not expressed, for Olivet and Bethphage being the highest and the lowest—the supreme

and the ultimate—include the whole. The Lord had come to this place, to represent that he had now glorified his humanity as to the interiors of all the degrees of life, and was about to glorify it as to the exteriors of those degrees also, that he might be the Word in ultimates, as from eternity he had been in first principles (John i. 14).

The Lord's sending forth from thence two of his disciples into the village over against them, represented his opening up a communication, by means of good and truth proceeding from himself, meant by the two disciples, between the internal and external of his humanity, the external being meant by the village over against them. The purpose of this communication is, to bring the principles of the lower into subordination to and harmony with those of the higher, and so unite them. This is signified by their loosing and bringing the colt to Jesus, and setting him thereon. The ass signifies the natural principle and the colt the rational; and the subordination of both to the spiritual is meant by the Lord riding upon them. The ass was to be found tied, and the colt with her. This represented that the natural principle, with the rational, was yet in bondage, but that the Lord came to set them free, first in himself, and then in those of his creatures who suffer themselves to be regenerated, as he was glorified. And the command, to bring them, when loosed, to Jesus, expresses the truth, that the natural and rational principles, when liberated, are to be brought into connection with the Lord's good and truth in the inner man, and to be made subservient to them.

3. But in sending the disciples for the ass and the colt, the Lord desired them, saying, *If any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.* Although Matthew does record the circumstance, Mark relates that certain asked this question, and that when the apostles repeated the Lord's words to them, they yielded to the divine requirement. He who, as the Lord foresaw and foretold, asked this question, is man himself, to whom the natural and rational principles belong, but who has become willing to yield the ownership of them to the Lord, and to "let them go," to become his, and be employed in his service. The Lord still spiritually sends his disciples to each of us to loosen the ass with her colt—to make our natural and rational faculties free, and bring them under a willing submission to his eternal love and truth. We may feel some inward repugnance to comply with the object of the heavenly message—some principle within us may say, "Why loose ye the colt?" but let the blessed words of Jesus—"The Lord hath need of them"—be sufficient for us, and induce us joyfully to

consent to the demand, enforced by a reason which expresses at once the highest honour and the greatest blessing.

4, 5. The evangelist tells us that *All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.* These prophetic annunciations serve as links to bind the old and the new covenant together. Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfilment are like the eternal Word, and that Word made flesh: the second is the incarnation of the first. They answer, therefore, to each other as the internal and the external in man. The daughter of Sion is the celestial church, and therefore that affection in the mind which receives the Lord as divine truth, but as divine truth that rules from love, for the King is said to be meek. The meek are they who are in the good of charity; and as human meekness is from the good of charity, divine meekness is from the good of love. The Lord comes to the daughter of Sion as a king, meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass, when his divine truth and love are received into the highest affection of the heart, with the concurrence and co-operation of the natural and rational principles of the mind. Heavenly order is then established in the mind, the natural serves the rational, the rational the spiritual, the spiritual the celestial, and the celestial the divine.

6, 7. *And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.* The garments of the disciples are spiritual truths. As two of the disciples were sent to bring the ass and the colt to Jesus, to represent that the natural and rational are liberated and brought to the Lord by the instrumentality of the spiritual; so when they had brought the ass and the colt, the disciples put their garments on them, and set Jesus thereon, to represent that spiritual truths are necessary to connect the natural and rational truths with the divine.

8. And while the disciples placed their garments on the ass and the colt, *a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.* As trees signify the perception and knowledge of good and truth, branches signify truths themselves; and the multitude strawed them in the way, because the way signifies the truth by which the man of the church is led to goodness. As the disciples represent the spiritual, the multitude represent the natural affections and thoughts. Therefore, while the disciples placed their garments on the colt, the

multitude spread theirs in the way. The multitude is said to be very great, to express the idea of the whole of the affections and thoughts of the natural mind uniting with those of the spiritual mind in celebrating the Lord's entrance into the heart, there to set up his kingdom, to take up his abode with the daughter of Sion, the expressive name of the highest affection of love in the soul.

9. *And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.* They that went before are the affections, and those that followed are the thoughts; thus all the natural principles, from first to last, from highest to lowest; and these unite, and all conspire, to exalt the Lord, to sing to him the hosanna of welcome and the blessing of praise. To describe the exaltation of the Lord both in the affections and in the thoughts, the multitude are represented as both *crying* and *saying*; for crying is expressive of affection, and saying of thought. To describe further this sacred duality, so often observable in the Word, the multitude not only sing *hosanna* to the Lord, but *blessing*. And to teach us that this twofold exaltation of the Lord is the exaltation of his truth in the understanding, and of his good in the will, hosanna is sung to him as the son of David, and blessing to him as he that cometh in the name of the Lord; for the son of David is the Lord as to divine truth, and he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Jehovah) is the Lord as to divine good. But the multitude sing, not hosanna only, but hosanna in the highest, expressing the exaltation of the Divine good and truth above every other good and truth of which the mind is receptive, making the Lord practically above all and within all.

10, 11. *And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.* Jerusalem represents the church and heaven, and the Lord's entering the holy city as a king means his ruling in his spiritual kingdom by his divine truth. The spectacle of Jesus making his triumphant entry into Jerusalem with the symbols of royalty naturally produced great excitement, and led the people to inquire who this was, to whom the multitude rendered the homage due to a king. And here again we have a distinction between Jerusalem and the city. The city means the people, but the term by which they are indicated signifies doctrine; and the commotion which the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem produced through the city, signifies the effect of the Lord's presence on those who are in a know-

ledge of its doctrines. We are not told by what feeling the people were moved. It could not be a feeling of indignation or hatred against Jesus, for they knew not at the time who Jesus was, since it led them to inquire, "Who is this?" They appear to have been moved by astonishment. The commotion and inquiry represent the feelings and inquiry in the church, here signified by Jerusalem, which the Lord's presence produces. The inquiry by those who belong to the city, and the answer of those who do not, may be understood like the responsive voices of those within and those without the gates of the city, as so graphically described in the 24th Psalm, when the ark of the Lord was introduced into Jerusalem. Those who carried up the ark, when they came to the entrance of the city, cried, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." And when those within demanded, "Who is the King of glory?" those without replied, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle—the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." The introduction of the ark and the Lord's entry into Jerusalem have both the same representative signification, and the first may be regarded as a type of the other. There is this further resemblance between them, that as the ark was carried into the tabernacle, so he whom the ark represented went into the temple. In reference to the Lord, both these events represented his ascension, when he passed through the Jerusalem which is above into the holy of holies, thence to send out his light and his truth, to lead all men to himself. Practically, in relation to us, they represented the Lord's upward progress in the regenerate mind, till he enters into the inmost of our affections, there to place his law of righteousness, and dwell for ever in our purified souls as temples of his presence. The answer of the multitude to the inquiry of those of the city was indeed different from that of those who accompanied the ark. Their answer to the inquiry was, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." Jesus in the New Testament is equivalent to, and has the same significance as Jehovah in the old. Both signify the Lord as to his divine love. The Lord, as THE prophet, was the Word, or the Divine Truth itself. Jesus, the prophet, is the Lord as divine love and divine truth; and Nazareth of Galilee, from which he was, signifies the Divine love and truth in ultimates.

12-14. *And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but*

ye have made it a den of thieves. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. We have already mentioned that this cleansing of the temple represented the final and complete glorification of the Lord's humanity, by the expulsion of everything of hereditary evil and infirmity that adhered to him. The particulars demand our attention. The temple is called the temple of God. In the next verse it is called "my house of prayer," which in John ii. 16 is expressed as "my Father's house." The name temple, like the divine name God, signifies the spiritual church, and the divine spiritual principle in the Lord; and the name house, like the divine name Father, signifies the celestial church, and the divine celestial principle in the Lord. Or, to express the same truth otherwise, in relation to ourselves, the temple is the understanding, and the house is the will; and the understanding is the temple of God when the Lord's truth is in it, and the will is the Father's house when the Lord's love is in it. And the mind is a house of prayer when the Lord is worshipped from love. But the human mind, at the time our Lord was upon earth, had become a den of thieves. Evil had taken possession of the human will, and falsity of the understanding—those faculties which God had formed to be the dwelling-place of his own goodness and truth. But a still greater sin than this had been committed. Evil and falsity had entered into and taken possession of good and truth, and profaned them,—men claiming for themselves what belongs to God, which is meant in the spiritual sense by theft. This had come to be the practice of the church, as it is in every time of great corruption. By those that sold and bought are signified those who make gain to themselves of things holy; the tables of the money-changers signify those who make gain from holy truths, and the seats of them that sold doves signify those who make gain from holy goods: wherefore it is said, that they had made the temple a den of thieves, for they are called thieves who steal truths from the Word, and pervert them, and apply them to confirm falses and evils, and thereby extinguish them. These the Lord cast out of the temple. For that divine work which the Lord performed in the temple of his own body, was followed by a corresponding work in man, and in the church. The humanity which the Lord assumed from the fallen daughter of a fallen race inherited all human imperfections. When he had cast them out from his own humanity, he could then cast them out from men and from the church, and dispense the blessing of salvation to suffering humanity.

15, 16. *And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things*

that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were sore displeased. These unspiritual men seem ever to furnish a dark background to the fairest scenes ever presented before the eyes of men in this sublunary world. But our own hearts present too often the same sad spectacle. The selfhood forms as dark a background to every heavenly scene which the hand of Infinite Wisdom traces upon the table of the most yielding heart. The conduct of these men, while it can hardly fail to excite indignation, should also produce humility; for we who condemn them do the same things. The evil and falsity of the old man are ever ready to oppose the good and truth of the new. But, of all things, innocence stirs up in the corrupt mind the bitterest feelings of resentment. When the children shouted their hosannas, the priests spoke out, and with mingled feelings of contempt and anger, addressed Jesus in the reproachful words, *Hearst thou what these say?* We find that during the Lord's progress to Jerusalem the multitudes shouted hosanna to him, but when he came into the temple this shout was taken up by the children. The Lord in the temple represented Jehovah in his humanity—the temple of his body. Children shouting hosanna to Jesus in the temple represented that innocence of heart is that from which springs the acknowledgment of the Lord in his Divine humanity. Heavenly innocence is the sinlessness which results from overcoming sin—the good which is acquired by the conquest of evil. This is the innocence which the Lord became by glorification, and it is his innocence in us that enables us to acknowledge him as Innocence itself. But the state here represented is not one of complete glorification on the Lord's part, nor of complete regeneration on ours. He had been casting out the mercenary dealers, and healing the diseased in the temple, representing the removal of evil from his humanity, and also from the human mind, and the restoration of its faculties to soundness and right action. But the scribes and the priests of the old and corrupt dispensation were still present, and watching with malignant jealousy his good and benevolent works, and the acceptance he found with the people, and with the very children. The priests demanded of the Lord, "Hearst thou what these say?" To hear means to hear approvingly—to accept the homage which this salutation implied. From the Lord's answer to the Jews, it would seem that, in their estimation, it involved something reproachful for a wise man to listen with approbation to the applause of children. But the Lord did hear them. To the priests' sneering question, Jesus said unto them, *Yea*. And as he heard and accepted their innocent and hearty praise, he

justified both them and himself. *Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?* Since their angels always beheld the face of the Father, we may conclude that the hosanna to the son of David, sung by the children in the temple, brought angels and men nearer to each other. On this principle, the praise of the children was more perfect than that which had been offered by the multitude. But the Lord in this, as in all other cases, expressed a spiritual truth within the natural truth. The babes and sucklings out of whose mouth the Lord perfects praise are those who are in the innocence of celestial and spiritual wisdom. Praise is perfected when worship proceeds from innocence and wisdom united, when a good understanding, from a pure heart, gives to the Lord the praise which is his due, and which includes, as all true praise of the Lord must, a confession of him as God-man, the root and the offspring of David.

17. The objections of the chief priests and scribes to the hosannas of the children showed their depravity, and the hatred of the Jewish church against the Lord as Innocence itself; and as such a state indicates the end of all true religion amongst them, which is the consummation of the church, therefore our Lord *left them, and went out of the city into Bethany*. The Lord leaves the church only when the church leaves him, or when she has degenerated so far as to reject all truth and goodness, for in rejecting these she rejects the Lord, from whom they proceed, and who is present in them. The Jewish church was represented by the city Jerusalem, and the evil and false principles of that church by the chief priests and scribes, whom the Lord left. And when he left these rulers of the church, and departed from the city, he went to Bethany, and lodged there. Bethany was the town of Martha and Mary, whose brother Lazarus the Lord raised from the dead. The raising of Lazarus represented the raising up of a church among the Gentiles. The Lord's leaving Jerusalem and going to Bethany represented, that when the Lord was rejected by the Jews, he was received by the Gentiles—when the church among the Jews should have come to a full end, then would the Lord raise up a church among the nations. When the Lord went from Jerusalem to Bethany, he did not remain, he only *lodged there*. His sojourn there was temporary; his work was not yet finished.

18. When the Lord had passed the night in Bethany he returned in the morning into the city. This mode of representatively expressing a new state is connected with an incident which describes, by a striking symbolism, the state and consummation of the Jewish church,

notwithstanding the Lord's desire to save it. *Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.* Natural hunger the Lord might no doubt feel; but there was a deeper cause for his hunger, and a deeper significance in it, than the natural man may be able to conceive. He had meat to eat that men knew not of: his meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. The Lord's hunger was therefore hunger after righteousness. He desired righteousness in his church and people. He desired this, because without righteousness on the part of the church and her members, they can have no part in the Lord, and he can have no part in them. This was the hunger which Jesus felt, on returning in the morning to the city. It was his intense desire to save his people.

19. *And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.* No one who has any faith in the divinity of Jesus, or any conception of the spirituality of his Word, can suppose that this incident has no deeper than the literal meaning. In the other gospels where this incident is recorded, Jesus is represented as expecting to find fruit on the fig tree, and cursing it for its barrenness, as if in the indignation produced by disappointment. Does not the whole character and the omniscience of the Lord entirely set such an idea aside? He who knew what was in man could not be ignorant of what was on the fig tree; and he who meekly endured the cruelest treatment from sinners, could not be angry at the unoffending and unconscious fig tree. Is it not obvious that the fig tree which the Saviour met with on his way to Jerusalem was but a type of the church towards which his desires were directed? We need only recognize this general truth, to see the appropriateness of the symbol which the barren tree presented of the state of the Jewish church, and to perceive in the curse pronounced upon it an annunciation of the fate which awaited the unfaithful dispensation. In Scripture a tree is the figure of a member of the church, and thence of the church itself. The character of the church is described by the particular tree selected to represent it. The celestial church is described by the olive tree, the spiritual church by the vine, and the natural by the fig tree. The most ancient church was an olive tree, the ancient was a vine, and the Israelitish church was a fig tree. The fig tree to which the Lord came on his way to Jerusalem was therefore a type of the Jewish church. The church was not, however, rejected or condemned because it was natural. For when we speak of the Jewish church in its normal state being natural, we do not

mean that it was natural as opposed to spiritual, but only as inferior to it. This church was natural from its commencement; it had no knowledge of spiritual truth, and hardly any of life and immortality. But so long as it continued faithful to the knowledge it possessed, and was obedient to the laws which had been revealed for its government, it remained in a state which gave it conjunction with God, and secured to its members the blessings of salvation. It was only when it had departed from the simplicity and sincerity of its original state, that it became separated from God, and subject to the judgment of condemnation. This was its state at the time our Lord came into the world, and this was indeed the immediate cause of his coming. All that constituted the church had died out among the Jewish people, and nothing could provide for the existence of a church, as a means of salvation, but the Lord's coming into the world. The Lord came in the ardency of divine love, desiring to find the church yielding the fruits of righteousness, but he found it, as he found the fig tree, having nothing thereon but leaves only—the leaves of barren knowledge, of a fair but fruitless profession. And the Lord is represented as being deceived by its luxuriant growth and promising appearance, and disappointed in his just expectation of obtaining fruit to satisfy his hunger, to express that hypocrisy had entered so deeply into the heart of the church, that it desired to deceive not men only but even God himself. Hypocrisy, or simulated religion, eats into the very heart of man, and destroys the roots of goodness, or kills the germs of life in the seeds that have been sown in the heart; and when these have been destroyed, the means of restoration no longer exist. The Lord taught this when he pronounced upon the fig tree the judgment, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." Divine judgments are not the awarding of consequences only, but the disclosing of states. The Lord's judgment on the fig tree was the utterance of divine truth respecting the Jewish church, that it was utterly devastated—that it would produce no fruit of spiritual goodness for ever. And how fully has that judgment been accomplished! The nation continues, but the church is gone. If the church can be said to exist, it is but in name—the lifeless form of the once goodly tree under whose shadow the nations of the earth reposed.

20. *And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!* Marvellous, indeed, must have been the change in the tree, transformed at once from a state of luxuriant beauty to one of blasted ugliness. No less marvellous, though less sudden, the change in the state of a church, when stripped of its fair

appearances, and reduced to its real condition. To change our view of the subject, not less astonishing and appalling is the change wrought upon those in corresponding states, when they are brought into judgment—when the fair appearance they have assumed and maintained in the world is removed, on the soul's entrance into the other life. The change may not be so sudden, but it is no less certain, as certainty in the spiritual sense, and in the spiritual world, corresponds to suddenness in the natural. According to Mark (xi. 20), it was on the morning of the day after that on which the fig tree had been pronounced for ever fruitless that the disciples beheld it dried up from the roots. So, when our day of probation is done, and the morning of an eternal day dawns upon us, our state is utterly changed. If we have had "no root in ourselves," but the growth of the heavenly seed has only been in the rank soil of our own self-righteousness, the fair appearance will quickly vanish, and leave nothing but the stump in the earth, fit only to be cast into the fire and burned.

21. But this subject has another side—one that affords us a lesson of encouragement after this lesson of warning. The Lord told the disciples, when they expressed their astonishment at the withering away of the fig tree, that they might do what he had done; and he intimated to them that they could do this by faith. *If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.* The Lord mentions the mountain as well as the fig tree, to intimate to us that there are two kinds of principles to be removed from the mind. The fig tree signifies a false principle that has to be removed from the understanding, and the mountain signifies an evil love that has to be removed from the will. Our faith and love are at first both natural; the one is tainted with the pride of intellect, the other with the pride of life. A spiritual principle underlies the natural, and ultimately, if we persevere, overcomes it. Saving faith, which comes by an internal way, works its way downwards, and expels that historical and scientific faith which has come from without; and that faith, grounded in and working by love to God and man, casts out the love of self and of the world from the heart, as well as self-confident faith from the understanding. But the mountain is not only to be removed, but cast into the sea. This declaration is very significant, and shows how much wisdom is contained in those expressions of the Word that seem merely rhetorical. The sea is a symbol of hell, and to cast the mountain into the sea is to cast evil love forth into the kingdom of evil, whence it came. But

what is meant by doing this, and how are we to do it? We cast evil into hell when we believe evil in its origin and nature to be infernal. If we really believed that all evil comes from hell and all good from heaven, we would neither appropriate evil nor claim the merit of goodness. We make evil our own by identifying it with ourselves; for what we believe to be our own, we love as a part of ourselves; and we fail to make good our own, by claiming the authorship of it, for we then sever it from God, and defile it with ideas of our own merit. If therefore we would remove the mountain and cast it into the sea, we must practically acknowledge evil as in itself diabolical in its nature and origin, and, as such, resist it in mind and shun it in action.

22. To these particular results of faith, the Lord adds a general promise as the fruit of believing prayer. *All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.* The previous promise relates to the removal of evil, this refers to the reception of good. And here we see the order according to which regeneration proceeds—the bad must be cast out before the good can be appropriated. We do not say before the good can be received, for evil could not be removed if there was no good in the heart to remove it. Satan does not cast out Satan. We must receive the Spirit of God before we can remove the spirit of evil; but the Spirit of God does not obtain undisputed possession of the heart till the spirit of evil has been dislodged from it. Regeneration consists, therefore, of two parts,—the removal of evil by good, and the substitution of good for evil. Christ casts out demons, and then restores us to a sound mind, by himself dwelling where demons had been. So when faith has cast out the mountain of evil, and withered the fig tree of falsity up from its roots, then all things are given to confiding prayer. True prayer springs from good in the heart, and is directed by truth in the understanding. Such prayer asks only what is consistent with the will of God, and the welfare of the supplicant. It is wild enthusiasm to suppose that, ask what we will, if we only believe, we shall receive it. Every true prayer comes from God, and therefore ascends to him again. If it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, it is he also that worketh in us to desire and ask according to his good pleasure. Prayer is the incense that ascends to God from the altar of a renewed heart, and the holy fire that burns upon it is kindled from heaven, being the Lord's love dwelling in the affections. It is enough for the largest legitimate desire, that whatsoever we ask in faith shall be granted us. Let us only have the faith of God, and we shall receive whatever that faith embraces in its petitions.

23-25. *When the Lord, after instructing his disciples, was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?* These functionaries did not concern themselves with the character of the Lord's teaching and miracles; they questioned his right to do them. In his doings they no doubt included his casting the buyers and sellers out of the temple. In our Lord's answer we see the same wisdom that characterized all his replies to the questions or objections of his subtle adversaries. He would tell them the origin of his authority, if they would tell him the origin of John's baptism. But what, may we suppose, was the Lord's object in submitting this question to their decision, and making his answer contingent upon theirs? If Jesus intended only to nonplus these wily and wary objectors, we can see how well his purpose was answered by the test to which he subjected them. But he who was wisdom itself in person, did everything for a wise end. He did not foil cunning with ingenuity, but turned the attempt to defeat the truth into a means of advancing it. Literally considered, there is no very intelligible lesson to be learned from it. We must look at the subject spiritually. Thus regarded, what may we learn from it? What relation had the origin of John's baptism to the origin of Christ's authority to purge the temple and heal and teach within its sacred precincts? John represented the Word, Jesus was the Word itself made flesh. The acknowledgment of the origin of John's baptism is still the condition of acquiring the knowledge of the origin of Christ's authority. Those only who acknowledge the real origin of the written Word can know the real origin of the incarnate Word; those only who recognize the heavenly origin of the purifying truths of revelation can recognize the saving power of him who was revealed once for all as the Truth itself. The baptism of John in Jordan represented the purifying of the external man, by which there is introduction into the church; Jesus purging the temple, and healing and teaching in it, represented the purifying of the internal man. The one work is the necessary precursor of the other. The second cannot be acknowledged, much less experienced, without the first. The Lord himself underwent the baptism of John, preparatory to his entrance on the great work of his ministry. Those who spiritually follow the Lord must be spiritually baptized with the baptism of John; they must

pass through the purifying work of repentance before they can become the Lord's disciples. Thus understood, the subject is seen to be one of great practical importance to ourselves. Our own natural reason still demands of the Lord by what authority or power he does his works, and whence he derives it. The Lord said to his disciples that, if they would believe, and doubt not, they would be able to do as he had done to the fig tree. But we may believe, and yet doubt; and active doubt implies latent denial, for doubt is the offspring of belief and unbelief, and the two opposite natures are in it struggling for the mastery, and the result of the conflict is undoubting faith or utter denial. The priests and the elders are the principles of unbelief which rise up in the mind against, and question the Divine authority, even when the Divine power is manifested in ourselves; and against this unbelief the Lord still has to contend. Let us see the result, as it comes out in the present instance.

25, 26. The priests and elders *reasoned with themselves*. These dignitaries did not reason which was true, to believe, but which it was safe to acknowledge. Like the natural man, they no doubt could have confirmed either proposition, as they would evidently have acknowledged either, according as it might have suited their purpose. It happened to suit their purpose to confess neither, and therefore they asserted their inability to decide. They could not tell whence was the baptism of John. There were two influences acting upon them, which led to this neutral decision,—that of Jesus on the one hand, and that of the multitude on the other. *If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? but if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.* We are told that when the highest and the lowest principles in man are in a state of order, intermediate principles are ruled and brought into order by their means. Such a state is here represented. The Lord is the highest, the people are the lowest, the priests and the scribes are the intermediate. Yet these intermediate principles have a greater affinity with the lowest than with the highest, for they are the priests and scribes of the people. They were not, indeed, convinced by the influences acting upon them, but they were awed into submission; their hostility was neutralized, so far as its active operation was concerned. And such will ever be the case with us individually. The remains of the old man within us will be checked in its operations when the highest and the lowest, the first and the last things, are in right order. The highest and lowest things of religion are right motives and right actions; right motives are those which have respect to the Lord, and

right actions are those which have respect to the neighbour. If our love and obedience are sincere, however imperfect, no corruptions of our nature will be able to injure us. The evil promptings and false suggestions of our selfhood will be defeated or neutralized, and finally overcome.

27. *And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* The power of right ends and actions operates in two ways,—it restrains the selfhood from bringing forth falsehood and evil, and from profaning goodness and truth. When the evil desire to know truth, it is that they may use it to serve their own evil ends. As the Jewish hierarchy desired to entangle Jesus in his talk, so they seek truth to pervert and destroy it. To prevent this great sin, the Lord's providence is exerted to hide the things of his Word and the mysteries of his kingdom from the wise and prudent, and reveal them unto babes. For this end he spake in parables; for this end he defeated the cunningly devised questions of the chief among the Jews; and for this end he refused to tell the priests and scribes by what authority he did those things which they beheld him perform in the temple. This teaches us that when we find our own perverse reason casting stumbling-blocks in the way of the Son of man, by insinuating doubts of the power and authority of his truth, and seeking to evade its chastening but beneficent operations upon ourselves, we must save the truth from such profanation, by shutting the mouth of the evil ones speaking in our hearts, and defeat their end by denying them the means. We must not encourage evil thoughts respecting the truth and good of heaven, when they arise in our hearts, but silence them and put them down by a wise and temperate exercise of the authority with which the Truth itself has invested us.

28-32. When the Lord in his wisdom had made his haughty interrogators defeat their own object, he proceeded to instruct them by parables, that he might lead them to a knowledge of their own character, and show them the danger to which they were exposed. The first which our Lord addressed to them was the parable of the man who had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, *Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.* He answered and said, *I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.* And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, *I go, sir: and went not.* Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, *The first.* Jesus saith unto them, *Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.* On the

Lord's asking the priests and scribes "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" they at once answered, "The first." Having drawn from them an acknowledgment of right and wrong in relation to the conduct of the persons of the parable, he pointed out to them that their own conduct to John the Baptist had been that of the fair but false son of the parable to his father, while the conduct of the publicans and harlots had been like that of the disobedient but repentant son, whom they themselves had pronounced to be the one who did the will of his father. *John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.* This parable is instructive, as showing how mere formalism in religion has a tendency to harden the heart and engender spiritual pride, and render men less capable of being awakened to a sense of sin than some who live a less correct external life. The Lord's teaching offers no encouragement to sin, but only gives a warning against self-righteousness. Difficult as it may be to bring sinners to repentance, it is still more difficult to produce penitence in those who "think themselves righteous, and despise others." This useful lesson lies upon the surface of the parable. There are deeper truths in its spiritual sense—truths that reveal the causes and nature of the internal states which are outwardly exhibited as the parable represents them. That pharasaical element, which says and does not, and which comes out in professional holiness and formal piety, exists either as an active or latent principle in every human mind, where also are the publican and the harlot. Under the smooth and tranquil surface of ecclesiastical order and religious observance in the church we see a struggle going on for honour and self-aggrandizement; we have only to turn our sight inward to see the same condition of things either in act or in effort in ourselves. All have in them the same elements of character, the only difference being that some allow them free course, whilst others strive conscientiously against them. With all, too, there are some evils that lie more upon the surface, and are therefore better seen, but which may be less malignant than others that are more deeply seated and less observed. Infirmities of temper are less malignant than corrupt dispositions, such as hatred and revenge; for the temper may be ruffled by a momentary excitement, while revenge often lies as a smouldering fire, ready to burst forth when opportunity occurs. A hasty temper, like the first son of the parable, may say No to the father's command, but as quickly turn and do his will; while an evil heart may, like the second son, say Yes,

without any intention of doing what he requires. The first son of the parable typifies those persons whose internal is better than their external ; while the second son typifies those whose external is better than their internal. The first are they who, notwithstanding their evil lives, have some remains of good left, upon which the Lord can operate so as to produce repentance ; while the second are they who, notwithstanding the profession of righteousness they make, are yet inwardly in the spirit and intention of disobedience, which hardens the heart, so as to produce intentional and settled impenitence. Individually applied, evils of the external man are meant by the first son ; evils of the internal man are meant by the second. By evils of the external man we mean evils in act ; by evils of the internal we mean evils in intention. Evil actions cannot, indeed, proceed from good motives ; but some good actions may proceed from worse motives than some evil actions. The worst state in regard to spiritual and eternal life is that of saying and doing not ; more hopeful is the state of saying No, for it indicates some amount of honesty and consistency that may be worked upon by the truth. The difference in these cases is something like that between a word against the Son of man and the sin against the Holy Spirit—the one is an offence against the letter, the other against the spirit, of the law ; the one offends against its outward command, the other against its indwelling spirit. Therefore, when the Word comes to us in the way of righteousness, calling us to repentance, and offering to wash us from our impurities in the living stream of divine truth—the Jordan through which we must pass if we would enter the Canaan of the church and heaven—we should obey the call, and come with an undivided mind, earnestly desiring to be made clean, knowing that the righteous only shall possess the land.

33-41. The Lord put forth another parable. A householder lets out his vineyard to husbandmen, who not only refuse to render the fruit of the vineyard, but injure or kill those who are sent to receive it. In the internal historical sense this parable relates to the Jewish people, who had been entrusted with the Divine oracles, and formed into a church. To them the Lord sent prophets and other messengers, to induce them to render to him the fruits of righteousness, but these messengers they condemned, or persecuted, or destroyed ; and when at last he sent his Son, or came in the form of a man, they conspired against him as the heir, that they might make his inheritance their own. And the conclusion of the parable is, that the kingdom should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits

thereof; which was fulfilled when the church was transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles. The spiritual sense does not relate to any one particular church, but is of universal application, having reference neither to time nor place, but to states of spiritual life, which are states of truth and goodness, or to the opposite states of falsity and evil. In this sense, as in the other, the vineyard signifies the church, but the church as formed in man by the Lord implanting in his mind the principles of goodness and truth. These principles constitute the church, or, what amounts to the same, religion. Where there is no religion, there is no church. And neither religion nor the church can exist amongst men except so far as they exist in them. But the church, while it exists in its principles in the mind, exists in its fruits in the life. Between the implanting of religion in the mind, and the producing of its fruits in the life, the great struggle takes place; for conflict and sorrow are experienced in bringing forth into actual life that which has been implanted in the mind. In the purely spiritual sense, in reference to individual regeneration, this struggle is described by the resistance of the husbandmen to the will of the householder, which means the resistance of the external man to the will of the internal. The servants who were successively sent by the householder to the husbandmen, to receive the fruit of the vineyard, are the truths proceeding from the internal into the external man, to cause or enable him to yield the fruits of righteousness, and induce him to ascribe them, not to himself, but to the internal, and through the internal to the Lord, by whose power he produces them. The Son, who is sent last of all, is good proceeding immediately from the internal, and appealing to the highest affections of the natural mind. In all these cases the husbandmen are represented as hating, stoning, and killing those who were sent unto them, and, lastly, casting out and slaying the Son himself. Like the historical facts which this so plainly describes, this murderous conduct does not represent the actual rejection or destruction of the good and true principles that come from the Lord through the inner man, but only the temptations and trials which those principles undergo in the natural mind, ending in their dying, and rising into a new and higher life, as our Lord himself did after he had been crucified by the Jews. The parable ends, indeed, by the vineyard being taken from those husbandmen to whom it had been let, and given to others. But when these two different husbandmen represent different faculties in the same mind, the taking of the vineyard from one class and giving it to another represents only the transfer of the church from one faculty to another. The

first husbandmen signify the thoughts of the understanding, and the second signify the affections of the will. The effect of regeneration is to elevate the principles of the church out of the understanding into the will. To describe this, the Lord says, "The kingdom shall be taken from you (the Jewish people), and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" for the term nation, as distinguished from the term people, signifies the will as distinguished from the understanding; and as the principles of the church, or of good and truth, when they are elevated into the will, come forth into the life in works that are really good, the vineyard is said to be given to a nation "bringing forth the fruits thereof." This is a brief outline of the meaning of the parable, when viewed in its application to the individual man who is passing through the regenerate life; but many significant and interesting particulars are contained in it which it may be useful to consider.

33. *There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.* The Lord no doubt intended to make this parable not simply graphic, but instructive, every particular having a spiritual meaning. The planting of a vineyard signifies, we have seen, implanting the principles of the church in the internal man, and the setting a hedge about it signifies the establishment of order in the external. Principles of life and laws of order are to each other as a vineyard and a hedge, or as a city and its walls. Principles constitute the kingdom of God in man, and laws are its guard and protection. Every work of order has its laws. The universe is hedged about with laws, without which it would fall into confusion and dissolution. The church and state have their laws, and so have social and domestic life. Principles and laws are the first and the last things in the Lord's kingdom in man, and these form its beginning. But there are intermediate principles necessary to its completeness and perfection, and these are meant by the winepress and the tower. The winepress and tower are emblematical of principles of the rational mind. The pressing of the grape is analogous to the thrashing of the corn, as the subsequent fermentation of the wine is to the leavening of the bread. On this account the treading of the winepress is frequently used as an emblem of judgment, which is called the treading of the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Rev. xix. 15). Yet judgment is not only God's general work of separating the good from the evil in the spiritual world, but his particular work of separating

good from evil in the human mind. When the householder had made every preparation necessary for the working of the vineyard, he let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. When the Lord, as the Creator, has formed the human being, and endowed him with every faculty that belongs to his nature, and provided him with every means that may be requisite for the proper and profitable exercise of his faculties, he leaves him to work out his own salvation. His leaving him to himself is only an appearance, or rather, it is a mode of expressing the fact of man's being left to act from liberty, and under a full sense of his responsibility.

34. But although the owner of the vineyard went into a far country, *when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.* The servants whom the Lord sends are the truths of his Word, which seasonably remind us of our stewardship, and require us, while we enjoy the Divine bounty, to acknowledge whence we derive the blessing. Nor is it enough to make this acknowledgment in words; we must make it in deeds; not with the intellect only, but with the heart. This practical acknowledgment is meant by rendering unto the Lord of the fruit of the vineyard; the verbal and intellectual acknowledgment had been made when the vineyard was hired, for this was the condition. Here our real labours and temptations begin. It is easy to acknowledge with the understanding that all our blessings come from God; to acknowledge this with the heart and in the life can only be accomplished with trial and perseverance. The natural mind resists with all its power, and many struggles are required to overcome its opposition. This is described in what now follows.

35. *And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.* The temptation of which we have spoken is in some sort the result of the labour; for when by labour we have procured fruit, we are tempted to think that we owe it entirely to our own exertions, and may therefore claim it as our own. The Divine Husbandman sends his messengers to us, to claim his share of the fruit which the vineyard that his hand has planted in our hearts has yielded. Although we are left free, we are not left without a witness, to remind us of what is our duty, that we may freely do it. And even then we are left at liberty; for the husbandman did not command his servants to take of the fruits by force, but only to require what was his due. The natural mind manifests its enmity to the truth in various ways and degrees of malignity. It is disposed to pervert the truth, which is meant by beating one of the servants;

to reject it, which is meant by killing another; and to falsify it, which is meant by stoning another.

36. But the Divine mercy does not leave them to themselves. *Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.* As the unregenerate man falls into deeper states of evil, and as the regenerate man falls into deeper states of temptation, the Lord applies to them other truths more suited to their states, and therefore capable of enabling them to resist evil and do good, and to render to him the fruits of their life and experience. But those to whom the vineyard had been let out did to the second as they had done to the first servants. Their state and conduct were not such as the mercies they had received should have produced.

37. The Divine mercy of the Lord still follows his sinful creatures with the means and offer of salvation. *But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.* The sending of his son—the coming of the Lord into the world—is the crowning act of Divine Goodness to his rebellious subjects. The son is God himself in human nature—the Divine truth coming forth from and manifesting the Divine love. This truth, the offspring and the express image of the Divine love, is the truth, the knowledge of which makes us free indeed, but the rejection of which makes us hopeless bondmen. Those who reject the truth of doctrine from their understandings are too liable to reject the truth of love from their hearts. This truth it is that puts in the strongest claim for the Lord's share of the fruit of the vineyard, by urging the practical acknowledgment of his claim to the merit of our works, and the authorship and ownership of the faculties that produce them.

38. But it is this that provokes the natural desire most strongly to claim that merit and ownership for itself. The united cry of the husbandmen is, *This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.* To extinguish the voice of divine love, and set up our own right to what is the lawful inheritance of the Lord—to claim righteousness as our own, instead of acknowledging the Lord as our righteousness,—this is the sin that separates finally and fully between us and our God.

39. The rejection of the truth, which offers to make us free, is described by the husbandmen's treatment of the son. *And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.* This is expressive of complete rejection: for their taking him is expressive of rejection from the will; casting him out of the vineyard, of rejection from the understanding; and slaying him, of rejection from the whole mind and life.

40. Then comes the judgment. *When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh*—a coming of the Lord to judgment, which takes place when the state of evil is full, and ripe for decision. This takes place with a church only when its state is so completely devastated as to admit of no restoration. Such was the state of the Jewish church when it had consummated its wickedness by slaying the Lord, who came in the character of a Saviour; then did the Lord return to judgment, making a complete end. It is only when the evil are guilty of corresponding conduct that their judgment overtakes them. The Lord does not himself describe the judgment, but demands of those who were to be judged what the judgment should be. *What will he do unto those husbandmen?*

41. And the husbandmen give the answer,—*He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.* This involves an important truth in relation to judgment. In the spiritual world no one is judged till he himself is not only convicted but convinced of the character of his own state, and of its necessary consequences. Every one, so to speak, judges himself. “I,” said the Lord, “judge no man: the word which I have spoken unto you, the same shall judge you in the last day.” The unpractised truth that we carry with us into the other world is that which judges us to perdition. Every one is judged by and according to the light he has received. Here is justice as well as mercy. The less light, the less condemnation to those who do evil; for it is light that makes evil to be evil—that makes man responsible for his actions, and blameable for his evil deeds. “To whom much is given, of them much will be required.” To the Lord’s question—“What will he do to those husbandmen?” the Jews answer, “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.” This expresses another truth or law of judgment, as enunciated by the Lord himself: “Take from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents;” “Unto him that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have.” From those who have only truth, that truth will be taken away; to those who have only good, that good will be enriched with truth. It is therefore said that the vineyard should be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof; for the term nation, as distinguished from that of people, signifies those who are in good, as distinguished from those who are in truth.

42. When our Lord had finished his parable, and drawn from his

auditors its practical meaning, he proceeded to point out an important prophecy relating to himself, as rejected by the Jews and received and acknowledged by the Gentiles. *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?* This stone, this precious corner-stone, this sure foundation, is the Lord Jesus Christ. But there is a profound truth in this symbolism. The Lord is called a stone because a stone is a symbol of truth—he is called the Stone because he was the Truth itself. And he is called a foundation and corner-stone because, by assuming humanity as it exists in the world, he brought himself, as the Eternal Truth, or the Word, into manifestation in the ultimate sphere of existence, for the redemption and salvation of the human race, and so became the foundation on which the church and heaven should rest, the corner-stone by which they should be held together. As the Stone, he was rejected by the builders of the Jewish church, or by the carnal builders in the church universal; but he, nevertheless, not only without their aid, but against their will, became the head of the corner. As this figure relates to the building of the temple, in the highest sense it refers to the Temple of the Lord's body, the glorification of which was completed by the stone becoming the head of the corner, when heaven and the church, angels and holy men, shouted grace, grace unto it. This was indeed the Lord's doing, for it was a work purely divine; and it is marvellous in the eyes of angels and men, for it is the great mystery of godliness—the great marvel of divine wisdom as well as of divine love. Subordinately to, and correspondently with, this work, the Lord becomes the head of the corner when he is acknowledged in his Divine Humanity as the head of the church; and especially when he has become the supreme good and truth in the heart and mind of man.

43. As a consequence of their refusing him as the chief corner-stone, the Lord said unto them, *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Those who receive him form the "nation" to whom the kingdom is given—the good to whom truth is imparted; while those from whom the kingdom is taken away are such as have been in evil, and who, though they had known, had not obeyed the truth.

44. Reverting again to the figure under which prophecy had spoken of him, the Lord delivers a solemn admonition to all to whom he, as the Truth, is revealed. *Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.* This no

doubt describes two different kinds of opposition to the truth, with their different results. We fall upon the stone when our opposition to the truth arises from falsity, and the stone falls upon us when our opposition to it arises from evil. Of those who fall upon the stone it is said they shall be broken; of those on whom the stone falls, that it shall grind them to powder. To break in pieces is to divide and separate the parts which together form one whole; thus the truths united under one good may have their connection with that good broken, which may involve the serious damage or destruction of a man's faith. To grind or reduce to powder denotes not only the dividing of truths from their good, and from each other, but the dissipation of the truths themselves, and the consequent destruction of every principle of faith and love. Understood in relation to the regenerate, it no doubt has a favourable meaning. Judgment is the separation of the good and the evil, and the determination of both to their final state. Individually, judgment separates all that is good and true from the wicked, and everything evil and false from the righteous. What is here rendered, "ground to powder," literally means dissipated like chaff—a mode of expression applied to the wicked, who are like chaff which the wind driveth away (Ps. i. 4). But the righteous stand in the judgment; the only effect upon them is, that it sifts them as wheat, removing what imperfections and infirmities have obscured their excellences.

45, 46. *When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.* In this conduct we see a not uncommon result of reproof. Instead of being humbled, the sinner is too often exasperated by having his sins pointed out. The enmity manifested in all ages against the written Word, by wicked and impenitent men, is caused by its laying open their secret sins, and announcing the condemnation they bring upon themselves. And many of these, too, would willingly lay hands upon the Word, were it not that they fear the multitude, whose faith reposes on its teaching and promises. The inward belief of the faithful secures for the Word and religion the outward respect of many of the unbelieving. Outward respect or restrained hatred will not avert, and may not even mitigate, the final judgment; but it has the effect of aiding the cause of external decency and order in the present world. But how much do the priest and the Pharisee in ourselves rise up against reproof; and how often would they seek to lay unhallowed hands upon the truth, were they not restrained by

the influence of our better feelings. Let us cultivate those feelings, and love to bring under their dominion the tempers and dispositions of our corrupt selfhood, till they submit themselves to the Divine will and wisdom.

CHAPTER XXII.

THIS chapter, though it introduces a new subject, is a continuation of the same discourse which our Lord had commenced in the temple. The last chapter concludes with the parable of the householder, who planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen; the present begins with the parable of the king who made a marriage for his son. The moral of this parable is much the same as that of the last. Those who are called refuse to come, and are rejected; others are invited, who come, and are accepted. Those who refuse, and lose their election, are the Jews; those who come, and are chosen, are the Gentiles. But however similar their moral, the parables teach a different lesson; however similar in their structure, each delivers a different truth. Relatively to each other, the parable of the vineyard has more reference to the intellectual life of man; that of the marriage of the king's son has more respect to his moral life. The vineyard produces the grape, from which is expressed the wine, which is the symbol of spiritual truth; the marriage is celebrated by a dinner, which is the symbol of spiritual good; the drink and the meat being symbolical of nourishment for the understanding and for the will.

2. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.* No symbol for the church and heaven is higher than that of marriage. Marriage is the highest emblem of the union, in all its forms and degrees, that constitutes heaven and gives felicity. Marriage is the union of two souls, which were so created that each finds in the other what it has not in itself, but which is essential to complete life and perfect happiness. The masculine and feminine souls are the impersonations of the two essential principles of all being, and of all perfection and happiness—the true and the good, the intellectual and the voluntary. Heaven and the church are, in themselves, nothing but the union of goodness and truth. This union must exist in the mind, before any one can be a true member of the church or an inhabitant of heaven. The church and heaven must be in man, before he can be in the church and heaven. This is only saying that every one must have in himself the heavenly marriage of goodness

and truth, or of love and faith, before he can belong to "the kingdom of heaven, which is like unto a king who made a marriage for his son." The son for whom the king made a marriage is Jesus, considered as the Son of God. The Lord, from the Divine, in and by the human, desires to enter into a covenant with the church, as his bride and wife. The consummation of this union was the end for which the Lord came into the world. The humanity which God assumed and glorified in the world was the Bridegroom of the divine nuptials; for actual conjunction between God and fallen man, or a fallen church, could only be effected through a humanity born of the church, and raised by glorification into union with the Divine nature. The Father, who made the marriage for the Son, is called a certain king, or rather, a man, a king. These two titles are expressive of the Divine love and wisdom, as existing united in the Divine nature; and they are no doubt introduced in harmony with the nature and object of the parable, to indicate, that as the divine marriage of love and wisdom existed eternally and essentially in God, so it was the object of the incarnation that it might exist also in man—first in the man Christ Jesus, and through him in every man willing to be saved and made happy.

3. *And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding.* This is in accordance with ancient custom. The guests were invited long before the marriage took place, and even before the time for its celebration was fixed; and when the day came, and all things were ready, servants were sent out to call the guests to the marriage feast. In this respect the symbol accurately corresponds with the fact. Long before the Lord came into the world, God, by his servants the prophets, had bidden his people to this approaching marriage. The invitation had been given to the Jews, but through them to all others. No time had been fixed for it, but its accomplishment was declared to be certain. When, in the fulness of time, the Bridegroom appeared, and sent forth his servants the apostles to call them that were bidden to the marriage, it was only to give effect to an invitation which had previously been given and accepted. *And they would not come.* Those who with pride had accepted the invitation, and had longed for the time when they should be called to the wedding, were found, when the blessed moment had arrived, to be utterly disinclined to come to it. Something like this comes within our ordinary experience. Events and occasions that we look forward to with eagerness sometimes find us indifferent or disinclined when they come. And if this is the case in natural things, much more is it so in spiritual things. The Jews refused the call of the apostles,

because the kingdom of Jesus disappointed their expectations. They looked for a king and a kingdom surrounded with pomp and glory, and saw nothing but meanness and obscurity. Moral grandeur had no charms for them. They would not come to a marriage where the union of love and wisdom was to be solemnized, where mercy and peace were to meet together, and righteousness and truth kiss each other, and where the table spread for the guests should present a feast for the gratification and nourishment of the soul. This conduct is not peculiar to the Jews. They were too faithful types of the natural man in all ages of the world. The religion of Jesus is too pure and unworldly to be otherwise than repulsive to the merely natural mind. We all know it by experience. And if there were none but the principles of the natural man in us—if in the little world within there were none but the chief priest, and the scribe, and the Pharisee—we should all be as unbelieving and unwilling as the sophisticated Jews. And so far as we are merely natural, the call to the blessings of the gospel will remain unheeded. But Divine mercy does not leave us even when we refuse its call.

4. As in the case of the Jews, so in ours, *he sent forth other servants*, with a still more urgent call, enforced with still higher inducements,—*Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.* It is thus we ever find striking and affecting instances of that long-suffering and abundance in goodness and truth so consistent with the Divine nature. As in the former parable, so in this, we must regard the second message and the second messengers, as having a distinct character from the first. The appeal is now more to the will than to the intellect; the guests are not called to the marriage simply, but to the dinner, all things being ready. The king has done his part to the uttermost, and only waits to receive those for whom the provision has been made. And what is that provision? It is first expressed by the one word, dinner. Dinners signify the good of charity, in which the Lord dwells with man; their dining and supping together denoting consociation by love, and all conjunction. The marriage feast is that good which the Lord's incarnation has provided, as the means of a blessed consociation and conjunction between his children and himself. And that good proceeds from the Lord's humanity, the glorification of which was the preparation of the feast, which stands ready for every willing guest. But the dinner itself is described: "My oxen and fatlings are killed." Oxen are emblems of the good of the natural affections, and fatlings of the good of innocence.

The term killed should rather be sacrificed; and to sacrifice is to make holy. The Lord made the natural affections and the natural innocence of the humanity he assumed holy in himself, when he purified and consecrated them to his indwelling Divinity. And now they are offered to us as holy and divine things, living and life-giving. And has not the Lord said, "He that eateth me shall live by me"? In him all fulness dwells; all things are ready; and the perpetual Divine call is, "come to the marriage."

5. But how many imitate the Jews of old, who *made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise*. The natural man is not only indifferent to the good and truth offered to him in the gospel, but he turns away from them, his will to evil, and his understanding to falsity—"one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." It is only the inordinate love of the world that is antagonistic to the love and life of heaven. It is not by employing the hands, but by devoting the heart to the world, that we despise the call, and forfeit our right to the kingdom of God. Here, as in the Scriptures generally, the effect is put for the cause, the labour for the love; by mistaking which, some have sought heaven by renouncing the active duties of life, which is neither a means nor an evidence of being crucified to the world. This neglect of divine and heavenly things for those that pertain to this life is a too common one. But we are to reflect at the same time that it is not the world itself, with its labours and rewards, that is opposed to the kingdom of God, with its duties and blessings.

6. When the heart and intellect are turned away from heavenly things, and devoted to earthly things, a further progress in iniquity must follow. The husbandmen were not satisfied with refusing the call of their lord, and giving themselves up to the world. *The remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them*. The word remnant here is the same that, in reference to the virtuous, signifies the remains of goodness and truth, whose awakening in the mind forms the beginning of regeneration, and which are more and more developed in its progress. But the evil have remains stored up in their minds as well as the good. Or rather, remains are stored up in infancy and childhood in all minds, though differing in quality and quantity. It is through these remains that the well-disposed are regenerated, and it is through these that the ill-disposed are called, or by which the call is heard. And when they turn to evil, it is the remains of goodness and truth in themselves that they destroy. It is in this way that they lay hold of the Lord's servants,

and entreat them spitefully, and slay them. For all the evil and destruction of good and truth that the wicked effect, they effect in themselves. And these three acts of violence mark the complete rejection of everything true and good: for the remnant taking the servants is expressive of violence offered to heavenly truths in the will; spitefully using them, of violence offered to those truths in the understanding; and slaying them, of violence offered to them in the life, which is their death or extinction.

7. But every consummated state of evil is followed by judgment. Those who destroy heavenly truth in themselves, turn that truth into an instrument of their own destruction. The servants who were sent to invite the guests to the wedding are slain, but in their stead there comes forth an army to avenge them. *When the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.* The crime of the guests—for they had previously accepted the invitation—has armed the truth against them, and the sword which their sins have unsheathed will not return to the scabbard till it has cut them off, and wiped out the stain which they had left upon the law of righteousness. The law of retaliation, which exists in its perfection in the spiritual life and in the spiritual world, does not imply anything like vindictive justice in the mind or dealings of God. It is simply the result of a law of order, that action and re-action are equal, and that their actual equality is necessary to the existence of equilibrium, on which the conservation of all things depends. The king is represented as *hearing* what those he had bidden to his son's marriage had done to his servants. Hearing is that sense which communicates more immediately with the will, as sight does with the understanding. The king hearing implies that the evil committed was not only a crime against the Divine wisdom, but against the Divine love—not only against the truth, but against the good of truth. The armies he sent forth are the truths of the Lord's Word and kingdom, which subdue opposing evils and falsities, and deprive them of the power of doing violence to the principles, and through them to the inhabitants, of heaven. The king's armies killed those murderers and burned their cities,—everything possessing or relating to life, both in the will and the understanding, is destroyed and consumed, every truth relating to life or doctrine is removed, and death reigns in the will and desolation in the understanding. Such is the final result of refusing the offers of salvation, and continuing in enmity and deadly hostility to the Author and the means of life. Even this is exhibited to some extent in the present world, if not in

the case of persons, yet in that of churches. Such a consummation overtook the Jewish church, whose crimes and devastation are described in the natural sense of the parable. On that occasion, when the Jews had refused the call to the kingdom of the Messiah, and had slain the Messiah himself, the church amongst them was consummated, and the Lord turned to another people.

8, 9. *Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.* The freeness of the gospel, and the offer of salvation to all, could not be more clearly set forth than in this parable, and especially in this part of it. Human benevolence often gets soured by disappointments, and the deserving frequently suffer for the sins of the undeserving. Not so with the Divine benevolence. In fact, the present parable is constructed as if to teach us that the Divine benevolence is even enlarged by human perverseness and malignity—on the principle that where sin has abounded, grace has much more abounded. Oh the richness of the wisdom and goodness of God! its depths are past finding out.

10. When they that were bidden had refused to come, the king's servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. Figuratively, those who were called to supply the place of the first-bidden guests are the Gentiles, who were adopted to form a visible church, in place of the unbelieving Jews. Spiritually, they are those who are in ignorance of the truth, but who are not indisposed to receive it. The servants are commanded to go out into the highways in search of the new guests. These are literally *ways of ways*, places where two or more ways meet or cross, places like the Latin *compitum*, where the country people assembled to keep their wakes and perform their sacrifices, where, therefore, numbers of persons were likely to be found. These central places, into which the converging ways poured their numerous contributions, represented the rational mind, where the thoughts assemble, some entering from the natural mind and some from the spiritual, or some from the world and some from heaven, and where, therefore, there are "both bad and good." Viewed in relation to persons, the Gentiles, who are historically meant, being without the light of revelation, were guided by the light of nature, thus of reason, with such spiritual aids as tradition and the reflected light of the Word afforded them. They were, therefore, in the highways of intellectual and moral truth when called to the wedding, to which, whatever their defects, they willingly came.

11. *And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment.* The prominence given to the circumstance of a man coming into the guest-chamber without a wedding garment is striking, and must be instructive. It no doubt teaches us that besides receiving and accepting the call, there is still something else required to make us children of the marriage. We must put on the marriage garment. We must be clothed with the garment of righteousness. The guests were not admitted into the guest-chamber in their own raiment, but in garments provided for them by the king. So we are not admitted into the heavenly marriage in our own righteousness, but must be clothed in a righteousness derived from the Lord. This is the only true, and therefore the only saving righteousness, for all our righteousness is of him. We must not imagine that the righteousness we receive from the Lord is put on to cover and conceal our corruptions. Righteousness cannot be acquired but by living it. "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." It may seem as if the righteousness we acquire by doing it is our own righteousness. Self-righteousness and Christ's righteousness are both alike acquired by doing righteousness: the difference is, one is acquired by doing righteousness from self, the other by doing righteousness from the Lord. Christ does not impart or impute to us right thoughts and affections, words and works, without any cultivation or practice of our own; but he, as the Spirit and power of righteousness, worketh in us to will and do what is righteous, and that righteousness which we will and do from him is his, because he is its author. As we do not derive it from ourselves, we are not to ascribe it to ourselves, but must give him the glory. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Ps. cxv. 1). Understood in its particular sense, the guests who came to the wedding are the thoughts and affections of the rational mind, and the king coming in to see the guests is the influx of divine truth into them. The object of this is to see, or enable us to perceive, the quality of our thoughts and affections, to distinguish and separate between the good and the bad, that the good may receive spiritual light, and the bad be cast into outer darkness. This is the judgment effected in every human mind, when brought under the influence of divine truth. And as every work is like itself in all its degrees, the judgment which takes place on good and evil persons is of the same character, and has the same results. The divine, present in the light of truth, reveals the character, "for whatsoever doth make manifest is light"

(Eph. v. 13); and the revelation of the inward character brings the good into the fulness of light, and leaves the evil in the depth of darkness. The description of the judgment in the parable is written for our admonition, and it is no doubt profitable to reflect upon it.

12. When the king saw the strange guest, *he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.* When, in this world, God questions us through his Word, it is for the purpose of leading us to self-examination, as the means of forming a just estimate of our own state. In the other world there is a conformity between state and place which admits of no violation. No heavenly state, no heavenly place; no heaven within, no heaven without. Not only the Lord himself sees, but he gives every soul to see, that there can be no possible violation of this law. Plausibly as we may reason ourselves into the contrary belief in this world, in the other world, when all sophistries are removed by the all-penetrating and revealing light of truth, the self-convicted soul remains speechless. The evil in the other life are not sent to their final abode in hell until they are not only convicted but convinced of sin—till they see their evil condition, and are convinced that they are unfit for any place but that to which their evil, like a millstone about their neck, draws them down into the deep. How solemn and impressive! And how fearful are the consequences!

13. *Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* In conformity with the condition of things in this world, the Lord is represented in Scripture as casting the wicked into hell, and in the other world they appear as if cast headlong into the infernal abodes; while the real truth is, the evil cast themselves into hell, or rather, evil itself casts or drags them down into hell, their headlong course being but a symbol of their inverted state. But there is a gradation in the vastation of the evil, which this parable unfolds. They are bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness. This implies total deprivation of all seeming good and truth. The hands are the powers of the internal man, the feet of the external. In this world these are free; in the other world, with the evil, they are bound. In this world the external man can do good, while the internal man wills evil. This is necessary here for the preservation of external order, and of man's capability of reformation. In the other life, where reformation is no longer possible, no seeming can exist; the external acts as the internal wills. An internal evil brings the external under subjection to itself, and that subjection is a

state of bondage. And while the powers of the will are deprived of good, and become subject to evil, the understanding is deprived of truth and immersed in falsity, which is meant by being cast into outer darkness. There are two kinds or degrees of falsity—one that originates in the will, another in the understanding. Intellectual falsity is darkness, voluntary falsity is outer darkness. The one is the negation of truth, the other is its perversion; the one shuts out the light, the other turns the light into darkness: "And if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" In this state of spiritual darkness "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." These are signs and symbols of anguish, but not simply of the anguish of suffering. In the other world the wicked no doubt weep, but theirs are partly the tears of a disappointed devouring selfishness and insatiate ambition. Their tears are like those of Alexander, who, having conquered the world, wept that there were no more worlds to conquer. They gnash their teeth; but they do so as did the infuriated Jews when, rushing on the saintly Stephen, they "gnashed on him with their teeth." Weeping is expressive of a state of the will, gnashing the teeth of a state of the understanding. The will weeps when its desires are resisted; the understanding gnashes when its notions are opposed. Gnashing of the teeth is the continual dispute of falses with each other, consequently of those who are in falses; these disputes are heard out of hell as gnashings of the teeth, and are actually turned into gnashings of the teeth when truth from heaven flows in.

14. Our Lord concludes his parable with the moral: *For many are called, but few are chosen.* We cannot, of course, understand this to apply literally to the relative numbers of the called and chosen of the last invited guests, although it might seem to be so intended. If it refers to relative numbers, it must be of the whole of those invited from first to last. But the remark is understood to be true with respect to the whole human race. Numbers in the Word do not, however, signify quantity, but quality. The few are those who are in charity and its faith; the many are those who are in faith without charity. The guest who came without a wedding garment represents not an individual, but a class—the class who have faith without works, and who, being destitute of the garment of righteousness, cannot be admitted to the kingdom of heaven.

15. Not conciliated, but rather exasperated, by the Lord's teaching, in which there was an obvious allusion to the Jews, *then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.*

The Pharisees representing and even personating those who are religionists in name, but not in deed, we see the same opposition to the Lord's love and truth that we had so often occasion to observe in these malignant and deceitful enemies of the Just one,—their opposition to the Lord's love being meant by their "going," and their opposition to the Lord's truth being meant by their "taking counsel," their purpose to "entangle him in his talk" being expressive of the lust of perverting and destroying the truth. To accomplish this,

16. *They sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians.* The Lord's disciples represent all the principles of the church, those of the Pharisees represent all the principles opposed to and subversive of the church. These signify especially false principles, the kindred evils of which are meant by the Herodians. These, therefore, are sent out or put forth to entangle Jesus in his talk. They address him with feigned respect, *saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.* The truth is often spoken by those who in their hearts deny it. The Lord is indeed true, and teaches the way of God in truth. He is the truth and the way, and he is the good to which it leads. He cares not for any man, for he regards not the person of men. He cares not for mere human good, and still less for mere human truth. He regards not the person of men, is, literally, he looketh not on the face of men. The same expression occurs in the Old Testament. Man looketh on the face, but the Lord looketh on the heart. The face signifies the understanding, the heart signifies the will. The Lord looks not on the face, on the understanding, at a man's intelligence and belief only, but he looks on the heart, at a man's goodness and love. In this, therefore, the deceitful messengers spake truly. But they had a purpose in speaking and describing the truth,—that they might make the truth speak falsehood, or might be able so to construe the words of truth as to make it appear false, and so compass its destruction. And now comes the grand question, by which they had hoped their object might be gained.

17. *Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?* The clever deceitfulness of this question is universally admitted. It was so framed that either a negative or an affirmative answer, one of which they supposed must be given, would equally answer their purpose. Had he said it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, he would have become odious to the Jewish people; had he said it was not lawful, he would have become obnoxious to the Roman government. How complete was their discomfiture, how great

must have been their dismay, when Jesus answered them, so as even to seal their lips in silence, without so much as treading on the snare they had so cunningly and so confidently laid. No one, indeed, can read our Lord's answer, without being struck with wonder and admiration at the wisdom it displays. It is a perfect exemplification of the advice he gave to his disciples, when he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves,—“Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” But the Lord not only defeated his enemies, but he taught them and us a double lesson; and their wicked attempt has, apparently, procured for the world one of the finest lessons, expressed in the most felicitous terms, that it possesses. “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's,” has become one of those great maxims that contain in a sentence the whole duty of man—faithfully to discharge his obligations to God and his neighbour. But let us see what it spiritually teaches in relation to ourselves and our spiritual life.

16, 17. According to Clowes, the Pharisees and Herodians coming to Jesus with their pretended difficulty, and with professions of confidence in his wisdom on their lips, spiritually means, that they who are in hypocritical worship treat the Word with outward respect, and consult it for the regulation of the external man as to things moral and civil. The Lord is the Word; and the Pharisees are those within the church who, while they outwardly reverence the Word, inwardly hate and despise it, secretly labouring to pervert its holy truths, because they witness against their evils.

18-22. *Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's*—Signifies that, while they inquire about the regulation of the external man, they do it without any regard to the regulation of the internal. The Lord, when they had openly acknowledged the image and superscription on the tribute money to be Cæsar's, saying to them, “Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's,” signifies that the Word teaches, by significations, that the external man bears the image of this world, for which it was created, and therefore ought to be regulated by, and submit to, the laws of moral and civil life; but that the internal man bears the image of heaven, for which it was created, and therefore ought to be regulated by, and submit to, the

laws of heavenly and spiritual life. *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him,* signifies that the truth which the Lord taught is incomprehensible to those who are in hypocritical worship, therefore they reject the internal of the Word.

23-30. *The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.* The denial of the resurrection was equivalent in those days to the denial of man's immortality. This is evident from the argument; for the impossibility of restoring every wife to her own husband was intended to show the absurd results of the doctrine of immortality. But in the spiritual sense, which is here necessary to obtain from the relation its proper instruction, the denial of the resurrection is the denial of regeneration. In the spiritual sense resurrection signifies regeneration. Regeneration is a resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. The denial of resurrection therefore represents, and, indeed, involves, the denial of regeneration. If man had no hope of rising again, he would have no desire to be born again. The affirmation or denial of the one doctrine implies that of the other. The spiritual Sadducee is one who says there is no spirit, therefore no spirituality. Such is the character of those who now come to Jesus, and endeavour to wrest from him an admission of the truth of their opinion. It is not to be supposed incredible that men should endeavour to confirm from the Word a doctrine which it was the main object of the Word to reveal. Did not the Sadducees believe in Moses, and yet disbelieve in the soul's immortality? But what is regeneration? It is the heavenly marriage, or the union of good and truth in the human mind. Therefore, the Sadducees proceed to speak about marriage. And as their belief was, that there is no resurrection, they endeavour to prove their doctrine by a question on the subject of marriage. If seven men had successively one woman to wife, whose wife could she finally be of the seven? It is one of the principles of regeneration, that in the heavenly marriage every good must

have its own truth, and every truth its own good. The marriage is heavenly only in proportion as the good and truth are really each other's. If a good and a truth, not having this mutual relation, are externally conjoined, they are not truly united, and remain unfruitful in good affections and true thoughts, and in the use and happiness that result from them. In the progress of regeneration there must sometimes be repeated external unions and dissolutions, before the true union takes place. It was in reference to this, and to represent it, that in the representative church it was a law, that if a man died leaving no seed, the next of kin should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. The case which the Sadducees proposed was one in which a woman had been the wife of seven brothers. In the spiritual sense, seven does not mean a certain number, but a particular quality; it means what is complete, and also what is holy. A woman who had had seven husbands, and at last herself dying childless, represents a good, to which truths of every kind and degree had been adjoined, but between which and itself there had been no real union, and from which there had been no spiritual offspring—no works of love and wisdom as the fruits of true marriage. Such a good must be a spurious good; perhaps an ardent feeling of natural charity or benevolence, that may be successively wedded to many different schemes of usefulness, but all equally unwise and equally fruitless of good results; and the end of all may be, that, cheated and baffled, the feeling itself at last may die out, and leave the heart hardened by disappointment and disgust. If, instead of learning wisdom, we only increase in folly by experience, there can be no profitable end of our exertions. The final state is only a more perfect or complete form of the present. If the soul has been betrothed on earth, it may be married in heaven; but if good has had no real love for truth, or truth for good, on earth, it can have none in heaven. In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage. If the heavenly marriage of good and truth is not effected here, it cannot be effected hereafter. Greatly do those err who suppose that any one of a succession of fruitless marriages between the will and the intellect, while man lives in the body, can become the one final and fruitful marriage of the will and intellect when he comes to live in the spirit. They err, not knowing the Scriptures; for it is the unalterable law of divine truth, that as the tree falls so it lies. The eternal state is but a continuation of the temporal state—the heavenly of the earthly. No heavenly marriage here, no heaven hereafter. They err, not knowing the power of God. Divine love itself, though it can exalt and bless every legitimate union

of the good and the true, cannot change the false into the true, or the evil into the good, nor can it change the infernal into the heavenly marriage. Those who attain the blessed resurrection into the new life on earth, and into the abodes of the blest in heaven, are as the angels of God there. An angel-man is already in the heavenly marriage; for the union of love and wisdom form the angel, or the angelic state. With the angel there is no marrying and giving in marriage,—no new union of the understanding with the will, or of the will with the understanding, for this reciprocal union is already perfect. They are Hephzibah, and their land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in them, and their land is married.

We may observe that resurrection is not only to be understood of the whole man, but of every part of the man, and in every stage of his regeneration. Every elevation of a good and truth out of the natural mind into the spiritual is a resurrection. Every principle thus raised up puts off the natural body and puts on the spiritual. Thus it is that the Christian dies daily and rises daily. But the principles thus elevated out of the natural into the spiritual mind consist not of single truths or goods, but of goods and truths united. Their union is essential to their elevation. It is only by living the truth received into the natural mind, and so uniting it with good, that it becomes spiritual. Here, too, the marriage takes place on earth, or in the natural mind, and not in heaven, or the spiritual mind. The principles thus raised up are neither married nor given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven; for the union of the good and the true is as essential to the angelic principle as to the angel.

We have said nothing here on the subject of marriage in heaven. Of this we have spoken elsewhere. Our Lord, it is commonly supposed, here teaches that marriage does not exist in heaven. It is true that in heaven they are neither married nor given in marriage. This does not mean that there is no marriage in heaven, but that there can be no marriage in heaven but between those who are in the marriage of goodness and truth; and as this marriage cannot be given in heaven except to those in whom it existed upon earth, so neither can true marriage. As the distinction of the sexes is essentially of the soul, and is therefore spiritual and eternal, so also is the union of the sexes. In heaven marriage exists in its highest perfection and blessedness. The kingdom of heaven is compared to a marriage, and marriage is the most perfect type and realization of heaven.

31, 32. *But*, continues our Lord to the Sadducees, *as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto*

you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. In the Old Testament there is no very direct revelation of the immortality of the soul; but our Lord shows it to be taught where none had ever before suspected any evidence of it to exist. When God proclaimed out of the bush that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, these patriarchs had long been dead. Our Lord gives this to the Sadducees as a proof of the resurrection. These, dead to men, were alive to God. They were living in the eternal world. Unless they had been so, God could not have called himself their God; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him. Resurrection, we may here perceive, is applied to the spirit, not to the body: for the bodies of the patriarchs were in the grave, their souls had ascended to heaven. This is the resurrection of the Scriptures—the rising of the living from the dead, the soul from the body.

In the spiritual sense Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the celestial, spiritual, and natural principles derived from the Lord in man. These are formed in him by regeneration, and therefore are living: what is of man, as an unregenerate being, is dead. God is the God of the spiritual principles in man, because, being derived from him, they are in connection with him; but he is not the God of the natural principles of man's selfhood, for these have no connection with him as the Life. In a more specific sense the Lord is the God of the affections of good and perceptions of truth, because they have his life in them; but he is not the God of the outward knowledge in which they are received and dwell; for this, being of the world, is put off like a body, when the spiritual, as the soul, ascends above the regions of time and space.

33. We read that *when the multitude heard this that the Lord had said, they were astonished at his doctrine.* Well they might. He had opened up a new view of the resurrection, and drawn a light from the Scriptures which neither the Sadducees nor the Pharisees had ever known them to contain. But this astonishment implies admiration. And as the multitude represented the simple affections and unsophisticated thoughts of the human mind, their approbation teaches us that common feeling and common sense are not so closed against the admission of heavenly truth as sentiment and philosophy.

34-36. *But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.* Truth, when it does not convince, hardens; and even when it silences one faculty, does not satisfy

another. If the Sadducees represent the natural understanding, and the Pharisees the natural will, we see how the defeat of the one may rouse the opposition of the other. The Pharisees, who were antagonists of the Sadducees, though they could unite with them in pursuing the common purpose of compassing the Lord's destruction, were not dissatisfied with the defeat they had sustained. As the Pharisees were gathered together, so are the affections and thoughts drawn into closer connection with each other, when their power is to be exerted to effect a common object. They put forward a lawyer, as the mind puts forth its science to refute or entangle. *Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* No vain or unimportant inquiry certainly, if it were honestly intended. It was meant as a temptation. And do we not sometimes tempt the truth, by endeavouring to extort from the Word an answer to our questions that will enable us to evade the force of its injunctions? And even then we sometimes outwardly honour it the most, as the lawyer did when he addressed Jesus as Rabbi, or Master; for this title is expressive of the Lord's character as divine truth, as Lord is of divine good. Thus to address the Lord is equivalent to saying, "Thou art the Truth itself, the Great Teacher; I come to thee as the only authority in questions relating to eternal life." Whether or not the lawyer profited by the answer, it is one that has settled a great and momentous question, and must ever remain on the page of revelation as one of the memorable sayings of Him who spake as never man spake.

37-40. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. To this the Lord added, the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And he summed up the declaration by saying, *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Love to God and love to man are the sum of all revelation and the essence of all religion. God and man are the only objects to which our affections can be directed or our services rendered. They exhaust all our aims, and employ all our powers. Love to God and man are, in Revelation and religion, what the heart and lungs are in the human body. They are the vital principles on which the life of all the other parts depends. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." The other precepts and truths of the Word are but the particulars and singularity, of which these are the generals and universals. The other precepts all proceed from them, and return into them again. They are as the rays of the sun,

which, while they reveal their source, return not to him void, but accomplish his purpose, that which he pleases—to clothe the earth with beauty and enrich it with fruit. Love to God is to be manifested in love to man. God and man are loved when God's love to man is manifested in man's love to his neighbour. Love to God is not strictly a personal affection, but an affection for the attributes which constitute his nature. God is goodness itself and truth itself. To love these is to love God. And to love these is to do them. To do good from him is to love his goodness; to speak truth from him is to love his truth. "He that doeth my commandments," said our Lord, "he it is that loveth me." Love to God is said to be the great requirement of the law; for to have respect to God in all we do is the great essential of religion. To shun evil because it is sin against God, and to do good because it is agreeable to his will,—this is to love God; and this is the first and great commandment; because to have respect to God in all we will, and think, and do, is the first and great excellence of character. This is to love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind. We love our neighbour as ourselves when we do to another as we would that another should do to us. Yet we are to love our neighbour with a love like that with which we love God. For the second commandment is "like unto" the first. We love God as goodness itself; we are to love our neighbour as the image of goodness. Good in our neighbour is that which we are to love, for good is our neighbour; and a human being is only our neighbour in so far as he has God's goodness in him. Yet we are to love every man, but we are to love him for his good, that good may be in him, and that the good in him may be increased and perfected. We may love a man so as to injure him, as we love our children so as to spoil them by injudicious fond indulgence; in which case we love the person, but hate the neighbour—we love him, not for his good, but for our own gratification.

41-46. *While the Pharisees, to whom the Lord delivered this great lesson, were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?* In teaching his interrogators to love God, the Lord endeavours to draw their minds to the God they ought to love. His question, *What think ye of Christ?* may indeed seem to have no relation to the subject on which he had been speaking. But there is an important connection between the first of all the commandments of the law, and the first of all the doctrines of the Bible. In some respects they are identical. We therefore find that in the record of this conversation, as given by Mark, the Lord answers the

question of the scribe by saying, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." The question, then, which is the great commandment, leads us to the supreme Object of love, as well as to the supreme love with which he is to be regarded. And this is the more evident when we reflect that Christ was God, yea, the one God whom Israel was taught to believe in and love as their one Lord. Jesus asks the Pharisees, "whose son is he?" But this is the very question by which the great doctrine of Christ's divinity, consequently his sole divinity, was and is to be determined. The Pharisees answered that he was *The son of David*. Our Lord's object in asking the question was to refute the error and overturn the belief in his being the son of a finite being, and therefore himself finite. When he demanded of them, *How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?* He silenced them as he had done the Sadducees; for they perceived at once that *If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?* And what is the result of this? It is, that Jesus is the Son of God. This, indeed, conveys to the natural mind the idea of Christ as the personal son of a personal father. But properly understood, it conveys the idea of his identity with the Father; for it involves the idea that the Son is divine; and as the humanity which the Lord assumed and glorified in the world is the Son of God, it teaches the great truth that the Lord's humanity is divine, and one with the essential divinity, as the body is one with the soul. The Lord's question, therefore, has an intimate connection with that of the Pharisees. He is, indeed, the God who is to be loved with all the heart. In him we see the Being whose love is life. He brought the Father forth to view. He rendered the invisible Divine visible, the Incomprehensible comprehensible; in him God was and is brought near to our thoughts, and made dear to our affections; and the Christian is able, far more perfectly than the Jew, to love the one God with all his heart and soul, because that God who was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, has given the believer an object that he can truly and supremely love. So complete was the Lord's demonstration of his own divinity, *that no man, among the Pharisees, was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.*

So important and so precious is this great doctrine of Christianity that we have thought it desirable to dwell at some length upon it. We may offer at the same time a few words having reference to its

internal sense. There is an actual duality in the Lord, pointed out in this passage, as in that in the psalm to which it refers. The nature of this duality is not so clearly preserved in our translation. In the original of the psalm the Lord who sits at the right hand is not called by the same name as the Lord at whose right hand he sits. It there reads, "Jehovah said unto my Adon." Jehovah is the name of the Lord as to his divine love, while Adonai is a name of the Lord as to his divine wisdom. And wisdom sits at the right hand of love, for all the power of love is by wisdom. The enemies of God are placed under the dominion of wisdom, for it is by wisdom the Divine love subdues and holds all disorder under subjection. But the subjugation here spoken of is not only general, but special. It relates to the subjugation of the powers of darkness and of nature under the power of the Lord's humanity. It was Adonai specifically that assumed the human nature: it was the Word that was made flesh. And the Word was made flesh, that the enemies of the Word might be subjugated and made his footstool. The enemies were the powers of darkness and the refractory powers of human nature. The Lord in the flesh conquered hell, and glorified himself by making his humanity divine. In both of these great works he made his foes his footstool. He reduced all under submission to himself. And as he did so in and to himself, he does so now in man. His foes in us are the evils that rise up against the rule of his divine government, and the powers of the mind that have become perverted. By regeneration the Lord makes these foes his footstool, so that his rule is established in our hearts and souls, by every thought being brought into subjection to the authority of Christ. It is by this that we come experimentally to know that Christ is not the son of David, but the Son of the living God. It is by this that the power of his divinity, or of his divine humanity, is felt within our consciousness and our conscience. It is this that, from a different cause and in a different way, silences all questions and completes all the Lord's answers—that ends all mental controversy between truth and error, and all conflict between good and evil.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HAVING defeated the machinations of the Pharisees, and refuted the error of the Sadducees, and brought forth from the treasures of his wisdom some of the most important truths of the Divine religion he

came to establish among men, the Lord now turns to the multitude, and to his disciples, to teach them the character of those sectaries, and warn them against the sins they concealed under an ostentatious sanctity, and the errors they made plausible by a perverted rationality. He afterwards addresses the scribes and Pharisees themselves, pointing out to them the character and consequences of their corruptions.

1. *Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples.* The disciples and the multitude represented the internal and external principles of the new man, or of man so far as he is new; while the scribes and Pharisees represent those of the old man, or of man so far as he is yet unrenewed; and these, we know, are contrary one to the other. It may, however, be as well to look at its individual through its general application.

2, 3. *Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.* Sitting is a state of the will, as standing is of the understanding. To sit in the seat of any one is to enter into and possess his will, or his loves and ends of life, of which his will is the seat. This was done by the scribes and Pharisees with regard to Moses, in whose seat they sat. They taught and enforced the law which Moses represented, but they did so to promote their own ends. The true end of the law is the glory of God and the salvation of man; but they had no other end in teaching it than their own glory and advantage. When this is the case, the will of man rules, and the truth of God serves. Yet men can be zealous for the truth even when they are trampling goodness under their feet, or at least when their heart has no sympathy with it. The Lord exhorted the people, saying, *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.* Their teaching was to be followed, but their example was to be shunned. This is a distinction which it is highly necessary to observe. Truth is true, from whose lips soever it proceeds. True it is, that they who instruct by their teaching should lead by their example. But when the teaching of those who sit in Moses' seat is better than their lives, it is our duty to accept the truth and leave the evil. The Lord requires his people to "observe" and "do" the truth, which is to receive it into their understandings and wills, and to manifest it in their words and works.

4. The Lord proceeds to describe the conduct of those who had assumed to themselves the authority of the law. *For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders.* The Jewish hierarchy, not content with the onerous duties of the law, refined upon its plain precepts, and multiplied its ceremonial observ-

ances, laying upon the shoulders of others a burden which they did not touch themselves. It is the duty of the priesthood to help others to bear the necessary burden of life; but the Pharisees increased that burden with unnecessary labours, and left the people unaided to sustain it. But do we not sometimes lay such burdens on ourselves? Do we not lay on ourselves the burden of unnecessary observances, even to the neglect of positive duties? We load our minds with trifles, to the neglect of solid acquirements; we oppress life with unreasonable cares and anxieties, to the neglect of prudent circumspection. But let us see what this conduct of the scribes and Pharisees spiritually implies. The Pharisees were a kind of spiritual taskmasters, who exacted an unreasonable tale of bricks from the people, and yet required them to make bricks without straw. And they no doubt represented those infesting spirits who endeavour, by fallacious reasonings and deceitful appearances, to subject the well-disposed to their power. Their requirements are a burden, because they oppress the spiritual life of the soul; the burden they impose is heavy and grievous, because, though outwardly good and true, the requirements are inwardly evil and false, and oppress the life both of the will and of the understanding; they bind these burdens, because it is their desire to unite evil and falsity together; they lay them upon men, for men signify the spiritual principles of good and truth, that make us truly human; their desire to oppress and overpower these is meant by laying their burdens on men's shoulders, for the shoulder signifies the greatest degree of power—shoulders, the powers both of the will and the intellect. The shoulders of those who bear the burden are contrasted with the fingers of those who impose it—the greatest power with the least. The burdens that the Pharisees laid on others' shoulders, *they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers*, because those whom they represent, while they desire to subject to themselves the whole power both of the will and intellect of others, will not, if possible, allow the least aid, either intellectual or voluntary, to be extended to them.

5. *But all their works they do for to be seen of men*—not to be seen of God. Man-pleasers care nothing but for the outward show of piety and holiness. This is to *make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments*. The phylacteries were fillets, on which were written certain passages of Scripture, and bound on the forehead and hands. The custom, which does not seem to have existed till the captivity, was derived from the command of Moses respecting a certain ordinance,—“It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy

mouth" (Exod. xiii. 9). Fringes were worn by the Israelites on the borders of their garments, as a means of remembering the commandments of the Lord (Num. xv. 38). As these were but outward signs of inward principles, the Pharisees, while they narrowed and diminished the inward spirit of religion, widened and enlarged its outward forms: they made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments. The phylacteries which they made broad signified goods in the outward form; the hands on which the phylacteries were worn signifying deeds which the hands are employed to perform; the borders of their garments, which they enlarged, signified external truths, which are those contained in the literal sense of the Word; outer garments denoting general truths, the ultimates of which are the borders.

6, 7. But the Pharisees, like all who enlarge the borders of their professional garments, looked to something more substantial and gratifying to their self-love than the reputation of superior sanctity; for they, it is said, *love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi*. Here, again, we have the idea of ruling. They who sat in Moses' seat were also ambitious to occupy the chief places in the social and religious assemblies of the people, and to receive public homage and dignified titles. Spiritually, feasts signify the communication of good, and synagogues the communication of truth; and to occupy the chief seats at these signifies to insinuate one's own self-will and self-love into the good and truth of heaven, and so make them the means of self-exaltation. The market, where goods are bought and sold, signifies the knowledge of good and truth; and to receive greetings there, is to receive the credit and praise of superior wisdom; and therefore it follows, that they loved to be called Rabbi, Master or Teacher—that is, to be acknowledged as not only excelling in wisdom, but being its exclusive and authoritative teachers.

8, 9. The Lord then says to his disciples, *But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren*; and he proceeds to say to them, *And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven*. This is one of the many instances which show that our Lord expressed spiritual truth in his plainest declarations. Our Lord could not mean to prohibit the use of the language that expressed the ordinary and necessary relations between teachers and their scholars, and between children and their parents. He who is a doctor or teacher may be so called and so addressed, and not less he who is a father. But in the spiritual

and exalted sense, Christ is our only Teacher, God our only Father. A teacher is one who communicates truth : a father is one who communicates good. Although one man may be instrumental in leading another into truth and goodness, the Lord is the only Author and origin of these heavenly principles. The teacher is in this respect on a level with the scholar, and both are alike recipients of these gifts from heaven ; the one excels the other only in regard to the time and measure of reception. One is the Teacher of all, and all the taught are brethren. Christ is a name expressive of the Divine Truth itself ; and whence but from the Truth itself can we receive truth ? By this declaration of our Lord we are also instructed that all the authority of truth belongs to the Lord alone. We are not to look to any man as an authority : Christ is our only authority in matters relating to eternal life. "To the law and to the testimony" is the rule of Christian evidence, and to this ultimate test every dogma is to be brought. "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." If the Lord alone is our teacher, no less is he alone our Father. He is especially, because spiritually, our Father when we are born again of him. Can we in this sense call any man our father ? That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And although human help is required to bring us to the second birth, yet the human instrument is not the author of the new life. He only who is the Life can make us alive, and to him alone belongs the glory. His infinite love is life, and that love in us is life eternal. Yet all this does not prevent the use of language which describes the relative condition of men. There is no sin in calling one Rabbi who is our teacher, nor in calling one father who is our parent. Nay, there is a propriety in doing so. The sin is committed only when we put man in the place of God, and, in the purely spiritual sense, when we put any human good and truth in the place of the Divine good and truth, and give them a name and ascribe to them a power which belong to the Infinite and Eternal only.

10. Our Lord seemingly repeats an exhortation he had previously given ; but as there are no mere repetitions in the Word, a distinct meaning is contained in the prohibition, *Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.* There is indeed a difference. In *v. 8* the disciples are not to be called Rabbi ; in this they are not to be called masters. Though of the same purport, Rabbi involves an assumption of greater importance and dignity than master, and is more directly opposed to the Divine truth itself. And when master is altered to masters, we are directed not to truth as a whole, but to

some separate or particular truths, and to the knowledges of truth. Even these we are not to claim as our own, but ascribe to Him to whom all knowledge and wisdom belong.

11. It is not our being served and exalted by others that makes us great or happy. Accordingly, when the Lord said to his disciples, *He that is greatest among you shall be your servant*, or minister, he delivered one of the greatest truths that can be carried out in life,—one that would work an entire revolution in the practice and condition of the world. This requirement is in harmony with his great principle—“Seek ye first the kingdom, and all things shall be added to you.” Let usefulness have the first place, and recompence the second, and there can be no fear of the result. Seek not honour and exaltation : leave them to seek thee. If you seek an office, seek it primarily for the sake of the use it will enable you to do for others, and secondarily for the use it will enable you to do for yourself. When we consider that this was addressed to the disciples, who represent not only all the members of the church, but all the principles of the church in every member, we learn from it that the principle which prompts us to do the greatest good is itself the greatest, and contributes most to the improvement of our character, and to the advancement of our happiness. And what principle is that which prompts us to do the greatest good, but the principle of love—love to God and love to man? Its greatness consists in, or arises from, its use. It is like the heart in the human body. It is the greatest and the most laborious : the ruler, and yet the servant of all. Such should be the measure of human greatness, as that which the Creator has appointed, and which the Saviour taught.

12. And as with greatness, so with humility. Humility does not consist in occupying a lowly place, but in cultivating a lowly state : and a lowly state is one in which there is an abnegation of self. Self-seeking is self-exaltation ; self-abnegation is humiliation. *And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.* When self is exalted, self itself becomes abased, and the whole man degraded. But when self is humbled, by being made to take the lowest place, it is exalted ; for self-love itself is purified and dignified by being subordinated and made subservient to the love of God and the neighbour. And, indeed, when man denies his own selfhood the Lord gives him a new and heavenly selfhood. A man's selfhood is really himself—his inner life—the complex of all the thoughts and affections that form his conscious being—that which he calls *me*. This by nature is evil. But so far as it is subdued, so far the Lord

gives him a new selfhood ; for he makes him a new creature, having new thoughts and affections, and the me becomes the consciousness of another and higher life. And this new selfhood which the Divine power builds up on the ruins of the natural selfhood is a truer self than that which it disinherits and succeeds ; for the more completely a man becomes the Lord's, the more perfectly he becomes his own. His conscious life is exalted. His liberty and rationality, his perceptions and delights, are of a higher order : they were natural, now they are spiritual ; they were earthly, now they are heavenly.

13. While this is the happy experience of those who have found true greatness in serving, and true exaltation in humility, unhappy is the experience of those who live in the exaltation of self above all that is divine and heavenly. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* As true life consists in making all that is of self to humble itself under and serve God, so false life consists in making all that is of God submit to and serve self. This is hypocrisy, for it makes the life holy outwardly, and profane inwardly. The effect of this our Lord describes. *Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men.* Considered in reference to the individual, heaven is the spiritual mind, which is an image of heaven, as the natural mind is an image of the world. This heaven is closed by evil, and especially by the sin of hypocrisy. The "men" against whom it is closed are the truths of the Word, which have been learnt, but only admitted into the natural mind, and there kept to serve a natural purpose. The Lord says further, *ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* Themselves—their thoughts and affections, which constitute themselves—they never raise above nature and the natural mind into the spiritual world and the spiritual mind, that they may become spiritual, nor do they suffer the truths of the Word, which, in their very nature, seek an upward course, to enter into that region of the mind for which they were designed ; for as they came down from God out of heaven, so have they an inherent desire to ascend into heaven, and return to God again. He who remains natural does not suffer them to enter there ; and both they and their recipient remain natural and dead—nay, truths, in themselves holy, are profaned, because made instruments of evil ends. This state of life is that to which the woe belongs ; for he who shuts his mind against the inward and sincere reception of goodness and truth, shuts it against the blessing which these heavenly principles carry in their bosom.

14. But these are not the only evils they commit, or the only blessings they exclude. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer. Widows signify those who are in good and desire truth; abstractly, good which desires truth. The house of the widow denotes the faculty itself, the will, in which the good resides, and also the means by which the principle of good is supported; for the house includes the living as well as the dwelling of the widow. To devour widows' houses is to take away the very faculty of loving and doing good. This hypocrisy does. It deprives the will of all good, and even of all the power of willing good; for it destroys not only good itself, but the remains of good, on which the very faculty depends. Connected with the devouring widows' houses there is the making of long prayers for a pretence. What can be more profane than a practice or a single act which at once mocks God and deceives men? It was by their long prayers that the Pharisees deceived and robbed the widows. So it is, when the understanding becomes the slave of the will, that it garnishes the foulest deeds with the fairest appearances. But the greater the pretence the deeper the degradation; he who steals into the hearts of others eats out his own. *Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.* This is a warning to avoid that which brings upon the soul the more grievous punishments.

15. But there are other charges against the hypocrites, and more woes, as the consequence of their sins. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.* This other charge is a severe rebuke to the sectarian spirit and zeal which seek to make converts, not for their sake, but for the sake of a particular faith. It does not condemn the propagation of the truth, but it condemns the making of proselytes for purposes of power and ostentation. Spiritually, it has a still more practical meaning. Sea and land are the literal sense of the Word as to truth and good. To compass sea and land to make one proselyte, is to search the whole Word to pervert one truth to favour self-love, and assist that love in attaining its object. The proselyte is said to be made twofold more the child of hell than those who convert him; for truth falsified is worse than simple falsity. It unites in itself what is evil and false, which is its twofold character; for such is the character implied in being a child of hell; hell being the evil that gives birth to falsity, and the child of hell being the falsity that is born of evil.

16-19. From the doings of the scribes and Pharisees the Lord turns to their teaching. *Woe unto you, ye blind guides.* They were intellectually blind,—keen-sighted enough to see what related to their

temporal interest, but unable to discern what concerned their eternal welfare. Blind guides are all those who are of such a character, and a blind guide is the understanding that is under such an influence. *Which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?* From these words it appears that the Pharisees instructed the people that to swear or vow by the temple or the altar was nothing, but that to swear by the gold of the temple and by the offering upon the altar made one a debtor. It is difficult to conceive how human ingenuity could devise such perverse trifles; and this shows how the learned among the Jews had multiplied observances, and laid upon men burdens grievous to be borne. It is well for us that these particulars have a higher sense, and teach us lessons of deeper interest to our souls. To swear, in the Word, spiritually means to confirm truth; and the question is, Whence is confirmation? We must know the spiritual meaning of the things which are here mentioned, as the objects that were and were not to be sworn by. The temple represented the Lord as to his Divine humanity, which is the temple of his body, specifically, the Lord as to divine truth; and the altar represented the Lord as to divine good. The temple and the altar were, for this reason, most holy objects, and the origin of all sanctification. And so is the Lord, whom they represented, the origin of all confirmation. God must be his own witness. He is the author of faith as well as of truth; of love as well as of good. We must, therefore, swear by the temple and the altar. To swear by the gold in the temple, and by the gift upon the altar, is to confirm truth and good by something lower and less than the Lord's truth and good: it is to seek in the finite what can only be found in the infinite; it is to place our trust in something that is not holy in itself, but is dependent for its sanctity on him who is holiness itself. The gold of the temple had the same signification as the gold of the tabernacle; and this was contributed by the Israelites themselves out of that which they had borrowed from the Egyptians. The gold of the temple owed all its sanctity to the temple, as the offering laid upon the altar owed all its sanctity to the altar on which it was laid. To swear by the gold of the temple and the gift that is laid upon the altar, is therefore to confirm good and truth, not by that which is divine, but by that

which, at the best, is sanctified thereby. He that confirms good and truth by the less excludes the greater, but he who confirms them by the greater includes the less.

20-22. *Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon, and so with the temple.* The supreme authority includes in it every lower authority in harmony with it, or that is sanctified by it. But the Lord adds, *And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.* It seems as if this were swearing by the lower, and that the lower included the higher. We must attend to the meaning of the Lord's declaration. To swear by something less than the temple, is to appeal to an authority that is less than divine; and this, as it excludes the temple of the Lord's body, excludes the divinity that dwelleth therein; but the acknowledgment of the Lord's humanity includes the acknowledgment of his indwelling divinity. "He that hath the Son hath the Father." On the same principle the acknowledgment of heaven as God's throne includes the acknowledgment of him that sitteth thereon. Heaven as God's throne is the Lord's divine truth in heaven, and his government derived from it there. But heaven signifies also the spiritual sense of the Word, the divine sense therein is his throne, the Divine itself being him that sitteth thereon. To swear by heaven is to acknowledge the spirituality and divinity of the Word, as to swear by the temple is to acknowledge the divinity of the Lord—that is, the divinity of his humanity. And he who acknowledges the divinity of the Word and the divinity of the Lord, swears by none other. To them he looks for all truth and goodness, and to them for that confirmation that can make them principles of the heart and life.

23. Our Lord proceeds to pronounce the woe of other evils upon the scribes and Pharisees, as hypocrites. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* They were scrupulous about the observance of the ceremonial law, but neglected the observance of the moral law. While the Lord condemns this conduct, he does not, on the other hand, teach men to observe the moral and neglect the ceremonial. *These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* The moral is the essential, the ceremonial is the formal. The formal may exclude the essential, but the essential does not exclude the formal. He who does the greater will not leave the less undone. He who

pays tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin may omit judgment, mercy, and truth; but he who does justice, mercy, and truth will not forget the mint, and anise, and cummin. There may be piety without religion, but there cannot be religion without piety. There must be the judgment of intelligence in the understanding, the mercy of love in the heart, and the works of truth or faith in the life. And these, while they go forth in service to men, will also go forth in piety to God.

24. Further, the Pharisees were called *blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*. As the Pharisees' love of virtue was shown only in trifles, so was their hatred of vice. How much is this still the case! Many who would think it a sin to do or permit anything inconsistent with a rigid observance of the Sabbath see no sin in pursuing a devouring selfishness all the other six days of the week. But all are prone to this inconsistency. The ruling love blinds us to selfishness, and the love of reputation makes us scrupulous about little things that come not in the way of our leading object. But this saying of our Lord has a more interior sense. The gnat and the camel, considered as food, were both unclean; but the gnat, as a winged insect, signifies an object of thought; and the camel, as a beast, signifies an object of affection: that belongs to the understanding, this to the will. In this view we strain at a gnat when we are scrupulous about trifling errors and unscrupulous about great evils.

25. We come to the cause of all this Pharisaic conduct and teaching. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess*. The inside and outside of the cup and platter are the internal and the external man. In the internal are principles, in the external are rules; in the internal are motives, in the external are actions. He who observes rules, but disregards principles—he who attends to his actions, but pays no attention to his motives—cleanses the outside, but leaves the inside corrupt and unclean. But this difference between the internal and external extends both to the understanding and will, and to things both good and true. The cup is the understanding, because it contains wine or other liquid, which signifies truth; and the platter is the will, because it contains food, which signifies good. The cup is clean without but unclean within, when a man speaks well and thinks ill; and the platter is clean without and unclean within, when a man acts well and intends ill. When a man utters habitually with his lips what he disbelieves in his

thoughts, and when he habitually does in his outward life what in his heart he hates or despises, then, however clean the outside may be, the inside is full of extortion and excess—that is, of evil and falsity.

26. The Lord exhorts the *blind Pharisee* to *cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also*. We are instructed in these words that the cleansing of the inside secures the cleansing of the outside, although it does not follow that the cleansing of the outside effects that of the inside. There is no purification of the moral and spiritual life without that of the motives. While the ends of life remain unchanged, the whole man remains unchanged. Man is such as his ends are. The ends of life with every one, by nature, are to love himself and the world above all things. A man may pursue these ends by a virtuous as well as by a vicious life and conversation. If the ends remain and have possession of the mind, no essential change is effected by a respectable life, even should it be saintly in appearance. It is above all things necessary, therefore, to attend to the state of the internal, and remove evil from the motives as well as from the actions, and falses from the thoughts as well as from the words, which is, to remove them from the sight of God as well as of men. We must not, however, run into the error that it is only necessary to attend to the internal, or to imagine that if we take care of the motives, the actions may be left to take care of themselves. It is highly important to attend to the actions as well as the motives. Although the actions may be good and the end evil, the end cannot be good and the actions evil. We may do good to serve a bad end, but we cannot do evil to serve a good end. While evils continue to disfigure the life, we may be sure that there are evil motives behind them. But the object of our Lord's present exhortation is, to make the inside clean where there is an appearance of cleanness outwardly. And mere outward cleanness is only apparent. Outward goodness is produced and maintained by pressure from without; and whenever that pressure is removed, good gives way, and evil flows from its fountain in the heart. The really clean external can only be produced from a clean internal. And the cleansing of the external is, even when the internal has been cleansed, a distinct and divine work. The Lord taught this both representatively and verbally when he washed the disciples' feet. "He that is washed," said our Lord, "needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." Though cleansed within, we still require to be cleansed without. And this cleansing, as well as the other, must be effected by the Lord. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

27-28. Another and still stronger image of the Pharisaic state is presented by the Lord in his address. *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.* In the figure here presented before us we see that both the internal and external of a man who is spiritually dead are unclean, and that there is nothing to conceal or relieve the gloom of the living death, and of man's unrenewed nature, but the colour that has been laid upon the surface of the external, as the sepulchre in which the internal is entombed, to make it "appear beautiful outward." How startling is it to think that mere outward good is but the gilding of a tomb, and that if sin be our state, when a few short years shall usher us into eternity, nothing will be seen but death and corruption. Then will it be revealed that evils, like sepulchres, are full of falsities, which are as dead men's bones, and of all unclean thoughts and desires. The expression, "dead men's bones," is significant; for men signify truths, and dead men are truths deprived of good, which is the life of truth; and the bones of "dead men" are the mere scientifics or knowledges of truth. As the bones, though the beautiful framework of a human body as the organ of life, are in themselves inert, and by themselves serve but to symbolize and show the work of death, so do the mere knowledges of truth serve but as a foundation on which to build a body of faith and love that may live, and breathe, and act, but without which they are but the spectral evidences of spiritual and eternal death. *Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

29, 30. Another woe is pronounced on the Pharisees, because, said our Lord, *ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.* The building of these sepulchres seems like a pious acknowledgment of the merit of the prophets, and a mark of disapprobation of the conduct of their forefathers for having killed them. But we are to consider that our Lord, as one who knew the heart, spoke to the conscience of the Pharisees, and appealed to that inward witness, that yet, even in these pious acts, they were playing the hypocrite. Like their other good deeds, these were done to deceive others into a belief that they were friends of the prophets and righteous men whom their fathers had slain—that they were doing homage to their worth and to their faithfulness as servants of God.

31. The Lord therefore says, *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.* Their conscience bore witness to the truth of his accusation. To understand the meaning of the accusation, it may be necessary to call in mind the words of the Lord to a disciple who, in answer to his request to be allowed to go and bury his father, was addressed in the striking words, "Let the dead bury their dead, but come thou and follow me." The dead Pharisees were burying their dead. They were honouring the dead messenger while they were dishonouring his living message. To see its spiritual lesson, we must consider the spiritual sense of the particulars. Prophets and righteous men are the principles of truth and goodness. The fathers of the Jewish people killed the prophets, and they built their sepulchres. "A sepulchre, in the internal sense of the Word, signifies life or heaven, and in the opposite, death or hell. It signifies life or heaven, because the angels, who are in the internal sense of the Word, have no idea of a sepulchre, since they have no idea of death. Instead of a sepulchre, therefore, they perceive the continuation of life, consequently resurrection; for man rises again as to his spirit, and is buried as to his body. And since burial signifies resurrection, it signifies also regeneration; for regeneration is man's first resurrection, inasmuch as he dies to the old man, and rises again as to the new. By regeneration, man, from being dead, becomes alive. Hence the signification of a sepulchre. But a sepulchre, in the opposite sense, signifies death or hell, because the wicked do not rise again to life; and therefore, when the subject treated of is concerning the wicked, and mention is made of a sepulchre, then there occurs to the angels no other idea than that of hell: this is the reason that hell in the Word is called a sepulchre." The tombs which the Pharisees built for the prophets, and the sepulchres they garnished for the righteous, have this last signification. Not that the prophets were wicked, but that the Pharisees built their sepulchres for the wicked purpose of making religious capital out of the hypocritical homage they thus rendered to those whom their fathers had slain. Their fathers killed the prophets, and they completed what their fathers had done. And, indeed, their "fathers" signify the evils of self-love and the love of the world, and they, as their "sons," signify the falses derived from these evils. And evils kill, and falses cast out and bury, or, as in the case of the Pharisees, build and garnish the tombs into which rejected good and truth have been cast. To build the tombs of the prophets is to rear up false persuasions over the truths that have been destroyed—yet false persuasions, that have the appearance of

truth, that seem to honour the dead, while they are only intended to do honour to those who buried them.

32. While blaming the conduct of their fathers, and protesting that, if they were in the days of their fathers, they would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets, they were persecuting Jesus as *the* prophet whose blood they finally shed, as their fathers had done the blood of them who were but his servants and representatives. In this did they truly and terribly fulfil the Lord's words: *Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.* But this has a lesson for us. The sons fill up the measure of their fathers when false principles are replete with evil. There are false persuasions which have good within them; but false principles that have an evil purpose, and are constantly employed to promote it, are of the character of the descendants of the murderers of the prophets.

33. Well, therefore, might our Lord, who knew their hearts and saw their end, address them in the language of an awful condemnation. *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* When the principles of good and truth are destroyed in the inner man, and their tombs are built and their sepulchres adorned in the outer man, the man has become entirely sensual both as to will and understanding, his affections being serpents, and his thoughts thence derived a generation of vipers,—a state that cannot escape the judgment of hell, because in itself it is all which that dreadful word implies.

34. But our Lord not merely shows the scribes and Pharisees what they were, and what they had done and become: he tells them also what they would in future do—that they would in fact do with the prophets of the new dispensation as their fathers had done with those of the old. *Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes.* Spiritually, prophets are the truth of doctrine, wise men are the good of doctrine, and scribes are the truths of the Word relating to both. In the present instance these are principles that proceed from the Lord, and testify of him, for he says, *"I send unto you."* The prophets whom their fathers killed were those that Jehovah sent; the prophets the sons killed were those that Jesus sent. Of the individual, equally as of the race, the Lord's remarkable words are true, *"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* And this successive working is with the children of disobedience as well as with the children of obedience. The Divine love works especially in early life, and the Divine wisdom works especially in mature life. He who receives the teaching of love is likely to receive

the teaching of wisdom ; but he who rejects the teaching of love is likely to reject the teaching of wisdom. He who kills the prophets and righteous men of Jehovah, is likely to kill the prophets and wise men of Jesus. Our Lord gives a description of this sin. *And some of them ye shall kill and crucify.* There were two kinds of capital punishment among the Jews—stoning and crucifying. The first of these represented the extinction of the life of truth by falsity, and the other represented the extinction of the life of good by evil. The same is signified here by killing and crucifying. But the Lord says further, *And some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.* It is still true of the evil, that some of the principles of spiritual life they kill and crucify, and some they persecute and scourge. That is spiritually killed which is rejected from the heart and understanding, and has no share in the regulation of the life ; that is scourged and persecuted which, though not entirely rejected, is yet hated and condemned. A synagogue and a city both signify doctrine ; but one signifies the doctrine of internal, the other of external good and truth, or, in the opposite sense, of evil and falsity. To scourge is to pervert, and to persecute from city to city is to falsify the truth in every doctrine of the church—always to hate, and ever to oppose the truth. Taking the particulars of the passage in a series, we find that to kill has reference to the truth of the doctrine of the church, which is a prophet ; to crucify has reference to the good of doctrine, which is a wise man ; and to scourge has reference to the Word, which is a scribe ; and so, to kill is to extinguish, to crucify is to destroy, to scourge is to pervert, and to persecute from city to city is to pursue from one false doctrine to another. The whole implies, therefore, every degree of hostility and opposition to the heavenly principles of good and truth, and to the Word itself, consequently to him from whom the Word and all its saving principles proceed.

35. The Lord concludes by saying that they had done all this, *That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.* Although this at first sight may seem to favour the notion that the sins of one generation are sometimes punished on another, yet the reasonable view of the passage, even in its literal sense, is, that as the generation whom the Lord was addressing had filled up the measure of their fathers' sins, so they had filled up the measure of their punishment. But the Lord's declaration has a spiritual sense, which its nature almost necessarily suggests. In the spiritual sense,

Abel means those who are in the good of charity, and, abstractly, that good itself; and Cain, who slew Abel, means those who make faith alone the means or condition of salvation, and disesteem the good of charity, and therefore slay it. Zacharias signifies those who are in the truth of doctrine, and, abstractly, the truth of doctrine itself. Hence the blood of both signifies the extinction of all good and truth. Slaying Zacharias between the temple and the altar signifies all manner of rejection of the Lord; for the temple signifies the Lord as to divine truth, and the altar the Lord as to divine good, and between them signifies both together.

36. When the Lord said, *Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation*, his words spiritually express the fact, that with the Jewish church the whole series of dispensations expired. That which was begun in the first church, and which had gradually declined, became extinct by the consummation of the Jewish. The soul of lives—the lives of love and faith—breathed into the first Adam, had been quenched in the blood of the righteous and faithful, and in the last generation was completed what had been begun in the first.

37. But this ruin had not progressed to completion without the efforts of Infinite love to prevent it. Our Lord, apostrophising Jerusalem as the symbol of the entire church, as well as of the Jewish, exclaims, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* Not only rhetorically, but morally and spiritually, sublime and beautiful is this passage of the holy Word—these words of Him who spake as never man spake, because he felt and thought as never man did. How full of tenderness, how overflowing with love, is this marvellous address! It displays the Divine character and dealings in the most touching and convincing manner. But let us venture to look at it more closely, and examine it more minutely. Notwithstanding Jerusalem killed and stoned the messengers he sent, the Lord never ceased to desire and endeavour to draw her children under the shelter of his own loving wisdom. The Lord, as Jehovah, had done what, as Jesus, he had come to do—to seek and to save that which was lost. As Jehovah he uses the same language to express his tender care over his people. “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him” (Deut. xxxii. 11, 12). All com-

parisons in the Word are grounded in correspondence. The fluttering of a bird over her young, and her solicitude to gather the little wanderers under the shelter of her soft and downy wings, present a series of beautiful and expressive images. But expressive as the images are, feebly can they express the infinite, omnipresent, and all-embracing love of God in his providential care of his people. Wings are the emblems of preservation and defence; and those are exercised over us by the Lord from his infinite love by his infinite wisdom. Since the Incarnation, this imagery has a still more expressive and comforting significance. As the Lord was the Word or the Wisdom made flesh, in the humanity we see the wings, the stretching out of which "shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel" (Isa. viii. 8); the wings under the shadow of which men put their trust, as sufficient for their protection (Ps. xxxvi. 7); in the shadow of which they make their refuge, till the calamities of trial are overpast (Ps. lvii. 1); and in the shadow of which they rejoice when they find in Jesus their Comforter, after successful temptation and faithful probation (Ps. lxiii. 7). The Jews refused to be gathered under the everlasting wings; but let us accept the call, and place ourselves under the protecting and cherishing care of Him who invites all to himself.

38. To those whom he would have gathered, but who would not, the Lord said, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*. Literally, this relates to the temple, as their "holy and beautiful house, where their fathers praised Jehovah," and the desolation of which our Lord declared to be so complete that one stone should not be left upon another that should not be thrown down. The taking of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple were the political effects, as they were the awfully expressive symbols, of the complete end and utter desolation of the Jewish church. Considered in its spiritual application to the evil individually, the house is an emblem of the mind. And when everything spiritual and heavenly is destroyed within it, and the Lord himself is spurned as evil, desolation reigns. Evil and falsehood desolate; they are the destruction of all that is good, and beautiful, and happy.

39. The Saviour concludes: *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*. This has caused perplexity to those who think of no sense but that of the words in their mere literal meaning. We shall not enter into the difficulties of the literal sense, but offer some remarks on the passage as containing a spiritual meaning. The declaration of our Lord contains this great lesson, that as evil blinds the understanding

to the perception of the Lord's truth, so good only can open our intellectual eyes to see the blessed vision of the Lord coming as the Saviour of the soul. Jesus coming in the name of the Lord is divine truth coming in the spirit and power of divine love. But we cannot say "Blessed" to this messenger of peace until we have the love of God dwelling in us. "No man cometh unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." One cause of our not seeing the Lord with the eye of faith is, that we do not desire him with a heart of love. In fact, we look at him as coming in his own name, and not in the name of the Lord, or Jehovah. That is to say, we regard him as truth, but not as good. And he who sees Jesus as the truth only, sees him not—acknowledges him not. It is only when he is seen as the good also, that he is hailed as the blessed, and that he makes us blest. And what is the reason of this difference? We see the Lord as truth alone when we ourselves are in truth alone, or when we regard the Lord from the intellect; and we see the Lord as truth full of goodness and love when we ourselves look at him from the heart, or from good and love in ourselves. Happy are they who thus regard the Lord. They indeed can say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. After the Lord had delivered his discourse to the scribes and Pharisees, in which he described, under their awfully corrupt and hypocritical character, that of the church of which they were the representatives, he *went out, and departed from the temple*. This was the Lord's last visit to the temple, and his final departure from it. How solemn and significant, under such circumstances, are the words, he "went out, and departed from the temple!"—a sign to the Jews that their house was left unto them desolate. He was the glory of their house, and his departure from the temple, after this his last visit to it, made it truly like Israel when the ark of God was taken—"Ichabod, the glory is departed." But this symbolical act, as well as the prophetic discourse that followed it, is not to be understood in reference to the Jewish church only, but is descriptive of the state of the Christian church—of that dispensation of the church, at least, which had its commencement at the time of our Lord's first advent. For the church itself, as consisting of the essential principles of religion, never dies, though dispensations come and disappear. The

Christian church will continue for ever; but the dispensation which was formed after the Jewish had passed away was destined to come to an end, to be succeeded by another; that is, the Lord's first coming, in the flesh, was to be succeeded by his second coming, in the spirit. It is reasonable, indeed, to suppose that the Christian church should consist of more than one dispensation. We are to date the upward progress of the church, and of the human race, from the time of the Lord's birth into the world. From the fall to the Incarnation, the church and the world had progressively descended, till they had become so utterly corrupt that the remedy could be no longer delayed. Yet we know that the church did not decline by imperceptible, but by distinctly-marked degrees: it consisted not of one dispensation, but of several. There was the first dispensation, commencing with, or called Adam; there was a second, commencing with, or named Noah; and there was a third, commencing with Israel. This last was, however, rather the representative of a church than a real church: it was the shadow of what was to come. Excluding this, the Israelitish, there were two other dispensations possessing the real characters of a church. If, then, the church descended by two distinct dispensations, it is reasonable to suppose that it should also ascend by two. And such may be seen to be the case. The New Testament, while it records the Lord's first coming, gives the promise of a second. As the progress of the church and of humanity must be, in a certain sense, a return towards the state of innocence and wisdom from which they departed, we find this shadowed forth in the Scriptures themselves. Revelation ends, as it begins, with the description of an exalted state of the church and of man; and, by the same figures, at the end of the Apocalypse. there is the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. On this new earth there is a paradise, with the river of the water of life flowing through it, and the tree of life growing in it. Yet there is a difference between this and the first paradise, such as is entirely consistent with the altered state and condition of man. The second Eden unites a garden and a city, for man has added science to wisdom; and the tree of life not only bears fruit that is good for food, but produces leaves that are good for medicine; for man now requires not only to be fed but restored. The Lord's second coming is commonly connected with the end of the world; but this arises from misapprehending the meaning of the Scriptures, the end of the church being meant by the end which they predict. The knowledge of this was, no doubt, providentially hid from the members of the first dispensation of the Christian church, and is only now revealed because the event itself

has revealed it. It is in reference to these dispensations of the Christian church that we are to understand this remarkable prophecy. It treats of the decline and end of one, and the beginning and progress of the other. It is fraught with matter of the deepest interest and of the greatest importance. To read it aright will enable us to see some of the deepest mysteries of the kingdom, in the providential operations of the Lord, in relation to his church on earth, as an instrument of his saving mercy. When Jesus had departed from the temple, *his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple.* The Lord knew more of the temple than the disciples could show him, but this took place and is recorded for the purpose of teaching us that the Lord explores the church by means of the truths of his Word. Exploration always precedes judgment. And when the Lord leaves a church, which is a consequence of the church having so profaned the sanctuary that he can no longer dwell therein, he only returns to it as a Judge; for when the church completely rejects the Lord's truth, or places itself in opposition to it, the truth cannot act otherwise towards it than as a judge. Although the grand object of the Lord's coming was for salvation, it was also, though secondarily, for judgment (John ix. 39).

2. After the disciples had shown him the buildings of the temple, Jesus turns to them and pronounces the doom of the sacred structure to which his attention had been drawn. *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.* How solemn and expressive! Not less so spiritually than naturally. The stones of the temple were symbols of the truths which constitute the church—collectively, of those truths built up into a system of religious doctrine. The temple aptly represented a system of doctrinal truths framed by the wisdom of man; for the temple which then existed was not Solomon's, but had been built by Herod. Nevertheless it represented the principles of the church as a unity—such as that which the Jewish hierarchy elaborated, but which was no more like a heaven-derived form of pure and sound doctrine than the temple of Herod was like that of Solomon. Yet there it stood in its entirety and seeming stability. But the hand of him whose touch reduces things of human creation to their original elements was upon it. Its stones were to be thrown down and dispersed. The result in such cases is, that the unity of the church is broken up, though the elements are preserved. And so we find even in our own day that amid the desolation of the Christian sanctuary, many single truths are preserved, though they no longer

exist in such a unity as to form a whole. Their connection is broken, their unity is destroyed. We may see and admire many particular truths, but we no longer see them in combination, such as that which made them rise in a form of beauty, a house of prayer, the place where God inscribed his name. There is not left one stone upon another, that is not thrown down.

3. Having uttered this general declaration respecting the fate of the temple, the Lord retired, and *sat upon the mount of Olives*, where he revealed, in all its length and breadth, the series of events connected with and leading to that great overthrow of which the destruction of the temple was the general type. His first prediction regarding the destruction of the temple was addressed to the disciples generally; his discourse on the mount appears to have been uttered in the ears of a few. Mark (xiii. 3) mentions Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew. Those representing the higher graces of the religious life are capable of entering into the deeper mysteries of the kingdom, or of seeing the particulars of those truths that come to the general apprehension. Jesus sat on the mount of Olives. This mount itself was the symbol of a high and holy principle. A mountain means the principle of love; and as the olive signifies the celestial principle, the mount of Olives is the symbol of celestial love,—that is, of the most heavenly of all loves—love to God. But in reference to Jesus, who is now upon the mountain, it is the symbol of divine love; and when, as now, he sits upon it, and thus *speaks* from it, we have a representation of the Lord, from the inmost of his divine love, uttering the highest truths of his divine wisdom. Such truly are the Lord's words, spiritually understood. Indeed, he who sees all the future, and who exercises a wise and beneficent providence in all he foresees, must be infinite both in love and wisdom. *The disciples came unto him privately*, and he speaks privately to them. They enter with him, as it were, within the veil, and are there privileged to see the unrolling of the book on which is written lamentations, and mourning, and woe. Aware of the general import of the Lord's predicted destruction of the temple, the disciples say unto him, *Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* The disciples speak as persons who understood the subject, and only ask about the time and the signs of their occurrence. Time signifies state, for time is not predicable of spiritual, but only of natural things. States are to the church and the soul what times are to the world and the body. It is not the knowledge of time, but of state, that enables us to see the character

of the church. The disciples asked also to know the signs of the Lord's coming, and of the end. What are those signs? Spiritual things are exhibited in natural things; and spiritual truths are revealed in the symbolic language of the natural world by correspondence. Correspondences, therefore, are the signs of the Lord's coming. These, as Luke (xxi. 11) terms them, are signs from heaven, because correspondence has its origin in heaven. And these signs are said (*v. 25*) to be in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, for these are symbols of love, faith, and knowledge, which are the ruling principles of the church, and whose states they mark, having been appointed for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years. It is by these correspondences, as signs, that we are able to know the nature of the Lord's coming and of the end of the world. By them, as the means of the right interpretation of the Word, we learn that the coming of the Lord is not a personal coming, but a coming in spirit, by a revealing of himself as the Truth, and by a perception and reception of him as the Truth in the hearts and minds of men. By the same means we learn that his coming is not to be attended by the end of the world, but by the end of the church. Indeed, the "world" does not here mean the material frame of our globe: it means an age or period in the history of the world, as when we speak of the golden or of the silver age. The end of the world means, therefore, literally, the consummation or conclusion of the age, or religious dispensation. And this is the true meaning of the end of the world, when the phrase occurs in the New Testament, as is evident from other parts. Thus in Hebrews ix. 26, "Now once in the end of the world hath he (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And in 1 Cor. x. 11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come." This is not, therefore, a question of interpretation, but of translation. The end at which our Lord came was, it is obvious, the end of the Jewish age, or dispensation; and the passage can have no reference to the end of the physical world. And the times in which the apostles lived were the ends of the age which had come upon them. That which is connected with the Lord's second coming is an end of the same kind as that which attended his first coming. The language in which they are described is the same. What reason can there be for giving them an entirely different signification? If the end that marked his first coming was the end of a church, it is only consistent to believe that the end that is to mark his second coming must be the end of a church also. It

is difficult, indeed, for the members of the Christian church to believe that the dispensation to which they belong can have an end as a church. The Jews to this day reject the idea that their dispensation has ceased, or can cease, to exist as a church. But the fact that the first Christian dispensation would have an end ought to be admitted on the simple ground of consistent interpretation, not to speak of translation. The Lord has promised to come a second time into the world. That coming is to be accompanied with the end or consummation of the age. What can this end be but the end of the age or period of his first coming? The end of the first age and the beginning of the second are the end of the dispensation of his first advent and the beginning of the dispensation of his second. It is true that the end, and also the beginning, are described by other "signs" or images, as the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars; by the passing away of the heavens and the earth, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth in their place. We shall see that the darkening of the luminaries of heaven is the darkening of the lights of the church—the love, and truth, and knowledge by which the church is enlightened and sustained. As to the passing away and re-creation of heaven and earth, unfettered reason and common sense may give the interpretation. What wisdom can there be in destroying one earth to create another? The material world is not at fault, nor unfit for its purpose, that another should be required. But the moral world, or rather the moral and religious age, may be at fault, and require to be replaced by another and a better. The church may wax old like a garment, and another suited to the wants of the body—that body which never dies—may be absolutely necessary. And such is promised—"a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

4. To the inquiries of the disciples as to the time of the end and the signs of his coming, the Lord answered, *Take heed that no man deceive you.* This caution is greatly necessary in all matters of spiritual and eternal interest, and not least in those which relate to Christ himself and his kingdom, and still more in relation to his second than to his first coming. The disciples are those who are principled in the goods and truths of the church, and, abstractly, these principles themselves. That such persons require care in perilous times appears from the Lord's declaration, that in the last times such will be the power of false Christs and prophets that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." And then the truths themselves come to be so ingeniously explained in favour of that which men love and practise,

that they lose the quality and power of truths, and virtually become falsities.

5. While the Lord cautions the disciples against deception, he describes the character of those who will try to deceive them. *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.* In the second century one appeared who called himself the Christ—certainly, this has never yet been done by “many.” This, however, is not the Lord’s meaning. The Lord’s name signifies that by which he is worshipped, and Christ is especially expressive of his character as divine truth, as Jesus is of divine good. False Christs are false doctrines respecting Christ—falses which have the appearance of truths. All false systems of Christianity are false Christs. Christ in Christianity is all that is divine and saving in it: in fact, he is Christianity itself, in its purity and perfection. False Christs are falsifications of the truth and perversions of the principles of Christianity, which deprive it of its beneficent character and saving power. Of such false Christs there may be, and doubtless have been, and now are, many in the world. A Christianity without Christ is itself false and deceptive. Emptied of the great truths which Christ taught for the salvation of sinners, and filled with the ideas of erring or interested men, such forms of false Christianity deceive many; for too many incline to the deception, and too readily fall under it. Corruptions of Christianity, particularly as respects the character of Christ, were early introduced into the Christian church; and with the division of the godhead and the degradation of Christ, the doctrine of salvation by him has proportionally suffered. The result is that state of things which our Lord next declares.

6. *And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars.* Since it is not the physical world, but the church, that is the subject of the prophecy, these are not to be understood as political wars among the nations of the earth, but spiritual wars among the members and parties in the church. Natural wars come, indeed, of these spiritual discords, but it is to the spiritual, and not to the natural, that the spiritual sense of Scripture relates. The first wars that arose in the Christian church were wars of opinion, and after them came wars of passion. These are the wars and rumours of war of which our Lord speaks. Whoever is acquainted with the history of the early ages of the church, when these disputes and conflicts prevailed, must be astonished to see with what violence and bitterness they were conducted. The simple and sincere members of the church must have been shocked and appalled at the tremendous conflicts, and might well suppose such

perversions and divisions to be the signs of the final consummation predicted by the Lord, for they well knew it did not mean the end of the world. To prevent such from being led into delusion, or having their faith in the truth of Christianity destroyed, when they thus saw it in a manner torn to pieces before their eyes, the Lord says, *see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.* In reference to these, the Lord tells his disciples to see that they be not troubled. The reason of this exhortation is, that these first indications of troublous times are debates and disputations about truth, arising from different views and feelings respecting what it teaches; and these are not such as to involve serious opposition or danger to the principles of truth and good, which the disciples represented. When the church has begun to decline, *all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.* In these differences there is neither the moral end of destroying the truth, nor the end of the church, as its result.

7. But more serious calamities arise after, and out of these. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.* In the spiritual sense of Scripture nations mean those who are in the love of evil, and, abstractly, evil itself as an object of love; and kingdoms or peoples mean those who are in the belief of error or falsity, and, abstractly, the error or falsity which is believed. This describes a state of the church in which there was not simply a war of opinion about the doctrines of religion, deplorable as that was, but a conflict of evil against good, and of one evil against another; and also a conflict of falsity against truth, and of one false persuasion against another. This implies not disputation and contention only respecting the principles of goodness and truth, which constitute religion and the church, but the rejection to some extent of these Christian principles, and the proportionate adoption of evil and error in their place. The natural and necessary result of these conflicts is, that there are famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes—that is to say, there is a defect of the knowledge of good and truth, signified by famines, and infestation from evils and falsities, signified by pestilences, and changes and inversions in the state of the church, signified by earthquakes; and these being in divers places, means that they exist in the church in various parts—though not an entire, but partial change has as yet taken place in the state of the church.

8. *All these are the beginning of sorrows.* They describe the first

state of the perversion of the church, which is, when men begin no longer to know what is good and true, but dispute with each other on these subjects, from which disputes come some errors of doctrine and evils of life. These are indeed the beginnings of sorrows—sorrow to the church, sorrow to religion, and sorrow to the soul. Sorrow is ever the attendant of sin, whether it be against righteousness or truth. In the description thus far of the sorrows of the church, we see very strikingly the progress and end of the first stage of religious corruption. First men dispute about goodness and truth, then they adopt and contend for some false principles, and lastly, they proceed to pervert goodness and truth, so as either to invalidate them or bend them to favour their own principles and practice. These religious disputations and contentions, meant by wars, arose early in the Christian church, and were carried on with great bitterness and acrimony, as history abundantly testifies; and could not fail to be followed by a famine, not of bread or water, but of the hearing of the Word of God, and, as a consequence, by pestilent disease of mind, and by convulsions and revolutions of both opinion and principle.

9. A second state of the decline of the church, and of her sorrows, is described by what now follows. *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.* The disciples represented the principles of goodness and truth; and this describes the treatment which these heavenly principles would come to experience, after the members of the church had, by disputations and contentions, obscured their perceptions of truth and goodness. To afflict, to kill, and to hate the disciples, means to pervert, deny, and condemn the spiritual principles which they represented. Nations denote those who are in evils of life; and to be hated of them, is to be held in aversion by the men of the church, on account of the prevalence of such evils amongst them. But the Lord said not only that they would be hated by all nations, but that they would be hated for his name's sake. Those within the church who hate goodness and truth, hate them as religious principles, as coming from the Lord, and leading to him through the obedience and worship which he requires. And, indeed, all hatred against the principles of goodness and truth has in it, and fundamentally is, hatred against the Lord, who is goodness itself and truth itself, and the origin of everything good and true in the Word and in the church.

10. The Lord proceeds to say, *And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.* This follows, and is a consequence of, the disciples being hated and persecuted. If the

principles of goodness and truth, as revealed in the Word, and as they relate to the Lord, are persecuted, many must be offended, or stumble. The disciples, or the truths of the Word, are instructors and guides to the members of the church ; and when these are deprived of their aid, they cannot but stumble, and even fall. The Word is a lamp unto our path, and a light unto our feet ; and when its teaching is obscured by error, the members of the church must suffer. And not only will they be offended, but they will offend. They shall betray one another, and hate one another. As mutual love is the result of true and undefiled religion, and of walking uprightly in it, so mutual hatred is one of the fruits of error, and of the stumbling which it causes.

11. Betrayal and hatred are followed by falsehood and deception. *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.* In the New Testament a prophet means a preacher, and, abstractly, the doctrine which is taught. Therefore, false prophets mean not only false teachers, but false principles. Error could not fail to be multiplied when the Lord, who is the Truth, was virtually denied, and a false Christ was set up in his stead. The true acknowledgment of the Lord's divinity is an acknowledgment of the divinity of his humanity. When this is denied, Jesus Christ must either be regarded as a divine person separate from the person of the Father, or a finite being. Such false persuasions cannot fail to seduce men from the true faith, and from a righteous life, which have their origin in the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12. *And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* Increase of error never fails to cause an increase of evil ; and when evil abounds, love must wax cold. The love which is here spoken of is charity, or love to the neighbour. When error leads men to believe that salvation is attainable by faith without works, virtue must fail, and as a consequence, charity must wax cold. Where there is no true faith, there can be no genuine charity. In the purely spiritual sense, which is abstracted from persons, this means that many truths would be deprived of love or charity, and thus of all vitality. When this is the case, there is neither charity in the heart nor faith in the understanding. Faith without charity is dead, and charity without faith is blind. Love to the Lord is the origin of love to the neighbour, and holiness of life is its foundation.

13. The Lord now gives encouragement to those who avoid the prevailing corruptions, and are disposed to go forward in the life of practical religion. *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* The end of these afflictions is one that must be applicable to

the members of the church in their individual experience. Those who see the perversions of truth in the church must not consent to them, and suffer themselves to be seduced by them into a careless or evil life, as men are so liable to be, by a prevailing state of belief and character. To be saved amid corruption, we must strive against the corruption. Perseverance is persistent continuance in well-doing, and it is constancy in the midst of temptation. Trial is implied in the promise. To fail in fidelity and duty to God, in troublous times, is not only a possibility, but a thing to be feared; for liable as we all are to fall away, even with the best influence and example to aid us, how much more when defect of faith and morality surround us?

14. A sign of another and very different kind from any of those which the Lord had as yet pointed to, he now announces. *And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* If these words be applied to the time when the corruptions which virtually included the utter destruction and consequent end of the church—which is indicated in the next verse as the abomination of desolation—first gained admission, they will denote the period when the profession of Christianity was established by the Roman empire, which is often called in the New Testament (by the word translated as here) the world, and which took place in the reign of Constantine the Great, soon after the end of the third century. But “end” in Scripture, and “the last days,” often denote a long period of time. There was a period in the history of the church which formed the beginning of the end, and another period which formed its completion. The beginning of the end belongs to the reign of Constantine, by whose power and influence the Christian religion, which is the gospel of the kingdom, was preached or propagated throughout the whole Roman world; and the completion of the end belongs to our own times, when the gospel may be said to be universally proclaimed, especially by the circulation of the letter of the Scriptures, throughout the whole globe, through the agency of the Missionary and Bible Societies. Thus, the periods called in Scripture “the time of the end” and “the last days” were marked by the setting up of the profession of a nominal Christianity through the Roman empire; and its termination is marked by the actual extension of the Scriptures, through the proclaiming of the gospel over the whole globe, as we see effected at this day. This is certainly a very remarkable sign indeed, alone sufficient to convince us, if we think there is any truth in the prediction of Omniscience, that we are living in the days prophesied of as those in which the Son of man was

to make his second and spiritual appearing. But it may seem incredible that two such events as the establishment of the Christian religion, or that of the Roman empire, and the circulation of the Scriptures throughout the whole habitable globe, should be considered as signs of the end—not of the world, but of the church. In regard to the first of these events, nothing can be more true. No sooner almost had the Emperor Constantine declared himself Christian, and made Christianity the religion of the state, than, to condemn the destructive doctrine of Arius, the famous general council, at which were present about 318 bishops, was held at Nice. The Arian heresy was indeed then condemned, though it was far from being extinguished. But the only way which the fathers of the council could find of opposing the Arian doctrine, which denied the proper divinity of Christ, was by asserting his distinct divinity, and that of the Holy Spirit, thus giving origin to the notion of three distinct persons in the godhead, which cannot be distinguished in idea from the notion of a trinity of gods. The establishment of this awful perversion as the orthodox doctrine of Christianity is, in fact, that which is denoted by the abomination of desolation set up in the holy place, of which our Lord now speaks.

15. *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand).* The holy place, in the language of Scripture, always means, in its literal sense, the interior part of the temple, which was considered as being the immediate seat of the Divine presence. Of course, it must representatively signify the most holy part of Christian doctrine and worship. To set up an abomination and desolation, or an abomination that makes desolate, in this holy place, can be nothing else than to introduce some principle destructive of all genuine Christianity. In regard to the doctrines of the church, there is none so holy as that which relates to the true nature and character of the God whom the church is to worship. The inmost of the doctrine of the church—that which occupies her holy place—is the idea she forms of her God. To set up an abomination in this holy place must be to introduce a false notion of God, instead of the true one. This is what the prophecy, understood according to its true meaning, would lead us to expect to see take place in the professing Christian church. Accordingly we find by history, and indeed see in the present day, that this was done when the doctrine of three separate persons in the Divine nature was introduced into the Christian church, and decreed to be the orthodox doctrine by all her leading ministers and members. This was first effected at the Council of Nice, previous to which the

doctrine was entirely unknown to many, and had only been partially entertained by some. It was then first declared to be the authentic doctrine of the church, and such it continues to be held at the present day. As this is a subject of the very highest importance, it may be expedient to point out some of the steps by which the belief of a Trinity of separate persons or gods, which has desolated the sanctuary and driven all true religion out of the church, or at least compelled it to quit Judea and take refuge in the mountains, successively obtained so universal a reception.

The formulary of faith called the Apostles' Creed, though not composed by the apostles, is yet the most ancient document in the form of a creed that has existed in the Christian church. Although no nice discrimination is attempted in it, and nothing is expressed but general truths, nearly in the language of Scripture, yet it contains nothing inconsistent with the genuine truths of Christianity. Nothing is said about either three persons in the godhead or a Son of God born from eternity. Respecting the three essentials of the Divine Trinity, called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the words of the creed are: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary." There is no mention here of a Son existing from eternity, but only of one begotten and born in time; nor is anything said of the distinct personality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to this, the Son of God is the humanity assumed by Jehovah through the instrumentality of the Virgin. And as the divine essence is incapable of division, Jehovah himself is in that humanity as the soul in the body, by virtue of which, through a process of temptation and suffering, the humanity itself was made divine. Thus "Jesus Christ" is the proper name both of the humanity assumed by incarnation and also, by virtue of the indivisibility of the divine essence, of Jehovah in that humanity. All this is taught or implied in the formulary of faith called the Apostles' Creed. The doctrine of that creed is thus in perfect harmony with the genuine doctrines of the Word of God. So long as the Christian church adhered simply to this faith, and held nothing inconsistent with its genuine import, it was, so far as faith or doctrine is concerned, the pure church of the Lord in the world.

However, very strange and extravagant doctrines respecting the Lord Jesus Christ speedily began to be promulgated, some of which denied his divinity, and separated him entirely from the Supreme God. To guard against any mode of explaining the subject which

would rob the Lord Jesus Christ of his divinity, a teacher named Praxeas, about the close of the second century, strongly insisted that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are but different names for the One God, or the One God viewed under different characters or relations. As none of his writings now exist, it is difficult to know with perfect accuracy what the views of this leader on the subject were, beyond the general fact, that he held Father, Son, and Spirit to be one person. If, from want of being acquainted with the important doctrine of the progressive glorification of the Lord's humanity, he maintained, as his opponents affirmed, that the Father himself, or the Divinity, suffered on the cross, he certainly erred in a very important particular. However, his doctrine of One God in one person—the person of the Lord Jesus Christ—was so consonant with the feelings of all simple-minded Christians, that it was in a fair way of being acknowledged throughout the Christian world. Even the Bishop of Rome, who, though without the popish power assumed by his successors, was regarded as the chief bishop of Christendom, declared himself in favour of Praxeas. But Praxeas was soon violently opposed by Tertullian, an eloquent presbyter of Carthage, but a man of harsh and gloomy temperament, and whose notions of the distinct personality of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were so positive, that he had embraced the monstrous heresy of Montanus, who had the madness to pretend that he himself was the Holy Ghost in person, or, at least, that the Holy Ghost as a distinct person dwelt within him. On the vehement representations of this Tertullian, who is still venerated as one of the principal fathers of the church, the Bishop of Rome withdrew his patronage from Praxeas, and he began to be generally regarded as a heretic; while the doctrine of the far greater heretic, Tertullian, was favourably regarded, and at length was adopted as the standard of orthodoxy in the Christian church.

But the doctrine of Tertullian, in behalf of the notion of three absolutely distinct persons in the Godhead, though generally favoured (or though something approximating towards it began to be generally held), was not yet authoritatively established. About a hundred years later, Arius, being imbued with the notion of the completely distinct personality of the Father and the Son, pursued this to its proper consequence—the denial of the real divinity of Christ. He saw that if the Father and Son are two Persons, they must, if each is God, be also two gods. But as he was fully persuaded of the great truth, that God is and can be but one, on seeing the incompatibility of this with the notion of separate divine persons in the Godhead, he

solved the contradiction the wrong way. Instead of inferring that as God is One, and Jesus Christ is a divine person, Jesus must be that one God manifested in human nature, he argued, that as God is one, and Jesus is a distinct person, Jesus cannot truly be God at all. He therefore invented the notion, that, as the Scriptures testify, the world was created as well as redeemed by Jesus Christ; he was in fact the first of all created existences—a being invested with great but delegated powers, and only called God by courtesy.

In modern times this genuine doctrine of Arius has but few adherents. The notion of a created Creator does such violence to reason, that the modern deniers of the Lord's divinity deny his creatorship, and believe him to have been a mere man also, and the Scripture passages which assert it, they divest of their proper meaning by violently forced explanations. Indeed, most of those who in modern times deny the Lord's divinity, deny his pre-existence in any character whatever. This, however, is an excess of daring and of contradiction to the plainest Scripture evidences to which the early impugnors of his divinity ventured not to go; and the doctrine of Arius, irrational as it is regarded to be by modern humanitarians, repeatedly threatened, during several centuries, to become the reputed orthodox doctrine of the Christian church. The first serious check which it received was at the Council of Nice, called by Constantine the Great. At this council was framed the doctrine afterwards digested into the famous creed called the Nicene Creed. But the fathers of the Council of Nice being imbued with the notion of Tertullian about the distinct personality of the three subsistences of the Trinity, saw no other way of maintaining the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his eternal existence, in opposition to the denial of it by Arius, than by asserting his existence from eternity in the character of a Son, or in adopting the doctrine of the eternal sonship.

16. When this great evil is seen to be done, the Lord's direction is, *Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains*; by which is meant that the church would no more truly exist with those who are confirmed in its received doctrines, but with those who shunned the abomination, and, betaking themselves into a state of retiring love, continued to worship the Lord in simplicity and truth, not dividing his divinity from the divinity of the Father, whether or not they had distinct ideas of the manner of their unity. And this is a direction now to be regarded by those who witness the corruptions of a perverted church. When truth of doctrine is in obscurity, they are to flee to the mountains, which always means, in the language of Scripture, to

take refuge in the principle of love, cultivated in the inner recesses of the soul. They are not to shut themselves up in the beleaguered city, and defend its errors and corruptions; neither are they to join the besieging heathen army of infidel foes, that would fain bring everything of the church to destruction. They are to stand aloof from the tumult, cultivating the graces of love and charity, in dependence on the Lord, and in reliance on his protection. So will they be recognized by him as his true disciples, will be admitted to form the first fruits of his new church in the world, and will certainly be finally elevated to his kingdom in heaven. Of this class there are large numbers at the present day. Many who are afraid to look narrowly into the doctrines of religion as held by the professing church, find a sanctuary in the good of religion, where they can pour out their hearts in acts of piety to God, and extend their hands in deeds of benevolence to men.

17. Again, *Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house.* It is evident that this exhortation is not to be literally understood. It is commonly supposed to be a figurative mode of expressing haste. But the Word contains no mere figures of speech. Every figure is a correspondence or spiritual analogy. The house is an emblem of the mind, the top of the house, of the highest or inmost faculty and degree of the mind, and the lower part a lower faculty or degree. The top of the house is the will, where there is love to the neighbour or charity, and the lower part is where there is faith or truth. The exhortation, spiritually understood, is, that he who is in a state of charity is not to come down to a state of faith.

18. *Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.* He who is in the field is one who is in the good of faith and his clothes are the truths of faith. To return back from the field to take his clothes, is to recede from the good of faith to the truths of faith, which is to recede from a good life to mere empty profession and nominal Christianity. In the three cases we have now considered there is a receding from a state of good to a state of truth, or from a religion of the heart to a religion of the intellect; but there is a gradation which shows the distinctions that are so frequently presented in the Word, of which little trace is discernible in the literal sense. "There are men of three kinds described in the Word—they who are in love to the Lord, they who are in charity to the neighbour, and they who are in the affection of truth. They who are in love to the Lord are meant by those who flee from Judea into the

mountains; they who are in charity to the neighbour are meant by those who are not to come down from the house-top to take anything out of the house; and they who are in the affection or the good of truth, are meant by those who are not to return from the field to take their clothes." It is but another way of expressing it; to say, that the three classes are the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural; who form the three degrees of the Lord's kingdom on earth, and the three degrees that are still more distinctly marked in his kingdom in heaven.

19. *And woe unto them that are with child; and to them that give suck in those days!* It is almost unnecessary to say that this must have another than the natural sense. In the Word nothing is more common than to compare man's spiritual to his natural birth. And, indeed, there is a perfect analogy between them. To be with child and to give suck is therefore to be understood of the spiritual life. To be with child is expressive of that state or stage of the regenerate life when good is conceived in the internal man, but is not yet brought forth into the external—that is, when religion is in the mind, but not yet in the life. To bear in the womb is to conceive the good of celestial love. To give suck is to imbue innocence with spiritual truth from a celestial origin. But why should the woe to which these are subject be attached to or attendant on these states? This is not a woe of punishment, but of affliction; and most expressive is it when seen in reference to the present subject, in the troublous times in which the state exists. As natural birth is attended with anguish and danger, so is spiritual. Pain as of a woman in travail is the very expression in which we recognize the pains of spiritual parturition. In fact, the time of "labour" and pain in the spiritual life is the time of "bringing forth" our religion, or religious principles, as conceived in the inner, into actual existence in the outer man, or from the mind into the life. If this is afflictive in the most favourable circumstances, what must it be under circumstances the most unfavourable? It is sufficiently difficult to bring our religion into the life, our principles into practice, even when we have the aid and encouragement of proper teaching and good example; how much more so when we are beset on every side by temptation to sin! But whence the woe to them that give suck? If, in evil times, it is difficult to bring our principles to the birth, it must be also difficult, after they are born, to sustain and nourish them, and this more especially when they are but new-born, or in their early infancy, and are tender and susceptible, and unable to bear the cold and privation from which even a mother's love may not be always able to preserve

them. And let us remember that these states derive much of their afflictive character from being connected with one that immediately follows, symbolized by flight.

20. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.* Flight denotes the last time of the church; it signifies also the last period of life, when the good flee away and are at rest from the tribulations of this world; and the wicked flee from one set of troubles to meet another. Flight has therefore two opposite meanings, because it is applicable to two opposite states. Spiritually, it denotes recession from good, or escape from evil. When it denotes recession from good and innocence, it involves the sin of profanation, which is the last state of the church; when it means escape from evil, it is a deliverance, and is the prelude of a new beginning. In either case the exhortation is to be attended to. As summer and its heat are emblematical of love, winter and its cold are emblematical of the absence of love; and when there is no love there is no life. Winter, therefore, denotes a state of the church when there is, indeed, the light of truth, but not the warmth of love,—when there is a complete end of vital religion. The Sabbath, the consecrated emblem of a holy state, is also the emblem of a state of seeming holiness—of a holy external without a holy internal—of sanctity in the manner, without piety in the heart. This is descriptive of the last state of the church, or religion, among men. The end of the church does not imply a universal, or even a general state of open infidelity, wickedness, and impiety. On the contrary, the church may be virtually at an end, while there is greatest outward appearance of religion—a church establishment, with all its pomp and circumstance. The church really is as seen by the eye of Omniscience. There may be abundance of light, but it is the light of winter—without heat; there may be abundance of piety, but it is the formal piety of the Sabbath, without the holiness of every-day life. If the church does recede from goodness and innocence, it is to be prayed for that it should not be when the church is in the very last stage of dissolution, so that no remnant can be saved—no remains left, out of which a new church can be formed. What the consequences of this would be, we shall see when we come to the 22nd verse. Those who, on the other hand, are fleeing from the wrath to come, may pray that *their* flight be neither in the winter nor on the Sabbath day—neither in a state of too much cold nor in a state of too much heat.

21. *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.* The greatest

good is capable of the greatest perversion,—the greatest blessing may be turned into the greatest curse. Truths of a higher order and of a more interior kind were revealed to the Christian than had been revealed to the Israelitish church, and were capable of being more falsified and profaned. The tribulations are said to be greater than any that had been from the beginning of the world; but the world spiritually means the church, and the beginning, not its first time, but its first state. Its beginning and its end are spiritually its first and last principles, and the last are more profaned than the first. The times and the states of a falling church, no doubt, to some extent run parallel; but it is not time, but state, that affects it, and it is only when its last principles are corrupted that the church comes to an end. While these remain, the foundations are not entirely destroyed; but when these give way, the entire fabric falls into ruin. And the last state is worse than the first: the last affliction is the accumulated intensity of all the others. But the affliction of these last times is greater than ever shall be, as well as greater than ever has been. This is, in fact, a promise that there shall be no more end, or, as the Word expresses it, that there shall be no more death, no more curse, no more sorrow nor crying—in a word, no more affliction: for the former things and states are passed away. The new heavens and the new earth that the Lord will create shall remain before him. The last shall be the crown of all dispensations, and shall stand for ever.

22. But in order that better days should begin, the evil days must be shortened: for *except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*. It is a law of Divine order, or rather an arrangement of Divine mercy, that no dispensation is ever allowed to come to a complete end, or die completely out. Its end must be hastened, or rather anticipated. It must be brought, and not allowed to come to its end. If the end of a dispensation were not anticipated—if its days were not shortened—there should no flesh be saved, for the reason that there would be none left,—all would be consumed. Flesh spiritually means the principle of good, and, personally, those in whom there is some principle of good. Every declining church is brought to an end by a process of judgment, before all the good that belongs to it has died out, or been consumed, that the small remnant of good saved from the old may form a germ out of which the new may be produced. Those in whom this remnant of good exists are *the elect*, for whose *sake* the evil days shall be shortened. These are not any number chosen without respect to their merits. Whom God elects, he elects because they are worthy. Men are not good because they are elected, but

they are elected because they are good. The elect are the good, and the good are the elect. For their sakes the days of affliction are shortened; for they are the ones that are to be gathered together, and out of them the new kingdom is to be formed.

23. The elect are not saved without tribulation. A series of seducing evils, similar to those which arose at the beginning of the church, are to prevail at its end. When the disciples asked the Lord what would be the sign of his coming, the first sign he warned them of was, that many would come in his name, saying, *I am Christ*. Here he says, there shall arise false Christs and also false prophets. There is a difference between the former and the latter Christs not undeserving of attention, and which will be noticed as we proceed. *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not.* Here and there have a similar meaning to near and distant. Here signifies what is internal, and there signifies what is external; and place signifies state. As the state of the church is treated of, here and there signify the internal and external of the church, thus of her doctrines and worship. That we are not to believe a man when he says, *Lo, here is Christ, or there,* implies that Christ is not to be found either in the internal or in the external of the church. Christ signifies divine truth; and when the church is corrupted, there is no longer the truth in her doctrines and worship, either in their internal essence or in their external manifestation.

24. But although the one true Christ is no longer there, *there shall arise false Christs and false prophets.* False Christs are falsified truths, and false prophets are those doctrines formed from them, as well as those who teach them. Those here spoken of are called false Christs; but this is not said of those mentioned at the 9th verse. There it is only said that many would come in the Lord's name, saying, *I am Christ*. The reason of this difference no doubt is, that in the beginning of decline falses prevail, but in the end falsified truths. And truths falsified or perverted are much more deceitful and dangerous than simple errors. It is therefore said of these false Christs and false prophets, that they *shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.* Signs and wonders are evidently means that these pseudo-Christs are to employ to induce people to believe their teaching. And the means which the designing employ to induce others to believe their doctrines are persuasion and influence—persuasion for the understanding, and influence for the will: the first appeals to their fallacies, the second to their cupidities. A sign is that which acts upon the understand-

ing; a wonder is that which acts upon the will. A sign is not a means of convincing, but only of persuading. Our Lord therefore refused the Jews a sign, because he would exert no power over the understanding to induce upon it a blind, unreasoning, and unperceiving faith. He performed wonders or miracles, because they only impressed the will with a sense of awe, but did not interfere with man's rational liberty. The very object of the false Christs and prophets, in performing their signs and wonders, is to take away the power of reason and freedom from others, or so bring them under their own influence as to make them their devoted followers. Unscrupulous men have an extraordinary power over untrained minds, especially when not balanced by fixed principles, and most of all when religion is the engine they employ to effect their purpose of deception. The best safeguard against such influence is a principle of real, genuine goodness. Those who have this principle are the elect, whom it is impossible to seduce. For when the mind is established in goodness as the very essential element of religion, there is the best protection against evil. It is true that goodness defends itself by truth; but genuine goodness implies the presence of truth and of life as their embodiment.

25. And while goodness is the best protection against the deceitful teaching of false Christs, it is the best ground in which to receive the teaching of the true Christ. It is to such that the Lord gives salutary warning. *Behold, I have told you before.* Those who are in good receive truth. And they also receive it internally. This is signified by being told before. For here again we have to translate the natural into the spiritual—the natural idea of time into the spiritual idea of state. For time, like place, signifies state. There is this difference between them, that place or space signifies state in reference to the will, and time, state in reference to the understanding; or, what is the same, space refers to states of good, and time to states of truth. Before and after are correlations of here and there, and of before and behind; before, has relation to the internal, and after, to the external. To be told before is therefore to receive truth from the Lord by an internal way, and into the internal of the mind; and they who thus receive are prepared to resist the seductive machinations of the wonder-working prophets.

26. *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.* Something similar to there and here are meant by the desert and the secret chambers. As here and there mean internal and external, the secret

chambers and the desert mean what relates to the will and understanding, or to good and truth. The church is called a desert when it is devastated as to truth; and the human understanding is described by the same figure when it is in the same state. And, indeed, it amounts to the same, whether we speak of the church or the human understanding as a desert; for it is the devastation of truth in the understanding of her members that brings the church into that state. It amounts to the same, whether we say that the church is devastated as to good, or that the human will is; for it is because there is devastation of good in the wills or hearts of the members of the church generally, that the church can be in that state. The will is meant by the secret chambers, as the understanding is by the desert. And as the consummated church is devastated both of good and truth, both as to will and understanding, therefore the truth is neither in the one nor the other. Christ is neither in the secret chambers of her moral principles nor in the desert of her intellectual ideas. Her moral principles, or secret chambers, are full of lewdness, where the pure good of the Lord's love cannot enter; and her intellectual principles are a desert, where there is only barrenness and desolation, the haunt of the serpent and the basilisk, with which the lamb cannot herd together. And when this is the case with the church, it is also the case with the Word,—not with the Word itself, but with the Word so far as the church is its expositor. If we look into the secret chambers of the church, what do we see? Mysteries that are not only above, but contrary to reason, rendering the exhortation, "Believe them not," a necessity as well as a duty. Again, we see the moral attributes of God so brought into conflict with one another as to refuse reconciliation, without a satisfaction that involves a violation of the highest moral principle. How can the elect believe that Christ is there? On the other hand, has not faith alone made the church a desert? How can the elect expect to find in the dogma, that man is saved by an act of faith, Him who said, "If ye would enter into life, keep the commandments?" When such is the state of the church and of religion, the advent of Christ must be at hand; for truly, except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.

27. *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* This coming of the Lord is not his future grand advent, which forms the commencement of a new dispensation, and which is described a little further on, by his coming in the clouds; but it is his coming to the

old dispensation in the last stages of its decline. For the coming of the Lord is not according to the literal expression, that he is to appear again in the world, but it is his presence within every one, which occurs as often as the gospel is preached, and holy thought is excited. The Lord, therefore, is constantly coming. The nature of his coming, or, what is the same, of his reception, differs as the state of the church, and is described by the different modes in which his Word represents it. The nature of his coming and reception at the end of the church being described in this instance, we can derive an idea of its character and results from the correspondences by which it is described. The figure here employed by the Divine speaker presents the idea of an appearance that is sudden and brilliant, but evanescent—a flash that lights up the horizon for a moment, but is instantly dissipated, leaving a profounder darkness than that which it dispelled. And this, in truth, is just that kind of coming of the Lord which takes place at the end of a church, when deadness and darkness prevail. There is no continuous spiritual light, no sustained spiritual thought, no reigning spiritual affection. The prevailing state is deadness of the affections, darkness of the intellect. By the preaching of the gospel, or rather, while the gospel is preached, or some exciting cause acts upon the mind, the faculties may be awakened and lighted up, but it is only for the moment. If the mind has no light and life in itself, one is only religious by fits and starts, as some external agency moves and persuades. When the world is within and religion without, religious states are emotional and imaginative. Vivid impressions and notions can be conveyed and entertained. The lightning may come out of the east, and shine even unto the west. Heavenly light from the east may flash in upon the soul, through the feelings of charity excited in the mind, but it as soon disappears in the west, where an antagonistic selfishness prevails. Lightning is the emblem of the heavenly light of truth; the east, whence it comes, is love and charity; and the west, sometimes the continuation and termination of a holy state, is also, as here, its opposite, where a good commenced is neutralized.

28. We come now to the last state of the church, represented by a figure that can at once be recognized: it is that of a dead body. And what an image of death and desolation does it present! The carcase and the vultures are the only remaining objects in the scene of desolation. The body of the church is dead,—fallen in the desert which she herself has created; and the vultures are hastening to the scene, to contend for their share of the foul banquet which the carcase offers. *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.* We

can hardly render the state of the church represented by the dead body more intelligible or expressive by explanation. But there is something to be said about the rest of the picture. Although it is only the vulture that feeds upon carrion, the eagle has no doubt been employed by the Lord on account of its signification. The vulture can only have a bad correspondence, but the eagle has both a good and a bad meaning. And the eagles are here introduced to represent principles in the church which were once good, having, like everything else, become perverted and profaned. Eagles correspond to the rational principles of the mind. And these may be either true or false. A man can reason in favour of truth or error, nay, of good or evil, as the motives prompt him. Reason is a noble faculty, and when employed in the service of truth and righteousness, can give them excellent support; but when it is degraded, and is made the slave of passion and self-interest, it becomes as mischievous as it was formerly beneficent. When reason is the minister of good, it is as the wings of eagles, with which the renewed mind mounts up; when the minister of evil, it is like the eagles that scent the carrion and hasten down to the prey. Do we not find that such is the case?—that mere reason, which is rather ratiocination, has been gathered around the Word itself, which is treated as a dead letter, possessing no inherent divine life; and have not many of those critics in these last days contended over the soulless body as vultures over their prey? And when the Word is thus regarded and thus treated, how can the church and religion fare better? for the Word is the origin and support of both.

29. But we now come to the end, out of which comes the beginning. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.* This is a most important prophecy. Considered in connection with the words which follow it, and which announce its sequel, it foretells the most momentous future event that the New Testament treats of. Its importance demands a proportionate share of our attention.

The impression which this prophetic declaration has made upon the centuries of the Christian church has been almost universally such as the simplest literal apprehension of the language could convey. It is here supposed that the event predicted in this address of our Lord is the end of the material world, and the present passage is understood to describe the catastrophe. It is not, perhaps, surprising that such a notion has prevailed. No event can be clearly understood before it is accomplished; and it may be assumed that the language in which

future events are announced in Scripture is designedly framed so as to preserve a belief in their approach, but to conceal their exact nature. It is a law of Divine order that we cannot see the Divine in his approach: we can only see him on the back, after he has passed. This has been the case hitherto. The Jews, who possessed and studied the whole range of prophecy relating to the end of their dispensation and the coming of the Lord to establish a new one, were so ignorant of the exact nature of the events that they refused to recognize them when they occurred before their eyes. Christians might learn from their example, both to be less positive in believing that they clearly understand the prophecies relating to the second coming of the Lord, and more ready to examine the claims of an expositor who offers a new interpretation, and one professedly founded on or supplied by their actual fulfilment. If they would adopt a course which is at once scriptural and reasonable, they might reach a satisfactory conclusion. That course is, to ascertain how predictions of a similar character in the Old Testament have received their fulfilment. We will adopt this course; and the result will show that prophecies in the Old Testament, almost identical in their character, and even in their language with this in the New, have never received a literal accomplishment. In a prophecy in Isaiah (ch. xiii.) relating to the destruction of Babylon, it is said (*v.* 10), "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." The same language is employed by Ezekiel in describing the fall of Egypt (ch. xxxii. 7), "I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light." It is evident that these are not to be literally understood. There is a prophecy of this class in Joel which may have more force, since an apostle has declared that it relates to the Jewish church at the time of its end. When the multitudes that were gathered together saw the effects of the pouring out of the Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, they were amazed, and some mocked; but Peter, standing up with the eleven, said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now, here is a prophecy

in which precisely the same figures occur. Interpreted literally, the last days could mean nothing else than the end of the world; but the apostle gives us clearly to understand that these were the "last days" of the Jewish church; and the extinction of the sun and moon can mean nothing else than the extinction of love and light in the church. As, therefore, this prediction of Joel had only a spiritual fulfilment, it is but reasonable to conclude that the Lord's prophecy must have a spiritual fulfilment also. We now know that a literal fulfilment of such a prophecy is impossible. The darkening of the sun would involve the ruin of our entire solar system; and the falling of the stars the destruction of the whole sidereal heavens—in fact, the literal fulfilment of the prophecy involves no less a catastrophe than the end of the natural universe. If the natural sense is utterly impossible, the prediction must have a spiritual meaning. We must inquire what that meaning is.

The sun is mentioned in many places in Scripture, and always as an emblem of love. It is in reference to its vivifying qualities of supporting all things on earth by its heat, that the sun has this signification. For as the body is warmed by heat, so is the mind (and the body too, very often) by love. The moon, however, which is also mentioned, gives no perceptible heat, but only light, and that the reflected light of the sun; and as light is a clear emblem of truth, therefore the moon is always employed in Scripture to denote the principle of faith, which is a belief of truth. The stars, too, which to us are lesser lights, denote the knowledge of what is good and true derived from the Word of God. The symbolical nature of these luminaries, and almost their exact signification, may be gathered from a remarkable passage in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, which is also prophetic in its character. "There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This woman is a symbol of the church. She is clothed with the sun, to represent the church as invested with love; she has the moon under her feet, to represent that a true faith is that on which the church rests; and she has a crown of twelve stars, to represent that the wisdom and intelligence of the church are derived from the knowledges of truth and love revealed in the Scriptures. When, therefore, the Lord declares that, at the time of his second coming, "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven," he teaches that at the time of his second coming there will be no love to him and to the neighbour remaining in the church, signified by the

sun's being darkened ; that all true faith in him will be lost, signified by the moon not giving her light ; and that all genuine knowledges of truth derived from the Word will be banished, signified by the stars falling from heaven. To the same purpose it is said, in the sixth chapter of Revelation, that, at the opening of the sixth seal, "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Here the meaning is the same, except that the moon is said not simply to cease giving her light, but to be turned into blood ; and as blood, in a bad sense, always signifies truth falsified, therefore, by the moon's undergoing this transformation, is meant that a false faith would be established instead of a true one. Nearly the same is signified in the eighth chapter, when it is said that, at the sounding of the fourth angel, "the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise." In all cases, by such language is implied a manifestation of the state of the church in regard to its love, faith, and knowledge of divine truth derived from the Word. The luminaries of heaven are the source of light and heat, and as such they are the symbols of spiritual principles which are to the church what light and heat are to the earth. In Scripture, the sun is the emblem of love, the moon of faith, and the stars of knowledges. The Lord is the grand source of all the life and light of the church, but he communicates these through love, and faith, and knowledge. It is only in the human mind, too, that the Lord's life and light can be interrupted or intercepted. The darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, result from the corruptions of the church, or, what is the same, of the human mind. Self-love intercepts love to God ; false persuasions intercept the light of faith ; and disregard of knowledge causes it to fail. The stars are said to fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven to be shaken. In Genesis we read that, when God made the two great lights, he set them in the firmament of heaven, which is an allegorical mode of describing the elevation of love and faith in the internal of the mind, which heaven signifies. The falling of the stars from heaven is the degradation of spiritual knowledge from the internal to the external man ; which means that spiritual knowledge is placed on a level with natural knowledge, and is regarded as earthly, and esteemed for earthly ends. Then it is that the powers of the heavens are shaken ; for when spiritual things are regarded and

loved for natural ends, the foundations of heaven are removed, and heavenly principles lose their stability and power.

30. When the whole fabric of the church, internal and external, thus trembles and totters to its fall, then is the time for the Divine power to be exerted to uphold it, and restore it to a state of stability. When the luminaries are darkened, and the powers of heaven are shaken, *then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.* This is the grand announcement of the Lord's second advent—that event to which the church has never ceased to look for eighteen centuries. It seems to have been the purpose of God's providence to keep the church in uncertainty and constant expectation of the great event. Watchfulness was required: "Watch; for ye know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." That the nature of the event is different from the expectation is a point on which we have already spoken, and does not affect the question of its vastness and importance. The first great difference between the reality and the expectation is, that the Lord's coming is not a personal coming, but a coming in spirit; not a visible, but an invisible advent. If this is seen to be true, it alters the entire signification of the description of his coming. If his coming is not personal and visible, he cannot come in the clouds of the material heaven. If the circumstances attending the Lord's coming are entirely different in their nature from what a literal interpretation of his words would lead us to suppose, it is but reasonable to believe that his coming must be entirely different also. If one part of the prediction is to be understood spiritually, so must the other. A just interpretation of this particular will reveal to us the true nature of his advent. If the Lord is not to come in person, but in spirit and power, how is such a coming to take place? He can come in the hearts and spirits of his people; and this, indeed, is his real, his practical and saving advent. Yet this coming to the minds and souls of men must be effected through some medium, and the only medium through which it can take place is the Holy Word, in which the Lord reveals himself to man. His Holy Spirit operates upon their hearts, but the Spirit of truth cannot operate savingly but by the Word of truth. This Word of truth is the medium through which the coming of the Lord takes place. The clouds of heaven in which he is to appear are the truths of the Word in its literal sense. This sense is compared to and imaged by a cloud, because it covers the inner spiritual sense as

a cloud covers the glory of the heavens, or shades the brightness of the sun. The literal sense of the Word is meant by clouds in those passages where it is said that the Lord's righteousness is in the clouds, that his truth reacheth unto the clouds, that he maketh the clouds his chariot, and that the clouds are the dust of his feet. Unless the Word is acknowledged to be divinely inspired, and expressed according to the law of correspondence, these expressions will only be regarded as figurative, and as such, understood as having a certain undefined sublimity. To those only who see the true nature of divine revelation can the spiritual sense be acceptable. Having, then, stated the facts generally, that the Lord's coming is not natural but spiritual, therefore not to the sense but to the mind, and that it is to be effected through the medium or teaching of the Word, we will proceed to explain this important prophecy as it stands.

"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." Between the appearing of the sign and the coming of the Son of man there is a distinction, but there is also a connection. We will first state this distinction in technical language, and then explain it. The sign of the Son of man is truth divine, the Son of man is divine truth. The first is truth from the Lord, the second is the Lord as the truth. The first gives us to know the Lord out of ourselves, the second gives us to know the Lord in ourselves. The difference between them is, in fact, expressed by the Lord in speaking of himself as the Spirit, when he said, "He dwelleth *with* you, and shall be *in* you." Truth divine is *with* us, divine truth is *in* us. The first is not the truth itself, but its sign. It is its precursor. The sign comes before the thing signified, and prepares the way for it. This preparation is not made without the tribulation of temptation, for it is by anguish and trial that the mind is humbled and purified, and made fit to receive the truth in its fulness and perfection. It is therefore said that, on the appearing of the sign of the Son of man in heaven, "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." The tribes of the earth are those within the church who are in good and truth, and their mourning is expressive of the tribulation and sorrow they experience in passing from the first state to the second. And, indeed, all new truth induces spiritual trial, for it disturbs the old states of the mind, which it is its purpose to remove. In the purely spiritual sense this is more easily seen. In this sense the tribes mean the principles of good and truth themselves, and the earth is the natural mind, in which these principles are. When the sign of the Son of man appears in heaven—that is, when truth divine is first perceived

in the spiritual mind, which is heaven—its influx into, or influence upon, the natural mind causes distress and mourning, and the days of mourning continue till the state is inverted, and inversion of state takes place when the Son of man comes, and is received at his coming. We may here remark that there is and must be an analogy between the first and second coming of the Lord. We are instructed that, when the Lord was in the world, he first made his humanity truth divine, and then made it divine truth. This may be otherwise expressed by saying that he first regenerated his humanity, and then glorified it; he first made it an image of the Divinity, and then made it divine, or, what is the same, he first made it heavenly, and then made it divine. And this was not effected without the bitterness of mourning or temptation. Although the Lord cannot now undergo these states in himself, he still undergoes them in his church and people. At his second coming he has to make his humanity in us truth divine before he can make it divine truth. And a corresponding progression goes on in the church and in the world in general. And the first we see going on before us. We see the sign of the Son of man in all new truth that is manifested in the world, and not only all new religious truth, but all truth in philosophy, and science, and government; for all such truth is *from* the Lord, though it is not the Lord. Some do not even know the source from whom it comes. Yet it is the sign of his coming, though here also we see that the tribes of the earth mourn; for all the mighty changes that are going on are not effected without blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.

We have already explained what is meant by the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. The Lord comes as Divine Truth, and he comes in and through the Word of truth. The internal sense of the Word, like the internal of the human mind, is meant by heaven, and its external sense is meant by the clouds of heaven. We have now to explain the meaning of "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The Lord comes in the literal sense of the Word, revealing its spiritual sense. He comes in the literal sense, because from the literal sense all doctrine is to be drawn and confirmed; and genuine doctrine derived from the literal or natural sense of Scripture is the very vehicle in which the Lord comes to his church and to the human mind. "He maketh the clouds his chariot;" and a chariot signifies doctrine, and doctrine, deduced by right interpretation from the letter of the Word, is the necessary receptacle and medium of all the higher degrees of know-

ledge. But while the Son of man comes in the clouds of heaven, he comes with power and great glory. These are the properties of the **internal** or spiritual sense of the Word, the revelation of which forms one of the **essential and peculiar** features of the Lord's second advent. The cloud of the letter is indeed the chariot in which he comes, but the power and great glory in which he appears are the attributes that give a distinctive and transcendent character to his second coming. His first coming in the flesh was in weakness, his second coming in the spirit is with power; his first coming was in humility, his second is with glory. The spiritual sense of the Word has power, because by it the Lord is more able to regenerate the human will, which he does by the principle of spiritual goodness, which power signifies; and the spiritual sense has glory, for by it the Lord has more light to enlighten and regenerate the human understanding, which he does by spiritual truth, which glory signifies. Yet in all the power and glory of his divine majesty the clouds are under his feet, nor can we see him invested with the power and glory of the internal sense of his Divine Word but in the cloud of the letter, for none are or can be admitted into the spiritual sense of the Word but those, who are in the genuine doctrines of its literal sense. The spiritual sense of the Word does not set aside the letter, nor does it even diminish its importance and sanctity; on the contrary, it increases and exalts them. As the glory of the Lord filled the temple where he had his habitation, so does the glory of the spiritual sense fill the temple of the letter, where it dwells, and through which alone it can be approached by men on earth.

31. It is remarkable that the second coming of the Lord is not followed by any such catastrophe as it is generally considered shall accompany or follow that event. The first act of the Lord after his coming is to *send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.* Spiritually understood, this description is highly expressive. The church, not the world, having come to its end, the Lord has come through his Divine Word to establish a new one. His first act therefore is, to gather together the remnant of the faithful—the elect—those who have in them as much spiritual principle as can be laid hold of by the power of the Lord's love and truth, and can be gathered together into the Lord's fold. No doubt angels are employed in this beneficent work, but the angels here are emblems as well as agents; for while they are agents of the Lord, they are emblems of his divine attributes, and their trumpets are symbols of

the truths of his Word. The angels are emblems, too, of the angelic heaven, whence descend the influences that draw men into the Lord's church, gathering and holding them together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. But this, though it varies, does not alter the signification, for the Lord is the all of heaven, as well as all that constitutes the angelic nature. Whatever mediums he uses, the origin and essence of every one of them is from him. The Lord's sending his angels with a great sound of a trumpet is his divine influx through angels by the truths of his Word. These truths are the trumpets that sound in the ears of the faithful, and draw them into the Lord's church and kingdom. The trumpets used in the Israelitish church for proclaiming their festivals and calling the scattered members to the holy convocations, were types of the holy truths of the Word, by which, as by the voice of God, the children of God are brought together. Here they are called from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. The calling the elect from the ends of heaven is the calling of all who have anything of heaven in them. The four winds or quarters are expressive of every kind and degree. The same thing is meant here by the four winds as by the east, and the west, and the south, and the north, from which men should come to the kingdom when the rebellious Jews should be cast out. Those from the east and west are those in all degrees of good, from the most internal to the most external; and those from the south and north are those in all degrees of truth, from the clearest to the obscurest. All, therefore, who are in any degree whatever of the love and practice of good and truth are invited, and will be received into the Lord's church as the gate of heaven. The Lord speaks of the four winds, and of the extremities of heaven; and although naturally they mean the same, spiritually there is a difference between them. The winds are symbolical of the spirit of intellectual life, and the heavens are symbolical of voluntary life, and are applied to the spiritual and the celestial. We may remark, in conclusion, that, understood in reference to the individual mind, to whom the Lord's coming is the beginning of regeneration, the gathering together of the elect from the four winds is the gathering of all the affections of goodness and perceptions of truth, which is effected when they are directed to one supreme object, and subordinated to one ruling end. That one object is the Lord, that one end is to do his will.

32. We now come to contemplate the first fruits of the Lord's glorious coming. In the parable of the fig tree we have a picture of life, and freshness, and promise. *Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When*

his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh. No image of the church is more common, both general and individual, than the fruit-bearing tree, whether it be the fig, the vine, or the olive. These are the emblems of the three great characters by which all churches, and all the men of the church, are distinguished—natural, spiritual, and celestial. That the fig tree should furnish the emblem of the first signs of returning life is not surprising; for should it not begin at the lowest, that it might ascend to the highest? The natural is before the spiritual, and the spiritual before the celestial. And although this church of the second advent is to be the crown of all churches, on the banks of whose living stream the tree of life, first planted in Eden, is to grow and bear its monthly fruits; yet for that very reason its life should be developed from the humblest and commonest of its forms. The sign of returning summer—for in Scripture there is no word for spring—is, that the branch of the fig tree is tender, and putteth forth leaves. The branches of a tree are the emblems of the affections in man; for the affections grow out from the will as branches do from the stem of the tree. And as the will produces affections, like as the tree sends forth branches, so the affections produce thoughts, as the branches put forth leaves. The branches and leaves of the fig tree are therefore the symbols of affections and thoughts; and the quickening of the affections and the unfolding of the thoughts are the spiritual ideas presented in the natural imagery of this brief parable. While the branch is yet tender. And what makes the branch tender? Is it not the gentle warmth and the early dew? And are not these themselves the emblems of returning love and faith, under whose genial influence and refreshing power the affections grow tender and the thoughts expand? This is equally true of the members and of the body—of the parts and of the whole. In the external church this beautiful parable has been strikingly exemplified. The second coming of the Lord has already taken place. More than a century ago a solitary voice, but one clear, and calm, and solemn as an angel's trumpet, sounded in the ear of Christendom the awful but joyful tidings that the judgment had come, and that the dispensation of the first advent had passed away, and that of the second advent had commenced. The Son of man had indeed come as a thief in the night, unseen and unacknowledged; and men slept and waked, and bought and sold, as if nothing had occurred to disturb the dead calm of their settled naturalism. But old things are passing away, and all things are becoming new. A new influence has begun to descend, and new

truths have begun to be diffused ; and ignorant as men generally are as to the cause, all confess that a new power operates on the world, and that signs of a new life are everywhere visible. The branch of the fig tree is tender, and putteth forth leaves. Men's affections have received a new impulse, and their thoughts a new direction. True, this mental activity has as yet been manifested chiefly on the natural side. But how great has been that activity, how extraordinary its results ! Knowledge has increased, science has advanced, invention and discovery have progressed with a rapidity and to an extent altogether unprecedented. It is not, however, to the facts only, but to their results, that we are to look for the signs of a new life. Steam has been turned into a beast of burden, and electricity has been endued with the power of speech. The first has supplied the world with a new muscular power, the second with a new nervous system. They have brought the inhabitants of the earth nearer to each other, and established amongst them a community of goods. These confer upon the inhabitants of the world material advantages chiefly. Admitting this to be the case, they are not in themselves unimportant, and they give the promise of higher things. They do not bring us the summer, but they tell us that the winter is past, and that the summer is nigh. They are but the leaves of the fig tree, and those leaves but in their budding forth. Their unfolding is yet to come, and in this they will display yet greater beauty, and produce yet greater results. But although the human mind has been developed chiefly on the natural side, it has by no means been developed on this side only. The moral and religious side has been to some extent developed also. This we see in the growing desire and increasing efforts to ameliorate the condition and improve the character of the masses, and in the greater tolerance and more liberal views that are beginning to prevail in the religious world. All these are signs of the spring, and give the promise of summer. Spring is the time for the tree to unfold its leaves and put forth its blossoms ; summer is the time for it to produce its fruits. That season will come, but the time of figs is not yet. This is the age of intelligence, but behind that intelligence there is a prevailing selfishness. Men generally serve others with a view to serve themselves. Each does a little for others, and as much as he can for himself. There is, therefore, in the world a much greater inequality of natural and spiritual wealth than is consistent with general happiness. The summer will bring the fruits of righteousness to fill up the measure of human good, to make men brothers of a common family, whose Father is Christ, and give that evidence of

their being what they profess to be, which our Lord pointed out: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

33. Our Lord directs us to the use of his parable, by saying, *So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.* Those who see all these things, which include the darkening of the sun and moon, the coming of the Son of man, and the budding of the fig tree, must see them spiritually; and the spiritual discernment of these things will indeed enable the mind to know that these great events and changes are near, even at the doors. Nearness is not nearness of time and place, but of state. This proximity of state will be best understood when it exists in ourselves. And these doors at which these things are, where are they but in our own minds—these doors by which spiritual things enter into the mind from within, and natural things from without? The doors are those of the natural mind, because good and truth first gain admission into this degree of the mind when man is being regenerated and made a church.

34. The nearness of these things is presented under another form in the next words: *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.* This is sometimes understood to be a promise that all these predictions would be fulfilled during the time of those who were then living. In the historical sense, the generation meant is the race of the Jews; and the promise is, that that race should continue even to the time of the second advent. This promise has had a literal fulfilment. And this is the more remarkable, considering that for eighteen centuries the people have had no national existence, but have been scattered and persecuted in most of the countries of the world. Among the purposes of Providence in preventing the extinction of this extraordinary people, the preservation of the Hebrew Scriptures was undoubtedly one; for it is probable that but for their conservative care, neither the books nor the language of the Old Testament revelation would have survived. Spiritually understood, generation means regeneration; and in this sense the promise is, that these things are fulfilled in regeneration and in the regenerate, and that regeneration shall not be completed until the corresponding states are realized.

35. From the time, the Lord proceeds to the certainty, of the events. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* In explaining the 29th verse, we took occasion to show that the darkening of the sun and moon was not to be expected to have a

literal accomplishment. We may here also show that a similar prophecy to this had previously been fulfilled, but of course without disturbing the existing order of the physical universe—being fulfilled, in fact, spiritually. In Isaiah li., at the 6th verse, there is a similar prediction connected with the work of human redemption at the time of the Incarnation. “Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath : for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner : but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” Independently of its application to the time of the first advent, the prediction has the appearance of a figurative enunciation. And other passages in the prophecies confirm this view. Take, for instance, one from the same prophet : “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth : and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” The prediction in which this occurs relates to the calling of the Gentiles at the Lord’s coming in the flesh, when it could have received only a spiritual fulfilment. Indeed, the heavens and the earth are figures of the church—heaven its internal, and earth its external. And that this prediction relates to the church is made almost absolutely certain from the words which immediately follow : “Be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create ; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.” It is surprising that, with such obvious reference to the church, these prophecies should still be regarded as declaring the approaching end of the visible world,—an event which, supposing it to be destined to take place, can have no real connection with the religious condition of mankind. Science has now come to the aid of theology, and gives its testimony to the youth and stability of the universe,—for these prophecies, literally understood, involve no less than the destruction of the whole. When the Lord declared that heaven and earth should pass away, he taught that the church would come to its end ; yet he gave a promise that his Word would endure, which was equivalent to promising that, while the eternal truth which formed the church remains, there is a sure ground of hope for the human race ; that, in brief, the endurance of the Word is a promise of the renewal of the church—of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. And so we find that he who here declares that heaven and earth shall pass away, in showing John the vision of future events, enabled him to record : “I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth had passed away, and there was no more sea.” And here, again, Jerusalem was created a rejoicing and her people a joy :

for John beheld the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending from God out of this new heaven to this new earth, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Who can doubt that the whole of the splendid vision was a symbolic representation of the glorious church of the future?

36. The Lord returns again to the time of the end, and speaks of its being hid in the mind of the Eternal. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.* Time means state. Not the time of the end of the world, but the state of the church at its end, is the subject of which the Lord here speaks. Why should the Lord mention the day and the hour? Because the day means the general state of the church, and the hour means its particular state, which is the particular state of every person in it. This no man or angel knows, nor can know. It is remarkable, and whispers to us the existence in it of a secret and sacred meaning, that in Mark (xiii. 32) the Lord mentions himself as one of those from whom the time is concealed. Is it supposable that the very person who was to come should be ignorant of the day of his coming?—that he who was to judge the world knew not the time when the judgment was to take place? Impossible. Does not this teach us that the Lord's words are spirit and not flesh? The reason that the Father alone knew the time of the end is to be found in the significance of the names and principles of the Godhead. The Father is the infinite Divine Love, the Son is the infinite Divine Wisdom, and angels and men are but the finites answering to these infinities. Yet why should not the Son, who is the infinite Wisdom, know this time? One might think that he was the very one to possess this knowledge. The reason is to be found in the character of the time—in the nature of the state of the church at its consummation. The Lord is said in Scripture to know those who know him, and not to know those who know not him; and the same is said of finite beings. When it is said that the day and hour were not known to men and angels, we are instructed that in the church at its end there would remain nothing truly human or angelic; that the church, both general and particular, would be entirely destroyed, internally and externally. This is analogous to the declaration that heaven and earth would pass away, for as angels are inhabitants of heaven and men are inhabitants of the earth, when these had ceased to exist, there was no ground for the perceptions of the truly human and angelic mind, and, indeed, no reception of truly human or angelic principles; and when men reject all good and truth of heaven and the church, there is no longer in

them anything by which holy men and angels can know them. But even the Son did not know, but the Father only. And this singular declaration teaches us that, in the end which was coming upon the world, there would be no remains of truth or wisdom left in the church, or in the minds of its members, so that there would be nothing for the Divine wisdom to know or acquire. All that would be left in the church, or in the human mind, would be some remains of good or love, which would preserve them in some connection with the Divine love and goodness, and by which the Divine Father might spiritually know them. This the Lord taught in another form, when he said to Peter, respecting John—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me;" meaning that some remains of good or charity would be preserved to the time of the Lord's second coming at the end of the church, but that truth or faith would pass away.

37. The same truth which we have now considered is carried out in the words that follow. *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* The devastation of the church is here described. But Noe signifies the spiritual church, or the church which is principled in truth or wisdom; as Adam signifies the celestial church, or the church which is principled in goodness or love. This comparison of the state of the church with that of Noe implies that the church was devastated as to truth; but as no comparison is made between its days and those of Adam, it was not devastated as to good, of which some still remained. And, indeed, as celestial remains are stored up in infancy, and are the most interior, they are the last to be destroyed; and if they were destroyed, the restoration of the church and the salvation of men would be impossible. Then the day and the hour would be unknown, not only to the Son, but to the Father also, and the day and hour of the church would be blotted out for ever. But, blessed be God, whose mercy never faileth, a very small remnant is ever preserved, which divine love can take hold of to form a new seed in the earth! The state of the first Christian church at its end is compared to that of Noe, because the first Christian church was analogous to the ancient church. The Christian church was the ancient church unswathed, for its principles lay infolded in the representatives of the ancient church. But the analogy may seem not to hold good here, since the days of Noe, to which those of the Christian church are likened, are not the last days of the ancient, but of the most ancient church, before the flood came and swept them all away. The seeming incongruity will disappear when

we reflect that the course of the Christian churches is the inverse of that of the pre-Christian. The first church was analogous to the ancient church, and the second is analogous to the most ancient. The states of the devastation of the Christian church are compared to those of the most ancient church, which were of a direful character. Yet they are called the days of Noe, to indicate their spiritual origin. But Noe's is a name of promise as well as of devastation. His name means comfort; and as Noah signifies those who can be saved by temptations, the comfort which succeeds temptation, which is the flood, is included in the name of the last of the most ancient and the first of the ancient church. So may we say of the coming of the Son of man. He comes as the Judge and as the Comforter; for it is the same divine truth that condemns the evil and comforts the good.

38. The nature of the states signified by the days of Noe are next described. *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking*—that is, they appropriated evil and falsity; *marrying and giving in marriage*—that is, they conjoined evil and falsity. This "marrying and giving in marriage" is expressive of the mutual and reciprocal desire and activity of evil and falsity to unite with each other. Evil marries what is false, and what is false gives itself in marriage to evil. This is the infernal marriage—the union of will and intellect, of heart and head, in loving and thinking evil; and it is also the union of heart and hand in willing and doing it. This continued *until the day that Noe entered into the ark*. Noe was the remnant saved out of the earliest church, as the germ out of which the second might be produced. The ark was the means by which he was preserved during the flood, and carried him, as it were, from the old over into the new world. And what is the ark of safety for the church, and for the man of the church, but the Word of God? It is from that we derive the materials, as it is from God we receive the wisdom, to form a refuge and covert from the tempest. And this is just that which the wicked despise, and to which they will not betake themselves. The day when Noe entered into the ark is the state when the pure are separated from the impure, the righteous from the wicked, and when the faithful separate themselves from the world, and place themselves under the protection of the Most High.

39. The evil knew nothing of the coming judgment *until the flood came, and took them all away*. The flood, spiritually understood—and it had no historical existence—is an inundation of falses. It was this that brought the first church to an end. This it was that took them

all away. *So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* This does not mean that the end of the Christian church would come with a flood. The end of this dispensation or "world" is declared to be with fire. Fire is an emblem of love, and evil love is the fire by which the church of the first advent has been consumed. When it is said, "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be," it is in reference to the evil not knowing the time of their visitation. The Word always speaks of the day overtaking the evil in the midst of their traffic and their pleasures. The righteous know not, indeed, the day or the hour, but they watch, that the Lord at his coming may find them ready.

40, 41. And the Lord at his coming finds both evil and good. For *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.* These twos are evidently in opposite states. The two in the field are those of whom some are in good and some in evil; and the two grinding at the mill are those of whom some are in truth and some in falsity. The two are therefore not two persons, but two classes; and these the two classes everywhere treated of in the Word—those who act more from the will, and those who act more from the understanding. In the figure by which the Divine Speaker represents the second class there is a peculiarity that deserves attention. There are two "grinding at the mill." Grinding is the symbol of inquiring and investigating, and therefore implies an intellectual operation. The two grinding at the mill are two who are in the same doctrine, but who are in opposite states of life—a circumstance which is always possible, but which is more common in a declining or degraded state of the church. And from this we learn that it is not doctrine, but life, that determines the real and final state of man. The same doctrine may be studied and maintained from opposite loves, which is indicated by those grinding at the mill being women.

42. The Lord now turns from the immediate subject of the consummation of the age and his second coming, to teach his disciples, and us through them, some solemn lessons for our guidance in relation to it. The first is an admonition and a warning combined. *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.* Spiritual watchfulness is not merely an act, but a state; not a duty only, but a principle. Watchfulness implies devotion to an end, and faithfulness in keeping that end constantly in view, and in doing everything necessary to secure it. Watchfulness is a state of the good of faith, or a state of truth and a life according to it; and the good of faith is

the life of faith. Watchfulness is thus preparedness. The reason given for watching is, that we know not what hour our Lord doth come. The end of a church and the end of life are equally hid from us, that we may be influenced, by the general knowledge, to do what the particular knowledge would incapacitate us for doing. And as the Lord comes to each of us at the time of the end, as truly as he comes to the church at the time of its consummation, we may, with more direct practical advantage, consider the remainder of the Lord's address as it applies more immediately to ourselves. In relation to our own last day and hour, Divine Providence has wisely and mercifully concealed them from us, for the very purpose of making us watch, and being always ready. We are not to watch as one does who is to meet and repel an enemy, but as one who is to meet and welcome a friend. The coming of the Son of man is in itself inevitable and irresistible. It is an event that most of us would ward off or avoid if we could. But as there is no use in attempting this, we ought to do that which alone is wise—prepare ourselves for the event. We know not what hour the Lord shall come, but we know that he will come. This is all we require to know in order to be always ready.

43. But this seems to be rather set aside by our Lord's next words. *But know this, that if the good man 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.* At first sight this seems as if it would be an advantage for the possessor of the house to know when the thief would come. This, however, is rather a description of what man would do, than of what he should do. A man would indeed watch if he knew in what hour he should be called away; but, then, he would never think of watching till the hour approached. We see this disposition and its consequence in the world. Many speak of giving up their pleasures or their business in time to devote themselves to religion, as advancing age gives its monition of their approaching end. All such plans are the results of spurious feelings and mistaken views. They proceed on the mistake that religion is something separate from the duties and enjoyments of common life. Common life is the appointed and congenial sphere for the daily cultivation and practice of religious virtue. Religion is to be infused into all the actions of life. Life is a school for practically learning the way to heaven. That way lies through active usefulness. He leads a heavenly life who sanctifies his earthly deeds with heavenly ends. The heavenly life must be lived without reference to time.

We know not what a day may bring forth. There is some difference in the expression here. The Lord does not speak of the *hour*, but of the *watch*. "If the good man had known in what *watch* the thief would come." A watch in the Old Testament times was four hours; at this time it was three. A watch therefore indicates a more general state than an hour. It also has relation to a state of truth, or an intellectual state, as the idea of watching and watchfulness implies. In the good, watchfulness is truth terminating in good, or intellect grounded in will; with the evil, it is truth without good, intellect grounded in concupiscence. This is the state of the man who, if he had known the time of visitation, "would not have suffered his house to be broken up"—more literally, to be "dug through." And here again we have an expression that has reference to intellectual action; for to dig is to inquire, to investigate, or search thoroughly into anything. Here, it is true, digging is not cultivating the soil in order to sow and reap, but digging into the house to obtain by stealth what one is too indolent to procure by industry. How would this supposed watcher not have suffered his house to be dug through? His intellect would have been awake, so as to keep the character of his mind from being discovered; for the house is a symbol of the mind, digging through which is to enter into it, and take away the knowledge it has acquired.

44. *Therefore be ye also ready*, says our Lord; *for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh*. Readiness is now substituted for watchfulness. To be ready is to be prepared as to the will and goodness, as to be watchful is to be prepared more especially as to the understanding. Watchfulness prepares the way for readiness; truth, for goodness. He that is watchful will find himself ready—he that faithfully uses knowledge will come to the virtue which it teaches. To be in this state is to be ready. And this is a state at which all should aim. When that hour comes that the Son of man appears, that hour which we know not, then shall we feel the value of being prepared.

45. The Saviour now illustrates the subject of his teaching by a parable. In this he describes the man that watcheth as a servant whom his lord made ruler over his house, and whom he found faithful at his coming; and the man who does not watch he represents as a servant who, thinking his lord delayed his coming, began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. The end of the one was honour, that of the other, degradation. We proceed to examine this divine simile. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant,*

whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? We are servants of God, who created us to serve him. And we find in what our service to him consists. We too often make our service to God to consist in serving him in worship. The service he requires is here described as ministering to his household—doing good to our fellow-servants, both as members of his church and of his human family. The name “servant” has spiritually reference to those who are in possession of the truth; but these may be either good or bad servants, as they employ the truth to do good or to do evil. The servant is made ruler over his lord’s household. The house is the church, and the household are its members. The servants in the church are its ministers, whose office it is to give to the members of the household, which they have been called to rule or feed, meat in due season—suitable and reasonable instruction. In an enlarged sense every one is a servant, for it is the duty of every member of the household of faith to serve, or do service to the brethren; so that every one is accountable for the way in which he discharges his duty as a servant of God by serving his neighbour. Those especially who are in truth above others are able to serve their simpler brethren, and lead them where the truth directs them to walk. If they perform their duty, the servants will be blessed; if they do not, their final lot will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The general lesson of the parable lies near the surface. The purely spiritual sense leads us into a more interior and even more practical wisdom, and on this sense we offer a few remarks. It is a characteristic of this sense that it applies to the individual mind, leading one to look into the state and workings of his own heart and interior life. In the internal sense, we may find the lord, and the servant, and the household in ourselves. The internal man is the lord, and the external is the servant; more interiorly, the principle of good in the internal is lord, and the principle of truth in the external is servant, and the household, or family, are the affections of goodness and perceptions of truth. The servant is appointed by his lord to rule over his household. The household being the affections and thoughts of the natural mind, truth is ruler over them; for it is the office of truth to produce and maintain order. Good may indeed be called the ruling power; but good rules by means of truth, or, what amounts to the same, the will rules by means of the understanding. Good and the will cannot rule by themselves, or immediately; for good is mere affection, and will is blind impulse. To truth and intellect belong discrimination and judgment—in one word, laws by which rule and order exist. Hence

it is that to bring and keep the affections and thoughts in order, good must employ truth, or the will must employ the understanding. Rule is not exercised by the higher as an active power through the lower as a passive instrument. If this were the case, the servant could have no choice, and incur no blame, and would have no title to either praise or blame. But the internal and external of man are distinct. They form the inseparable parts of every man, but they have a distinct will and action. The internal acts *upon* the external, but it does not act *through* it. The external is a re-agent, and so much is it so, that it can re-act either *with* or *against* the internal, and may then be either a "faithful and wise," or "an evil" servant. Besides these two parts of the mind, there is a third—a sort of intermediate. Of the existence of this we are conscious; for we can look into and see both sides of our own mind and character, both the good and the bad, the true and the false. Who then is a faithful and wise servant? The external is such a servant when it submits itself to the will of the internal, and carries out its purposes by ruling over the natural affections and appetites, and giving them their meat in due season, which is to give them the nourishment which they require to sustain them, including seasonable orderly gratification. Meat more especially means the good necessary to support them. Yet that good is not so much imparted as acquired. The Lord showed how the mind was to be fed when he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Just as the Lord's humanity was fed by doing the will of the indwelling divinity, or, just as his external man was fed by doing the will of his internal, so are the affections of our external man fed by a faithful and wise subordination of the external to the internal—of the natural to the spiritual. The servant is to give the household their meat in due season, which is, to make them do good according to truth, or to exercise charity according to faith,—or, as it may be expressed, to do good with discrimination; for truth discriminates, as good desires and loves.

46. *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.* The blessing promised, or pronounced, on the wise and faithful servant, is the result of his fidelity and wisdom. The result of ruling and feeding the affections and perceptions of the external man, in obedience to the will of the internal, is, that these two parts of our nature become harmonized and united. And this union is itself blessing, for it introduces the mind into a tranquil, peaceful, happy state. Naturally, the inner and outer man are entirely opposite. This opposition is the cause of mental disorder and misery; and

it is only when their opposition is removed, and true peace between them is restored, that the Divine blessing is received. The blessing is promised to him whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. The lord is represented as being absent, the servant being left with the entire charge of the family, indicating that our natural man is as it were left to himself in the exercise of his freedom, to do or not to do as his will may determine. It implies also the necessity of persevering unto the end, when the Lord cometh to judgment.

47. And what is in this case the result of judgment? *Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.* When the Lord was speaking of his union with the Father, he said, "All things that the Father hath are mine." The divinity and the humanity were related to each other as the internal and the external man. All that was accomplished in the Lord was the grand prototype of what can be effected in man. As by glorification the Lord's humanity became possessed of all the attributes of the divinity, so by regeneration the external man becomes possessed of all the properties of the internal. They are not, indeed, his own as independent possessions. Such a claim would deprive him of them. He is only appointed over them, and holds them and uses them under the internal as their owner, under whom they ought to be administered. It is enough that all the good and truth, and, with them, all the joys and delights, of the inner man should be enjoyed by the outer, as the reward of fidelity in the use of his own. He that is faithful over a few things is made ruler over many things, and enters into the joy of his Lord.

48. But the opposite side of the external man is presented in contrast to this. *But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.* The case of a wicked servant is here supposed, but one who has been entrusted with the charge of the household, and who so far feels his obligation as to look for his lord's return, but who abuses his trust when he thinks his lord delays his coming. He represents one, therefore, who is nominally a Christian, but who is really, as this servant is called, a hypocrite. Considered as a type of the natural man, he presents to our view the external of one who has been trained in the forms and habits of religion, and has preserved an outward conformity with the order of spiritual life. In this case the inner man, flowing into the orderly external, gives it that power which is necessary to its free and independent action. And, indeed, the servant denoting not only the external man in general, but truth in the external man in particular, we here see the character of the

mind when it has truth, but has no corresponding good. The first manifestation of the true character is in the servant saying in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming." Spiritually, this is more than a secret doubt; it is a thought, the offspring of a wish. A voice within the heart is a thought that springs out of the will, which is desire speaking. Delay has in it something more than the idea of procrastination. Time being the symbol of state, haste and delay signify certainty and uncertainty. When the Lord said to John, "Behold, I come quickly," he did not promise to come soon, but to come certainly. When the evil servant said his lord delayed his coming, he entertained a secret disbelief that his lord would come at all. This is the spiritual idea it contains, and the spiritual state it describes. And this disbelief in the lord's coming is spiritually a denial of the existence of an internal man, and with it a doubt of every corresponding internal—a denial of the internal of the church, of heaven, of the Word, and of the Lord. This state results in a state and in acts described in the next verse.

49. *And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.* The fellow-servants are co-ordinate and subordinate truths. Truths disagree, not that truths have any disagreement among themselves, but they are set at variance in ill-regulated and contentious minds, and among discordant men. It is good that makes men agree with one another, and it is good that makes truths agree with one another. So far as we are evil, so far do the truths we possess come into conflict. We see this exemplified in open and extreme cases in infidel minds, who consider that revealed religion is a system of contradictions. This is more or less the case, though differently manifested, in every mind where evil has a controlling influence. And that ruling truth which evil has perverted, smites every other. It is the Ishmaelite whose hand is against every man. And when truths are silenced or rejected, there is then the appropriation of evil and falsity, which is to eat and drink with the drunken. The drunken are they who imbibe falsities, so that this being opposite to a state of truth, which a good servant signifies, the servant's conduct is expressive of the falsification of truth.

50. But a day of reckoning comes. *The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of.* If the lord signifies the internal man, and yet the evil have no proper internal, what are we to understand the lord's coming to mean? Every man has an internal, although the internal of the evil is different from that of the good. Evil closes the true internal,

and makes it as if it did not exist ; and in this state it is that the servant says in his heart that his lord delays his coming. His coming as the author of good and the dispenser of blessing is indeed delayed—delayed or prevented by the evil itself that rules in the external. But the lord does come, if not in this world, at least in the next. For judgment is effected by laying open the internal—opening the book of the internal memory, where all the life is written—not the actions, but the ends from which they have been performed. For while the word and deed are written in the external memory, the motive is engraven at the same time in the internal memory. And when this is laid open, and explains every recorded word and deed in the external, then does the lord come. And he comes in a day when he looketh not for him ; for the inner memory of the spirit is unknown to man while he lives in the world, and therefore, during it, it remains silent, till death breaks the seals and reveals its contents. And so complete is this revelation of every one's interior state that men are not only convicted but convinced of their evils.

51. The consequences of the lord's coming are described by the lord saying of the servant that he *shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites*. This cutting asunder describes the result of judgment, or the opening the internal, in separating from the nominal and deceitful disciple everything good and true. Those who are of this formal religious character have good and truth outwardly, which they have put on, as the false prophets put on a hairy garment to deceive. Stripped of this outward vesture, they stand out in their own undisguised character, as evil servants. And those assumed excellencies of good and truth, of love and faith, adhere only to the external man, and have had no real conformity with their essential character. They are therefore appointed a portion with the hypocrites, or profane; and where these are, *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*. Weeping is misery arising out of evil, and gnashing of teeth is misery arising from falsities. Weeping is grief of heart, gnashing of teeth is sorrow of intellect—not, alas ! weeping or sorrow for sin, but rather of rage and disappointment; grief for the restrained evil of a malevolent will and the transparent fallacies of a perverse and deceitful understanding. Evil and falsehood carry their own punishment in themselves, and in the other life it comes out and returns upon the evil doer.

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CHAPTER XXV.

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An issue betw—the parables of the ten virgins, of the talents,
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pointed by Gove, rs delivered by our Lord, are distinguished for
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George H. P^s
idency. T^y the subject of general and particular judgments.
selection is not sufficiently attended to, and seems not to be
terms.

and th^l. Most Christians have an impression, amounting
like conviction, that the soul enters immediately after death

into heaven or hell; and yet a belief almost universally prevails, that
all are to be judged at the last day, which is understood to mean the
end of the world. A revelation of the spiritual sense of the Word,
and of the nature and economy of the spiritual world, has shown how
these two ideas may be reconciled with each other. What the religi-
ous world has hitherto understood to mean the end of the world, is,
we have seen (ch. xxiv. 3), the end of the church, or the close of the
religious dispensation. And as there have been several dispensations
in the world, there have been several general judgments. There has
been such a judgment at the end of every dispensation; for the
general judgment is that which brings the dispensation to a close,
and prepares for, or forms the commencement, of a new one. The
judgment which is described in this chapter, is that which our Lord
predicted would take place at the end of the dispensation which he
then established. And this is called the last judgment, both because
that dispensation is the last which will ever come to an end, and
because the judgment upon it is the last general judgment that will
ever take place. The church of the Lord's second advent is the
crowning dispensation, and will endure for ever. No general judg-
ment will therefore ever again take place, because none will ever be
required. Every individual will in future be judged immediately
after death. It is only when circumstances exist that prevent the
regular occurrence of particular judgment, that a general judgment
can take place. We will explain how this is. The whole spiritual
world consists of three general divisions. Heaven and hell form two of

these, and are opposite to each other in situation, as they are in state. Between these there is a third region; and this is intermediate in situation, because its inhabitants are intermediate in state, between the two opposite kingdoms we have mentioned. Heaven and hell are the ultimate and eternal abodes of the good and the evil. But the intermediate region, called the world of spirits, is the immediate and temporary abode of all who depart from the natural world. Both the good and the evil pass through it on their way to their final abode. Here they are prepared for their ultimate destination. The preparation consists in separating from the good any evil that adheres to them before they enter heaven, and in separating from the evil any good that adheres to them before they enter hell. The time they remain in the world of spirits is determined by the ease or difficulty with which this separation is effected. This is the normal state of things—the appointed order of progression. That which gives rise to a general judgment is an interruption of this order, a derangement of that state. Circumstances arise out of the decline of the church on earth which prevent the regular and progressive separation of good and evil in those who enter the world of spirits; and the consequence is, that those in whom the separation cannot be effected, remain in that intermediate place till the end of the dispensation, when a general judgment effects upon all what a particular judgment could not previously accomplish upon each. So long as evil and good are mixed in the minds of departed spirits, so long good and evil spirits, like good and evil men on earth, can remain together; but when an extraordinary divine operation separates good and evil in the minds of such spirits, then, as a natural and necessary consequence, good and evil spirits are separated from each other, and the good pass into heaven, and the evil into hell. This is the judgment which is treated of in the present chapter—a judgment that took place in the spiritual world, where all judgment must and does take place, and which was effected on those only who had belonged to the Christian dispensation, not on all who had lived from the beginning of the world. This mingling of the evil and the good in the world of spirits, or intermediate state, is described in the parable of the wheat and tares being allowed to grow up together until the harvest, which is called the end of the world—literally, the consummation of the age—and which spiritually means the end of the church. The general judgment which took place at the time of the Lord's incarnation was upon the Noetic dispensation, which commenced after the event described as a flood. The dispensation that succeeded this, called the Israelitish, was not, as we

have seen, a church in the proper sense of the term, but only the representative or shadow of a church, and may be considered as a prolongation of the dispensation proper, till the fulness of time, when the Lord should come into the world. The good and the evil belonging to this dispensation, who, like the wheat and the tares, had been allowed to grow up together in the world of spirits until the harvest, were those on whom the Lord performed a general judgment at the time of his first coming. This judgment could not be effected till after the Lord had completed the glorification of his humanity and the subjugation of the powers of darkness; for these two works prepared the way for the separation of the good and the evil in the intermediate state, and for the evil being cast into hell, and the good raised into heaven. Besides being described in these parables, this work is spoken of in other parts of the Scriptures. We read that the Lord was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (1 Pet. iii. 18). These spirits in prison were of the Noetic dispensation. The prison in which they were cannot mean hell, from which there is no deliverance, but must be the intermediate state, to the temporary inhabitants of which the Lord could preach redemption. These spirits were the prisoners of hope spoken of by the prophet Zechariah (ix. 12), and the bound and in prison whom the Redeemer came to deliver (Isa. lxi. 1; xlii. 7). In agreement with this, the Apostles' Creed states as an article of early faith, that the Lord, when put to death, descended into hell—that is, into *hades*, the name, among the early Christians, of the intermediate state. The spirits in prison who accepted the deliverance which the Lord preached, he carried with him into heaven at the time of his ascension; as it is written, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive" (Ps. lxxviii. 18). The whole subject of the Lord's ascension into heaven after his descent into *hades* is stated by the apostle Paul. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 8).

The description which the Scriptures give of the judgment which took place at the Lord's first coming enables us to form an idea of that which took place at his second advent, a vision of which was presented to the Apocalyptic seer, which he thus describes,—“And I

saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (*hades*) delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell (*hades*) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. xx. 11-14). *Hades* is clearly a different place from the burning lake, and is evidently the temporary abode of souls, preparatory to the final judgment. This intermediate world presents to us in this instance its evil side, as it sometimes does in the Word. We have here only to concern ourselves with the fact that, as *hades* was cast into the lake at the time of the judgment, it must be a different place from it.

In all the parables recorded in this chapter there are three leading points in which they have a common resemblance. The good and the evil form one company, or congregated mass of human beings, mixed together, and undistinguished from each other as to their opposite characters. This is the first aspect in which they are presented before us. Then comes the judgment. Its first effect is to distinguish and separate the evil from the good—the wise from the foolish virgins, the faithful from the unfaithful servants, the sheep from the goats; and its second effect is to consign the good and the evil to their proper and final habitations.

1. Having offered these remarks on the subject of judgment, we now proceed to consider the parables in which it is described. The parable of the ten virgins is one of the most attractive of the many which our Lord delivered and has left for the edification of his church. Important as it is to have right views on the nature of the general judgment, yet particular judgment is that in which we have the deepest, because an immediate personal interest. It will therefore be most profitable for us to consider the parable in this application. For every divine work is like itself in its general and particular operations. The less is an image or epitome of the greater; and the same description applies to both. So with the parable of the ten virgins. *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* A virgin is a common symbol of the church, and of the church both in its pure and corrupt state. The virgin daughter of Zion and of Jerusalem are other names for the

church, but even the virgin daughters of Israel can do a very horrible thing (Jer. xviii. 13), and in doing it, must represent the church, and the members of the church, in a corrupt state. Among the reasons for virgins being taken to represent the church in the present instance, there is one that appears to deserve attention. The three parables which the Lord employs in this chapter to describe the same event, we cannot suppose to be mere variations of the same idea. The things signified are as different as the symbols. The three parables are descriptions of the judgment on three different classes of persons. The virgins are they who are judged as to their affection for and against the principles of goodness; the servants to whom the Lord delivered talents are they who are judged as to their affections for or against the principles of truth; and the sheep and the goats are they who are judged as to their affections for or against goodness and truth in the actions of life. Thus discriminated, the parables may be understood in relation to an individual as well as to a multitude. There are ten virgins. In the natural sense this may be considered to mean an indefinite number, but in the spiritual sense numbers have a definite signification. Both revelation and creation bear testimony to these numbers being the result of a divine law. All the laws of divine order are collected into the ten commandments. But these are still more summarily expressed in the two general precepts of love to God and love to man, as the ten commandments were written on two tables by the finger of God. The number of the virgins in the parable, spiritually understood, has therefore a distinct and instructive meaning. The virgins are ten in number, not only because that is an indefinite number, used to express all who were to be judged, but because it expresses all who have been instructed in the knowledge of the Divine laws, and have had the ability, the means, and the opportunity of preparing themselves to enter with the bridegroom into the marriage—with the Lord the Saviour into the kingdom of heaven. One of the particulars in which these ten virgins were alike was that *they took their lamps*. The lamp, as the means of affording light, is employed here, and in other parts of Scripture, as a symbol of light itself; and light is a universally recognized emblem of truth, which is intellectual light. As a lamp is the emblem of truth that enlightens the mind, so is it of the Word itself, from which all true enlightenment comes. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. cxix. 105). The possession of the Word as an immediate revelation from God is that which peculiarly distinguishes the members of the Lord's visible church from the heathen. God has

nowhere left himself without a witness, but the direct light of revelation is the highest testimony which he vouchsafes to man. It is not, however, the Word as a book, precious as it is, that makes it a lamp which we can take to light us on our way, but it is the Word as a record in our mind. The Word can only be a lamp to guide us on our way so far as its truths are engraven on our heart or inscribed on our memory. The parable assumes that the ten virgins were each possessed of a lamp. Each one of those whom they represent is in possession of the Word, even to having its general truths impressed upon their minds. But the parable begins by saying of the virgins that they *took* their lamps. To take the lamp is to apprehend the truths of the Word, and even to take hold of them by faith; for those who belong to the church, and profess to be Christians, must at least have some nominal belief in its principles. There is another particular in which the ten virgins resembled each other: they *went forth to meet the bridegroom*. The taking of their lamps and going forth to meet the bridegroom describes the commencement of the religious life, when the Word, previously possessed, becomes an object of mental apprehension and personal faith, when men go forth to meet the bridegroom, by coming to the Lord, either really or nominally, as the Redeemer and Saviour.

2. But while all possessed the Word, and had a knowledge of its truths, and professed belief in them, the virgins were yet essentially different in character, for *five of them were wise, and five were foolish*. No words could express greater opposition of state and character than this. In the language of Scripture, wisdom and folly do not mean keenness and obtuseness of intellect, but moral excellence and depravity. The wise and the foolish of the Scriptures are the good and the evil. Wisdom and knowledge are sometimes confounded with each other, but they are entirely different. Wisdom is knowledge reduced to practice; knowledge teaches us the way of life and happiness, and the wise are they who walk in it. But he who knows how to be happy, and yet acts in such a way as to bring certain misery on himself, cannot be considered wise, but in the most emphatic sense is foolish. There can be no wisdom without knowledge, but there may be knowledge without wisdom.

3, 4. The Lord, after telling us that five were wise and five were foolish, shows in what their wisdom and folly consisted, and in what it was exhibited. *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps*. All alike had the lamp of truth, but the wise only had the oil of

love. Here is the grand distinction between wisdom and folly. Splendid talents, high intelligence, ardent zeal, may not be claimed by the wise more than by the foolish. In all matters of intellect, the spiritually foolish may even outshine the spiritually wise. Intellectual acuteness does not constitute wisdom, and is not incompatible with folly. But this is a point that will be more clearly seen in a future part of the parable. We need only remark here, that wherever oil is mentioned throughout the Scriptures, love is the grace which is meant by it. And the Scriptures throughout as invariably teach that love is the essence of religion: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). If Christian love is that which enables us to dwell in the bosom of divine love, it is evident that those who are destitute of that heavenly grace cannot enter heaven.

5. The bridegroom whom the ten virgins went out to meet did not immediately come. And *while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* Whether we consider the scene of this transaction to be in the natural or in the spiritual world, it teaches us here an instructive lesson. As the lord, when he delivered talents to his servants, left them and went into a far country, whence he returned to receive his own with usury, so does the bridegroom tarry, after he has invited the guests to the wedding. His tarrying is the interval between our being endowed with the means of living for heaven, and our entering into the spiritual world, to realize what we have prepared ourselves for receiving. During this important period the wise and foolish live undistinguished from each other, and even are all slumbering and sleeping. This common condition is significant. An external state of life is meant by sleep, and an internal state by wakefulness. Life in this world is as sleep, compared with life in the eternal world, which, comparatively, is wakefulness. The spirit of man, which is the real man, while in the body, is in a state of comparative dullness and obscurity, both as to the will and understanding, which in the parable is expressed by slumbering and sleeping. This is a state or condition of being which is incident to the real and the nominal members of the church alike, the difference being, that the same external condition covers two different states of mind.

6. *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.* Midnight is the time of the end, and the midnight cry is the announcement of a new beginning. The end of the church, the end of life, the end of a particular state, is expressed in the Scriptures by night, and especially by midnight. When the

midnight of the Jewish church arrived, there was a cry made of the same purport as that in the parable. John was "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." So with every one individually at the end of life. When the day of preparation is ended, the midnight cry is raised, that the bridegroom cometh, and that we must go out to meet him. The Lord comes to us by the messenger of death, and calls us to go out of the body and out of the world to meet him.

7. Awakened by the midnight cry, *then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.* When we pass out of time into eternity, we awaken to the consciousness of a new and higher state of existence. The material body and all the conditions of time and space being removed, the soul is set free; and the spiritual world, which before was a matter of faith, becomes an object of sight. What an awakening is this! Its immediate effect is to call into activity the faculties both of the will and the understanding, which is expressed by the virgins arising and trimming their lamps. Arising is predicated of the will and its affections, and trimming the lamp, of the understanding and its thoughts. When, even in this life, the affections are greatly excited, they rise above their ordinary condition into one of intense feeling, and when the thoughts are powerfully directed to a subject, they concentrate their energies, and endeavour to bring increased light to bear upon it. How much more must this be the case with us all when we awake in the eternal world, and hear the midnight cry, "Prepare to meet thy God!"

8. And now the fatal truth dawns upon the minds of the foolish ones. The lamps which they have trimmed are going out, and they have no oil to feed the dying flame. *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone (going) out.* During their abode in the world they were able to keep the lamp of faith from dying out by that fictitious love which simulates the true—the love of knowledge, that simulates the love of truth. But in the spiritual world, where earthly counterfeits are of no avail, the fictitious fountain dries up, and the lamp of faith which has no true spiritual love to support it gradually dies out. But the foolish see that the wise have oil, and they desire to receive from them what they had neglected to acquire for themselves.

9. But the wise refused to supply the need of their destitute companions. *They answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* Works of supererogation find no place here. "None of them can by

any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should still live for ever" (Ps. xlix. 7, 9). The wise know that the greatest measure of goodness is little enough for themselves, and that, little or much, it is incapable of being imparted to another. They therefore give the sage advice, "but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The heavenly oil cannot be obtained as a gift; it must be bought with a price. But who are they that sell? The Divine Being himself is the only Author of love and goodness, and he calls upon all to come to him and buy. But the laws of divine order are the delegated sellers of the holy oil, and they tell us the price at which we must purchase it. We must sell all that we have, do the work of repentance, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. These laws are holy truths, which yield the oil of love and goodness to all who obey them. We must therefore go and buy for ourselves. For although the Lord gives without money and without price, yet he cannot give of his own love except to those who relinquish their self-love to obtain it.

10. *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.* The bridegroom's coming during the absence of the foolish virgins, or their absence at the time of his coming, is expressive of an entire dissimilarity of state between them and him, and of their consequent unpreparedness to enter into the marriage. But the wise, who were ready, entered with him. Entering with the Lord into the marriage is not only entering into heaven as a place, but into heaven as a state, and this is a state of the internal mind, and of the conjunction of goodness and truth there; for the Lord enters with the righteous into the heaven of their inner man, and there dwells with them eternally in the union of love and faith. And when he has entered with them into this heavenly and eternal marriage, the door is effectually and for ever shut against the intrusion of all external things that can disturb their peace and happiness. But the door which shuts the righteous in shuts the unrighteous out. The door that is shut against the foolish is the door of their own minds—in particular, that by which there is a communication between the spiritual and natural minds; for the spiritual mind is man's particular heaven. During a man's life in the world that door is never absolutely shut—at least, never so fixedly closed as to be incapable of being opened by sincere repentance. For the Lord stands at this door and knocks; and the door at which God knocks, man must be able to open. But in the other life he can no longer do so. He who has not opened the door

of his heart in this world, cannot open it in the next. And when the door that opens into the inner man is closed, the natural mind is left in darkness and death. The darkness of the outer mind, when all light from the inner mind is shut out, is the outer darkness into which the wicked are said to be cast at the judgment; and is that in which the virgins are understood to have been left, when, with extinguished lamps, they were shut out from the glory of the marriage in heaven.

11. *Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* As the desire to be happy is common to all mankind, so the desire to enter heaven is common to all who have belonged to the church, who believe heaven to be the abode of happiness, admission into which many think is all that is necessary to be made for ever happy. And if heaven be considered as the heaven of the inner man, the evil still desire that the door that gives admittance into it should be opened by the Lord even in the other life.

12. But the Lord answers the foolish virgins: *Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* God's knowledge of the evil is like their knowledge of him. The evil may know the Lord intellectually, but they know him not savingly. So the Lord with them. As God, the Lord knows the evil; but as Saviour, he knows them not. Their names are not written in the *Lamb's* book of life. They have no saving knowledge of, no saving interest in, his incarnation and redemption. Neither have they the mark of his children. The Lord's name is not written in their foreheads, nor in their hands—neither in their hearts, nor in their lives,—how, then, can the Lord know them? Their names are not written in heaven, how can they be known there? They are not in the Lord, and the Lord is not in them. The inevitable consequence is, that there is no ground of communion, no means of conjunction, between them; nothing but the great gulf, which makes complete and eternal separation.

13. How solemn, then, is the warning, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh!* Our happy ignorance of the time when we shall be called into the presence of the Lord, affords us the opportunity of preparing for the judgment. Our preparation must be begun when we are free from the immediate apprehension of the event which ends it. We must keep watch even when we see no signs of danger. We know that the thief *will* come, therefore our watching can never be in vain. And unless we are constantly watchful, we may at any time be surprised, and all our previous anxiety and labour lost. Watch, therefore. But what is the duty of a spiritual watchman? It is not to live in fear and

apprehension ; for this rather exposes us to danger than preserves us from it. Those who are prepared for the intruder watch with a tranquil mind ; it is the unready that need to fear the enemy. To watch, therefore, is to have set our house in order, and wait the coming of the event which we know must come. And come when he may, may the Lord then find us ready !

14-30. The parable of the talents presents the subject of probationary life and final decision, under another aspect than the parable of the ten virgins. It throws considerable light upon the nature of the state which awaits us hereafter, and the conditions on which our future happiness or misery depends. Nothing can be more clear than the testimony it gives to the doctrine, that every human being has faculties given him by the Lord, which he is at liberty either to use or to abuse, and that in the use which he makes of them he is left to his own free determination. It, indeed, is plain that this faculty of free determination, and everything else that he possesses, is given him by the Lord ; and that, if he is saved, the Lord is sole Author of his salvation. This is the reason that all the traders in this parable are described as the Lord's servants, who of course ascribe all that they possess to him, as properly his own, both what they had originally received and what they had gained by trading. Regarded in the light of the spiritual sense, it brings before us another class of minds, or the human mind in another of its conditions than the previous parable. The virgins representing those who are favourable or opposed to that principle of the kingdom of God which is the object of the will and its affections—the principle of love,—the servants represent those whose affections are favourable or opposed to that principle of the kingdom which is the immediate object of the understanding and its thoughts—the principle of truth.

14. The first thing we have to notice in the parable is the Lord's being compared to a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. This teaches two important particulars relating to the manner in which the Lord proceeds in his dealings with his creatures. The first is, that all that man possesses, by the use of which he may attain to eternal happiness, is a free gift to him from the Lord alone, and which, if he makes right use of it, is finally given to him as his own—that is, is confirmed to him so as never to be taken from him—although he himself will ever acknowledge with thankfulness that it, together with himself, of right belongs wholly to the Lord. This is plainly taught by the circumstance that the talents which each of the servants received were

given them by their lord, who evidently is the Lord the Saviour. Another important truth we learn is, that during man's abode in the world, he is left so much to his own disposal that, according to all appearance, he is entirely his own master, independently of the Being from whom all that he has is derived. Of the Divine presence he has no sensible perception, insomuch that if he were to judge by outward appearance only, as exhibited by his senses, or even as suggested by his consciousness, without the testimony of revelation or the dictates of enlightened reason, he might fall into doubt even of the existence of a God, as we know many actually do. This is evidently taught by the circumstance of the lord of the servants "travelling into a far country." In this, as in many other sayings in the Holy Word, an action or proceeding is ascribed to the Lord which in reality is an appearance produced by a change of state which takes place in man. Heaven, and the spiritual world in general, being the scene of the Lord's more immediate presence, is called "a far country," in respect to the natural world, as is also the natural world in respect to heaven. But man is so created that he possesses in his own mind both a spiritual world and a natural. His soul, or spiritual part, which is to live after death, is his spiritual world; and his body, or natural part, is his natural world. His soul or spiritual part, again, is divided into distinct regions, in the inmost of which the Lord himself has his residence, and by virtue of possessing which he receives from the Lord, who dwells in it, the faculties of liberty and rationality, and with these, the faculty of living to eternity. In the order of his creation, the inmost region is first formed by the Lord, and the lower regions of his mind and body in their respective order; and it is in the lowest of these that he first comes to be sensible of his existence. While the Lord remains ever present in the inmost of his soul, man, as it were, recedes from the Lord, which is expressed by the Lord's going into a far country. Here, then, we see, man stands in this world of nature, and having come from God, he is to return to God again. In the meantime, he is endowed with talents to trade with, on the use or abuse of which his eternal happiness or misery depends. Those on whom the Lord bestows his goods are called his own servants. They are called his own, because the parable relates more especially to those who are within the church, and who nominally, at least, belong to the Lord, from their possessing that Divine revelation through which there is a more immediate communication, and may be a more intimate connection, between God and men. There is a special reason, also, for their being called servants. The

servants so often spoken of in Scripture were not free, but bond ; and being the property of their masters, their entire gains, like themselves, belonged to him who bestowed the talents upon them. In the spiritual sense, servants denote those within the church who are possessed of truth—of that truth which makes men free, if they employ it to attain to a state of good, which is a state of freedom.

15. The goods which the lord gave consisted of talents, and these are given to three different servants. *And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one ; to every man according to his several ability ; and straightway took his journey.* As the parable describes the divine economy more especially with the professing members of the church, the number of members is limited to three, because this number expresses the idea of completeness, as applicable to those of the spiritual class, or who are receptive of truths, and who are especially meant by servants not only here, but wherever they are mentioned in the Word. The servants, too, receive each a different number of talents. The talents denote the knowledges of divine truth which are given by the Lord to every man, with the faculty of apprehending and using them aright. But are we to understand that these are given in allotted portions—to some more, to others less ? Here again the language is adapted to express the appearance rather than the reality. The Holy Word and the influences of the Holy Spirit are offered in equal fulness to all, and are received by every one “according to his several ability,” the measure of reception being only limited by the capacity to receive, which every one acquires for himself, chiefly by his habits and manners of life. Thus, out of the treasury of infinite wisdom some take five talents, some two, and some one. And when it is said that the Lord gives them, the meaning is, that whatever each takes is a free gift from him. But the numbers of the talents, like that of the servants, has a distinct spiritual signification. And here also the appearance is different from the reality. Numbers signify quality rather than quantity. The larger number does not therefore always stand for more, and the smaller for less ; but each has a meaning determined by its relation to the principles whose quality it is intended to express. The five talents signify goodness and truth stored up in the human mind as remains, which is done chiefly during infancy, childhood, and youth ; the two talents signify good and truth acquired by instruction and study at a more advanced age, and possessed as knowledge ; and the one talent signifies truth alone, acquired from some degree of choice at a still nearer approach to manhood, and laid up in the memory. These may be said to include all principles

acquired, and all states formed during that period of life when, by the Lord's providence, man is being gifted with the possessions which properly constitute the talents necessary for every one to possess, that he may be qualified for entering on the regenerate life. Spiritually understood, the talents are not bestowed all at once; they are given gradually, and the period occupied in God's bestowing and man's acquiring them extends from earliest infancy to the age of manhood and womanhood, and includes both the storing up of remains and the acquisition of knowledge.

16, 17. *Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.* The talents bestowed by the Lord were given to trade with, and in this their true value consists. In all the comparisons which infinite wisdom has adopted to instruct us as to the nature of the kingdom of heaven, there is one prevailing idea ever presented before us. That one idea is the earnest use of means to attain some great practical end ever presented before us. There must be fervent prayer, earnest seeking, determined striving and persevering labour,—and all these with the promised end in view of securing a blessing, finding a treasure, reaching a goal, gathering the clustered grapes, or reaping the abundant harvest. The whole duty of man as a probationary being may be expressed in the Lord's one word, "Labour." God gives the means and the power; man has to use the means. In this his great duty consists; on this his salvation depends. God cannot do more for man than give him the talents; man should not do less for himself than use them, that he may render them back to their Giver with increase. To say that the Lord does not save his creatures without their own exertions is the same as to say that he cannot. There is no doubt he would if he could. He who made man what he is must deal with him as he is,—a free agent. He who gave him free-will cannot force or act against it. This would be a contradiction, which with God is impossible. We must therefore use our talents: we must trade with them. The knowledge, of which the talents are the symbol, is the knowledge of our duty, and at the same time the faculty of doing it. Our duty is to do the will of God, which is, that we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. Spiritual life is not separate from natural life, but within it. We trade with the Lord's talents when we employ the Lord's principles in doing our daily work.

But here we come to the ever-recurring fact, that while a bountiful Providence sees that all receive talents sufficient for their need, and

which only require to be used to make their possessors rich towards God, yet some only of these favoured servants carry out the purpose and do the will of their merciful Benefactor. Happily, there are some who are wise and grateful enough to apply their talents to the great use for which they were bestowed. "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two." They who gain five talents by trading, and they who gain two, are such as make a good use of divine mercies, and acquire to themselves intelligence and wisdom by living a life of charity and faith. And here we observe that each gains by trading a sum equal to that with which he had commenced his career in life. In this circumstance there is an instructive truth. The trading of the servants signifies that part of man's duty and labour which consists in reducing one's knowledge to practice—in making the religion of the mind the religion of the life. This is the true labour, and the result is the true gain of life. Our great labour consists in bringing the external into harmony with the internal, the natural mind with the spiritual, our words and works with our affections and thoughts. And this is done gradually by intelligence, zeal, and perseverance. Every evil that we successfully resist removes some principle or element of discord, and every good we do establishes a harmony between the inner and the outer life. And as we go on in this progressive way, ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, our principles grow out into habits. Every talent that we faithfully use gains another talent; and it is indeed a solid and eternal gain; for that which has become practical has become confirmed, and remains with us for ever.

18. *But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.* This one talent, if it were to be considered as representing the most limited capacity which man can have for the reception of God's spiritual gifts, and the least of the gifts which God bestows, is yet evidently intended to be understood as sufficient for all the purposes for which God's gifts are bestowed. The servant who received the one talent was left, like the others, to occupy till his lord came; and he, like the others, had it in his power to double his sum by trading. So far, therefore, the Lord is equal, giving all the capacity and the means of eternal life; and so far all men are equal, in being placed every one in a condition to work out his salvation. Considered in its spiritual sense, it teaches a still more distinct and instructive lesson. For, understanding the one talent as the symbol of truth which the Lord teaches every one through Holy Scripture,

every one has it in his power, because the power is ever given him, to add to his truth goodness; and this is all that God requires of man, and all that is necessary for his salvation. But this servant, instead of employing his one talent, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Every one sees in this slothful servant a type of those who neglect to improve the talents and means which God bestows upon them for spiritual and eternal uses. But the spiritual sense gives emphasis to this lesson. For the earth, as we have often had occasion to point out, is a symbol of man's earthly or natural mind. The picture here is most instructive. This servant did not spend his lord's talent as the prodigal son wasted his father's substance. He carefully preserved it; and that he might be able to restore it to its owner, he buried it in the earth, where it might safely remain till the time of restitution. This servant is the type of those in the church who cultivate a knowledge of the truth, not from any spiritual love or for any practical purpose, but for the mere pleasure of knowing it for the vanity of display. This cultivation of the truth, or of the natural mind for its reception, is meant by digging; and to express the idea that the end for which the mind was cultivated was earthly, he who hid the talent is said to have digged in the earth. This servant is by no means necessarily a singular character. Many an intellect may be dazzled with the light and charmed with the beauty of truth, without the heart being influenced by its moral excellence, or brought under its moral power. These, and all others who make an intellectual acknowledgment of the truth, but go no further, "hide their lord's money." They do not conceal or neglect the knowledge of which the money is the symbol. Men hide the talent, as their Lord's, when they do not in heart acknowledge the talent they possess to be his, and when they hide its spiritual worth in their unspiritual lives, not letting their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

19. But the day of reckoning comes at last; and then it is seen who have been faithful and who unfaithful to the trust reposed in them; and then are to be revealed the opposite consequences of industry and idleness. *After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.* We speak of the brevity, the uncertainty of even the longest time allotted to man on earth. But time spiritually is state. The long time of the Lord's coming to judgment is his long-suffering. This is the experience of each of us, how long or short soever our stay may be in this present probationary world. His unerring wisdom measures out our needful period of

existence in this world; and his unfailing love attends us in every state through which we pass. And all that a watchful Providence can do is done to make our time of reckoning a time of joy and the realization of eternal happiness. This long time is with the Lord a time of striving with us, prompting us with his love, guiding us with his wisdom, and aiding us with all the agencies he has appointed, to lead us to repentance and holiness. But, long as the period may be that the Lord affords to his servants to improve their talents, the time comes when he "reckoneth with them." Reckoning is an ordeal through which all must pass.

20. When the lord reckoned with his servants, *he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.* It is a principle plainly laid down, and a duty strenuously enforced, in the Divine Word, that man is to regard nothing as his own, but that whatever he acquires or possesses is to be ascribed to God as its true Owner. It may seem, as to many it has seemed, that God is jealous of his honour, and makes this demand upon his creatures that he may receive from them what is his due. The true view of this important matter is, that the Lord makes this demand, not because he can derive any honour from the homage of his creatures, but because it is the means of increasing their own perfection and blessedness. Spiritual gifts and acquirements are blessings, because they are the means of connecting us with the Lord, who is the only source of blessing. They are the channels through which the love and light of God flow down into the soul, and can only be so in virtue of man looking through them to him as the Author of every good. This is the reason the Lord comes to reckon with us, as we shall see in the result to the faithful servants. The Lord comes indeed to every one at an hour when he thinks not, by the solemn visitation which brings us into his more immediate presence in the eternal world. And as this is an event that is common to all, the subject of the final reckoning is to all one of deep and solemn interest. In the parable the lord reckons first with the servants who had improved their talents. They bring the original sum, with the increase they had acquired by industry, and give the whole to their lord as his,—thus not only acknowledging him as the giver of the means of acquiring riches, but as the rightful owner of the wealth acquired. And in this they are figures of those who claim no merit for their works, but ascribe all the merit of goodness to him who alone has a title to it. We have already spoken of the important practical

truth expressed in the servants doubling the sum which had been entrusted to them for the purpose of trading with it. This, we have seen, is done when we use truth so as to make it the means of acquiring goodness—faith as the means of acquiring charity.

21. But the doubling of our talent by trading not only implies that what was received into the mind has been reproduced in the life, but that this has been done faithfully and fully, as expressed in the salutation of the lord, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant.* Good is a quality of the will, and faithfulness is a quality of the understanding; the one is an attribute of charity, the other of faith. To be entitled to the approbation of having done well, we must be both good and faithful. To have the Divine approbation for fidelity and goodness is great comfort. But this is followed by reward. *Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.* The principles of goodness and truth which have been confirmed in the life are, in the other life, greatly multiplied and exalted. This is the general lesson which this award of the lord to the servants teaches us. But it contains a more specific meaning. Few and many, we have seen (ch. xx. 16), signify principles of goodness and truth. But how does this apply in the present case? We have seen that their receiving talents and trading with them means receiving truth, and by means of that truth acquiring goodness. When goodness is acquired, it gives the capacity of being further enriched with truth, but with truth of a higher kind. We have, on a former occasion, shown that there is truth which leads to good, and there is truth which is derived from good. The truth which is derived from good may be rather called wisdom than truth. It is not the light of knowledge, which teaches us what goodness is, and shows us the way to attain it, but the light of love, or the truth by which love goes forth in wise, and therefore beneficent acts—deeds of enlightened charity. That the reward of the servants of this parable consists in enriching goodness with truths of wisdom, appears from the manner in which the reward is expressed in Luke, where the lord says to the servant who had gained ten pounds, "Be thou over ten cities;" and so of the other who had gained five pounds, "Be thou over five cities" (ch. xix. 16, 19). Cities, wherever mentioned in the Word, have relation to the understanding, and to truths and doctrines of which the understanding is receptive. But the servants being made rulers over many things is further expressive of the good and faithful being gifted with the rule and government of all their lower affections and thoughts, which implies the complete submission

of the external to the will and wisdom of the internal man. Besides all this, there was one other and final reward bestowed upon them in the blessed words addressed to each, *Enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* This is the highest award that the Lord can make to the regenerate man. The joy of our Lord is the joy of having his love dwelling in the heart, and manifesting itself in all the delights of heaven for ever. In accordance with the particular sense, in its application to the mind, the servant enters into the joy of his lord when the joy of the internal man and his spiritual affections is imparted to the external man and his natural affections; for when these two parts of the mind are brought into harmony and unity, all internal joys descend into external joy and delight, that the Christian's joy may be full. Then, too, it is that the joy of the Lord is imparted to man, and that he is prepared to enter into the joy of heaven.

22, 23. What is said of the servant who gained five talents is repeated in these verses of him who gained two, the meaning of which it is unnecessary further to explain.

24, 25. We come now to the less pleasing, but not less necessary and profitable, subject of neglected talents, as presented to us under the character of the unfaithful servant. *Then he which had received the one talent came.* This servant comes into the presence of his lord with as much confidence as the others. He does not confess to having been guilty of any want of fidelity to him; on the contrary, he considered that he had discharged his duty when he restored to him the money he had placed in his hands. He even justifies himself in the course he had followed, on the ground of his master's severity. *Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.* In these words we have an exact description of the manner in which every merely natural man views the merciful Lord, the Author of all good. Although every blessing he enjoys is from the Lord, he still regards him as a hard man, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strawed. In their hearts all view the Lord as a hard master whose state of mind is wholly uninfluenced by a spirit of love, of which he is the Source, and is immersed in love of an opposite nature, as is the love of self and of the world. And as they nevertheless know that the Lord requires of man the fruits of charity and faith, whilst they are conscious of being destitute of both, they in their own minds throw the blame on the Lord, endeavouring to justify themselves by pretending that their

deficiency is owing to his not having implanted those gifts in their nature. It is indeed true that genuine charity and faith are not implanted in our nature, which by birth is replete with contrary sentiments; yet it is equally true that the means are afforded, the talents given, by which we may acquire them; but because such persons as are here spoken of live only according to their natural inclinations, they never make the acquisition. To be afraid is a term expressive of the inward dread which such persons feel, when they think of the Lord, from a consciousness of the contrariety between their own state and his nature; as to go and hide their talent in the earth is to immure the noble faculties with which they are endowed in the corruptions of the natural man, by making them subservient to merely natural ends and objects.

26, 27. But it may appear remarkable that the lord, instead of expressing any displeasure at the injustice of calling him a man who reaps where he has not sown, goes in his answer on the supposition that he is so, but thence infers a duty to have devolved on the servant which he had not performed. *His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* By this he teaches us that the duty of serving him is incumbent even on the natural man, and that those who are so engaged in outward things as not to acquire a principle of pure and exalted charity and faith, ought nevertheless to do good from the simple motive of obedience, and to keep the divine laws, if only with a view of being rewarded in heaven. To do good merely with a view to reward, though that be a reward in heaven, is the lowest motive from which man can do anything like real good at all; yet if those who do it are sincere in their obedience, and in shunning evils as sins, their motive may be purified, and they will not be finally rejected. In brief, a service which begins in fear may end in love; if not in the perfect love which casteth out fear, at least in love that casts out the slavish element that makes fear unworthy of him who is its Object.

28. While the servants that improved their talents were made rulers over more than they had thus faithfully used, the slothful servant was deprived of the one talent which he had neglected to improve. *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.* We know it is a universal law that any power is enfeebled by neglect, whilst it is increased by action. Spiritual

gifts are subject to the same law. If we neglect the right use of our faculties, they become enfeebled or depraved. If we neglect the use of knowledge, it will vanish away. The use of knowledge does not consist in teaching it to others, but in applying it to ourselves; not in communicating it to another's understanding, but in applying it to our own heart. If religious knowledge is not thus applied, it will be taken from us. Not that the Lord forcibly deprives us of it, but because, having no spiritual capacity or love for it, it cannot remain. There can be no truth where there is no good, no faith without love. Those who enter the other world with knowledge which they mistake for truth, and with persuasion which they mistake for faith, soon find themselves destitute of even the semblance of any. On the other hand, they who have doubled their talents, by adding goodness to their truth and charity to their faith, have increased their capacity, and find themselves enriched with a great and endless increase. The one talent is taken from the unfaithful servant and given to him that hath ten talents. It is not given unto him that had two, although he had been as faithful, and had gained as much, according to the extent of his means, as the other. There is a reason for this. The five talents, we have seen (v. 15), denote a state less full and perfect than the two. The two signify the knowledge of good and truth in equality, and the two gained besides them signify good and truth, or charity and faith, acquired as principles of life; and this practical union of charity and faith constitutes the heavenly marriage. But the number five signifies the remains of good and truth; and, indeed, a defective state of remains, such as they may be supposed to have acquired who have enjoyed to but a limited extent the advantages of a right education. That these were able to gain their other five talents, teaches us that even a defective state of remains is no hindrance to salvation. A full state of remains is meant by ten. Such a state as that meant by five, though imperfect, may be filled up and perfected in the other life. And such a state is perfected by knowledges. Therefore it was that the talent of received knowledge, of which the mere intellectual cultivator of truth was deprived, was given to him who had ten talents.

29. The contrast, expressed as a seeming paradox, that *unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath*, is thus to be understood: he who has good shall be enriched with truth; but he who is destitute of good will be deprived of truth. In the Gospel of Luke (viii. 18), "that which he hath" is called "that which he

seemeth to have ;” for with the evil and faithless truth is but a seeming possession. They have it in their memory, but not in their hearts ; and the memory is but the storehouse of the mind—the Scripture “barn” of hoarded wealth, of which death deprives a man for ever. “This night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall these things be ?” The great law of heaven, and indeed of life, is,—so much of good, so much of truth ; so much of charity, so much of faith. He who has no good has in reality no truth ; he who has no charity has no faith. Good and charity can, however, have a certain existence without truth and faith. Men may live in this world, of which the heathen furnish an example, without the knowledge of revealed truth, and therefore without the faith of Jesus Christ as revealed in the gospel ; but they may nevertheless live in charity and virtue, as far as their own knowledge extends. Such, in the other life, will have truth added to their goodness, and faith to their charity.

30. The sentence upon such is : *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.* We have already spoken of the meaning of this language. The darkness into which the evil are cast is the darkness of their own minds, from which the light of saving truth has been excluded, the light in which they lived in the world being only the light of knowledge. It is like that which the earth is said to have enjoyed before the sun was made and placed in the firmament,—a temporary light which precedes that of the permanent, but which cannot continue to be a substitute for it. But this is called not simply darkness, but outer darkness ; for this is the darkness not of ignorance, nor even of error, but the darkness of perverted truth—the light turned into darkness ; “and if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness !” *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, which is expressive of the bitterness of suffering arising from the absence of all good and truth, and the presence of evil and falsity in the moral and intellectual life.

Here again we find a solemn lesson. Life and death are set before us in strong terms. Life, if we are faithful to the mercies we enjoy ; death, if we are unfaithful and unprofitable.

31-46. Another parable the Lord puts forth, that of the sheep and the goats, which is one of the most impressive that he delivered, or the Word contains. The certainty of a final judgment by a just and omniscient Judge is one of the most solemn admonitions that Revelation addresses to the children of men. God has wisely implanted in our nature a dread of pain and a love of pleasure ; and on this parent stem he engrafts the religious fear and hope which

become our guard and incentive in the progress of the Christian life. Without these to keep the mind awake and active, there could be no determination of its powers, either of understanding or will, to the concerns of eternal life; for without fear and hope there could be no interest awakened in the doctrine of heaven and hell, nor, consequently, in that of a judgment to the one or the other. Certain that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or evil, we may see in this parable, as it may be called, the nature of the ordeal through which we must pass.

31. The scene presented before us is one of utmost grandeur and solemnity. *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.* By outward glory, which affects the sense, the Scriptures describe inward glory, which affects the mind. The glory in which the Lord comes is the lustre of his divine truth. But the glory of the Lord's second coming in the Spirit is presented as a contrast to the humility in which he made his first advent in the flesh. He is still, indeed, "the Son of man." And this name is descriptive of the Lord as the Word that was made flesh, the Divine truth accommodated to the apprehension of men; which, being that by which men were redeemed and are saved, is that by which they are to be judged. But while the Lord is still the Son of man, he is the Son of man glorified. He comes in his glory. Instead of being attended by a few humble disciples, as on earth, he has "all the holy angels with him." These are not, indeed, a different race from the disciples, but are the disciples themselves, and such as they, glorified. Having all the angels, he has all heaven with him, for "angels" is but another name for heaven. But why has he the angels with him? They cannot judge, nor assist him in judgment. Is it to add splendour and dignity to the grand tribunal? Angels rather shade the Lord's glory than enhance it. It is therefore to moderate the effects of his own transcendent glory upon those who are to be judged that the Lord comes to judgment, having all his holy angels with him. He comes through heaven: he bows the heavens and comes down, shading his glory by the finite perception of angelic minds. And the very "throne of his glory" upon which he sits is intended to moderate his judgment; for heaven is God's throne. And men are judged by the Divine truth as it is in heaven; for they are judged by the laws of the kingdom in which they are to live, or from which they are to be excluded.

32. Seated on the throne of his glory, *before him shall be gathered*

all nations. Nations denote those who are in good or in evil, as peoples denote those who are in truth or falsity. But nations in this instance include all who were to be judged, both the good and the evil. They are "gathered before him." This implies more than bringing all in a body into his presence, which is but a natural idea. The spiritual idea is that of being brought under the immediate inspection of his searching truth, that their state may be made manifest, as it were, in the light of his countenance. The first act of the Divine Judge was to *separate them one from another.* The good and the evil were mingled together until the time of the judgment; and one part of the judgment was to separate them into two great divisions. How this separation was effected has already been spoken of. It was by making their interior characters manifest. Persons can live in society with each other so long as they unite in matters in which they have a common interest, or so long as they meet on common ground. Persons can act very harmoniously in business or pleasure, or even on morals, who would disagree on religion: in short, people can go on very well together in worldly matters who could not go on together in spiritual matters. Whenever their minds are raised to this higher platform, many of the best natural friends disagree and separate. Such was the case in the judgment. When their internals, where spiritual things reside and eternal concerns reign, are opened, and they are brought together, not as moral but as spiritual beings, they separate from each other as a necessary result. It is said that the Lord separated them, because his divine truth was the cause of separation, by bringing their internal states to view. He separated them one from another, *as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.* Here the Lord is the Pastor, and the people are his sheep. And he is represented under this character when his love is that attribute of his nature which is being exhibited in relation to his people; and they are called his sheep when their love to him and to each other is understood. Sheep are the symbols of those who are principled more especially in the grace of charity. And those who are of the opposite character are called goats. Goats are the types of those who are in faith; but here they denote those who are in faith alone, without charity. The goats are those who have lived within the pale of the church, and have made profession of faith, but have been destitute of any of that living charity without which faith is dead.

In the New Testament Jesus is invariably set forth as the Judge of the world. Not that he is a distinct person from the Father, but

because Jesus in the New Testament is the same with Jehovah in the Old. In the Old Testament Jehovah is declared to be the Judge of all the earth; and we have no reason to suppose that in this divine work he will give his glory to another. Yet there is a distinction. In the New Testament it is said the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, because he is the Son of man. When we understand that the Father is the principle of Divine Love in the Deity, and the Son is the principle of Divine Wisdom or Truth in the Deity, we see clearly the meaning of the declaration of the gospel to be, what we know must be the case, that all judgment is effected by Divine Truth, not by Divine Good. Divine Good judges no man but by Truth. And so it is said that God will judge the world by Jesus Christ (Rom. ii. 16), and, indeed, by the man Jesus Christ (Acts xvii. 31): for it is by the Word made flesh that all judgment is performed. But what is it that God does not do by Jesus Christ? He created (John i. 10) and redeemed the world by Jesus Christ; nor is the sanctification and salvation of the world an exception, for the Son sends the Holy Spirit from the Father. And what is this but the same law operating, that all which Divine Good does, it does by Truth; all that Divine Love does, it does by Wisdom?

33. A further and still more decisive sign of the characters of these two classes is afforded by what is further related of them, that the Lord *shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left*. For right and left are expressive of good and truth. Those on the right hand of the Judge are those who are in good, and thence in truth; and those on the left are those who are in truth without good.

34. But we now come to the deeply interesting subject of the judgment itself. And here we may remark that the Lord now calls himself a King. This name has the same spiritual signification as the Son of man; but it denotes divine truth of a higher degree—that is, in relation to man. This character corresponds with the throne on which it is said he shall sit. *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. Those who are blessed of his Father are they who are blessed with his love—who have his love dwelling in their hearts, and who enjoy all the blessing which results from it. This is that of inheriting the kingdom; which implies, that those who have the love of God dwelling in their hearts shall receive as an inheritance the truth of God, which is his kingdom, into their understandings, and shall have the government of that truth established in them. This kingdom is said to be prepared

from the foundation of the world. In the proximate sense this means from the foundation of the church, which the world signifies. The Lord is said to have been slain from the foundation of the world, which literally was from the foundation of the Christian church. But the kingdom is prepared for the righteous individually from the foundation of the church in themselves. It is no less truly prepared *for us*, because it is prepared *in us*. It is no less a divine provision because it is a state of life within us, than it would be if it were solely a place without us. We carry our inheritance in ourselves, yet it is the Lord's gift, being entirely his work.

35, 36. Having saluted those on his right hand as the blessed of his Father, the Lord, as the Judge, proceeds to show forth the grounds of their blessedness and their acceptance. *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.* In reading the Scriptures we are constantly met with the declaration that we are to be judged by the deeds done in the body. And in this portion of the Word, where the very process of judgment is described, there is no mention of anything but works. The assembled multitude are not judged on the ground of what they had believed, nor even of what they had felt, but of what they had done. Not that faith and feeling are excluded. Without faith and love there can be no good work. Every work that is really good must include both. Hence it is, that in judging men by their works, God judges them at the same time by the faith and love that produced them. The whole of our affections and thoughts are comprehended in our works. There they are in their fulness. They are fixed when they are lived, and form our permanent and individual character. In their simplest acceptation, the Lord's words addressed to the blessed contain a beautiful summary of the works of charity, in relation to the temporal condition of men. And although, when understood spiritually, they relate to the still higher uses of ministering to the soul in its sufferings and sorrows, we are by no means to suppose that the greater supersedes the less. The charity that ministers to the body is not to be severed from the charity that ministers to the soul. Those who are principled in spiritual charity will never dream that they perform the whole duties of Christian love by ministering only to the spiritual wants of their fellow-creatures; they will extend their active sympathies to his entire nature, the physical and the spiritual. It is incumbent on us to take our share in the labour of love necessary for diminishing the sum of human

misery. But to be able to do even the natural works of charity with advantage, it is necessary to understand what spiritual charity is, which the spiritual meaning of our Lord's language makes known. In the spiritual sense the hungry are those who from affection desire good, and the thirsty are those who desire truth; the strangers or sojourners are those who desire knowledge, for sojourners were those from other lands who came to learn the law among the Israelites; the naked are those who see their need of, and desire to be clothed with the garment of righteousness; the sick are those who are sensible of their diseased moral and spiritual condition, and desire to be restored to health of mind and soul; and the prisoners are those who are in bondage to sin, or are suffering from trial and temptation, and earnestly desire to realize in their lives and experience the truth that makes them free. To minister to these is the work of spiritual charity. To be able, under Providence, in any degree to satisfy the desire of the human will with good, and of the understanding with truth; to give knowledge to the ignorant, and lead to righteousness him who is out of the way; to heal the diseased affections, and give freedom to the imprisoned thoughts; these are works as much more important than the deeds of natural charity, as the value of the soul is greater than that of the body. But to be able and willing to perform this work of spiritual charity to others, we must be careful to do it for ourselves. This personal duty is equally involved in the Lord's words with that which we owe to our neighbour. This we shall perceive if we take the terms in their abstract sense. For while the hungry denote those who desire good, hunger is the desire itself of good; thirst is the desire of truth; sojourning is the desire for instruction; nakedness and sickness are the acknowledgment that we have nothing good or true of ourselves; and being in prison, is the confession that in ourselves we are wholly possessed by falsities. In our own case, as well as in that of our neighbour, we may see the force and beauty of the Lord's language. "*I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.*" Our sense of spiritual wants, and our desire to have those wants supplied, are from the Lord, and are the Lord in us; for he is present with us in everything that we derive from him, and in every desire we have for his love and truth. And every act we do, to satisfy our own or our neighbour's spiritual wants, is an act of charity done to the Lord himself. The Lord is our neighbour in the highest sense and in the super-eminent degree, and he is the origin of all spiritual brotherhood. Men are our neighbours and our brethren spiritually, so far as they have the Lord dwelling in them.

It is not the person of any man, but the Lord's image in him that is the neighbour, we are to love. It may seem from this as if none but the good are our neighbours, and are to be loved and ministered unto. We are to love the evil, not as evil, but as having a capacity for good; and our charity to them consists in acting towards them in such a way as to turn them from evil to good. Good is our neighbour. So far as our actions tend to strengthen this heavenly attribute in ourselves and others, so far are we in the true love of the neighbour; and so far as our actions tend to weaken this attribute in ourselves and others, so far we are destitute of that love. Whenever this attribute, this grace, in ourselves and in others, is hungry, and thirsty, and naked, and sick, and in prison, it is the duty of Christian charity to minister to its wants; to give it the food it requires for its support; the clothing it needs for its protection; the medicine it needs for its cure; the comfort it needs in its temptations. These are the deeds of charity for which the Lord called the sheep the blessed of his Father.

37-39. *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?* This disavowal by the righteous of the virtue ascribed to them is designed to show the absence of all idea of merit from true righteousness. The good do not think of the value of their works: they do good for the sake of good. They do it, indeed, in obedience to the Lord, and thus for his sake; but what they do for the Lord's sake they do for the sake of the goodness which the Lord essentially and pre-eminently is. They know that the good they are enabled to do is from him, but they do not think of good being done to him, as if it enriched him or added to his glory. Therefore they say, "When saw we thee in need, and ministered unto thy necessities?"

40. To this disavowal of merit in the good they had done the King answers, *Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* What merciful condescension is this! What love, to call his creatures brethren! It is true that he had borne their frail nature, and had hungered and thirsted, and endured the extreme of all human suffering. But he was now in glory. Yet he calls the needy and the suffering his brethren. It is remarkable that the Lord never directly calls his disciples his brethren till after his glorification, or in reference to it. After he was risen he desired Mary Magdalene to go and tell his "brethren" that

he ascended to his Father and their Father. Why was this? Because the Lord was more truly and fully man after his resurrection than before it. Then also his disciples could become more truly men than before, because they could be more fully regenerated. And Jesus glorified and men regenerated are more nearly related than Jesus unglorified and man unregenerated. But there is a profounder truth in the Lord's language than this. It is when the Lord is glorified in us that we become truly those whom he acknowledges as his brethren. This our Lord taught when he said, "My *brethren* are they who hear the word of God and do it." But the brethren recognized in this judgment are all poor and needy. These objects of charity are such as are in the good which makes them brethren, but whose good labours under those privations and sufferings which goodness itself in the person of the Lord endured. It is in returning this good given by the Lord to man, and restoring it to strength and freedom, that the work of real charity consists. The Lord, therefore, speaks not only of his brethren, but of the least of his brethren; for those who possess the least of real goodness have in them a ground of regeneration—a capacity for goodness and for being saved. And what an extended field for the exercise of love and charity does this open to us,—a field, we are happy to say, that Christian philanthropy, acting under a new spiritual influence, is now industriously cultivating. And what dignity does the Lord stamp upon the lowliest offices and acts of Christian charity, by declaring that he himself is the object of every one of them. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Is any object too mean for our charity whom the King of kings condescends to call his brother? There is not one who sincerely calls himself by the name of Christ, but who believes that if Jesus walked our streets he would think it an honour, and feel it a blessing to minister to the wants of the man of sorrows who had not where to lay his head. Let us behold him in sorrowing and suffering humanity—in every virtuous sufferer; and on his own divine assurance let us know that if we withhold a real good while we can bestow it on one of the least of these, the Divine Man still walks in the midst of us unacknowledged and unaided. Let good be our object, as it was our Lord's when on earth, and let us imitate him by spiritually as well as naturally feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, instructing the ignorant, visiting the sick and the prisoner, and we shall receive the joyful salutation: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

41-45. How terrible the contrast to this is the Lord's address to those on his left hand! *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.* It is not necessary to enter into the particulars of the charge brought against them. It is simply the reverse of the commendation bestowed on the righteous. This only may be remarked, that the goats are not accused of having done evil, but of not having done good. For these form the class who have led a moral life, but not a spiritual life, and morality without spirituality is not heavenly. This want of spirituality and reference to the Lord is indicated by the mode of address. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat." They may have ministered to men, but they have not ministered to the Lord in men.

The manner of our Lord's address to these may seem severe. We are to remember that the Divine judgments are simply the revelations of men's states, and of their consequences. The curse which the Lord pronounces upon the unregenerate is not an anathema proceeding from him, but a blight arising out of their own corruptions. His Word, which is his divine truth, lays open that which had been concealed, and makes all things manifest. And so with the sentence, "Depart from me," which is the announcement of a result, the cause of which is in the wicked themselves. For the state of the soul is that which causes nearness and distance from the centre of life, and according to their state the righteous come to the Lord and the unrighteous depart from him. And when they depart into everlasting fire, they only become immersed in their own burning loves, or rather lusts, of hatred, revenge, and all uncleanness. The fire into which they go is said to have been prepared for the devil and his angels. The devil is another name for those who have confirmed themselves in evil, and his angels are those who are in the principles proceeding from them. The devil is hell personified, as the fire—the everlasting burnings—in which he dwells is a figure for the evil love which is at once the element and the torment of depraved human souls.

46. The opposite results of righteousness and unrighteousness—of spirituality and carnality—are set before us as a conclusion. *And*

these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. Punishment and its endless duration are here placed in opposition to life eternal. Both are undoubtedly the doctrine of the Scriptures, and both are the result of a law which is unchangeable—that states that have been confirmed in this life remain unchanged for ever. It is not, therefore, because God will not have mercy that the evil are punished, but because his mercy cannot save them from a punishment which is inseparable from themselves as evil beings. Torment can no more be separated in the other world from evil than pain can in this be separated from burning. They are as inseparable as cause and effect. So, on the other hand, holiness and happiness are united. The one word, “life,” is most expressive of all that is desirable. Life in its original state must have been a sense of pure enjoyment, arising from the healthy condition of all the powers of mind and body; and eternal life is this sense in man when living in the spiritual world. This is heaven, the opposite of which is hell. Let us choose between them while the choice is in our power. Happy are they who have done the work of true charity in this world, where men must sow in righteousness if they would reap in joy. The Lord grant that we may stand at last on his right hand, and hear the joyful salutation, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE discourse which the Lord had finished concluded his public ministry. He had commenced it by preaching the acceptable year of the Lord, and he ends it by declaring the certainty of a final judgment. Having delivered his last address to those who were without, he now addresses himself to those who were within.

1, 2. *And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.* The passover was instituted to mark the Lord's mercy in passing over the houses of the children of Israel on the night that he went through Egypt and slew all the first-born of the Egyptians. This last plague was the means of Israel's deliverance, of which the passover was also the sign. The Holy Supper, which the Lord instituted instead of the Jewish passover, was a sign of the great redemption which he was about to complete, and by which the faithful were to be saved from a slavery

more cruel than that of Egypt. The Lord thus kept the passover, because the deliverance of Israel from Egypt was typical of the redemption which he accomplished. The Lord says to the disciples, "Ye know that after two days is the passover." Two signifies conjunction—the conjunction of good and truth, or the conjunction of evil and falsity, according to the nature of the subject. Here the two days signify both—the union of good and truth in the Lord's humanity, and the conjunction of evil and falsity in the Jewish church. Both were ready—the one for glorification, the other for consummation. The betrayal and crucifixion of the Son of man were the means of completing both. This is expressed in the two acts that were to be committed by the Jews, as well as by the two days after which they were to be done; for it is the false principle that betrays the Lord, and the evil principle that crucifies him.

3, 4. While the Lord was instructing his disciples respecting his death, the Jewish council were plotting how to effect it. *Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.* The prophetic Psalm was being fulfilled, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed" (ii. 1). The whole powers of evil and falsity in the church and in the world, represented by the Jews and the Romans, were combined against the Lord as the supreme good and truth; for everything they did to the Lord proceeded from, and therefore involved, opposition to the Word, as the expression of the Divine love and wisdom which Jesus was. The palace of the high priest was the place where the members of the Jewish hierarchy were assembled, and Caiaphas the high priest presided over them. As, in the Word, he who forms the first or the head of an assembly gives a character to the whole, we may judge of the character of the church which this council naturally represented, indicating a state of utter corruption and complete devastation.

A palace, as distinguished from a house, signifies the intellect, as distinguished from the will, thus the intellectual principle of the church. It is in the understanding that the thoughts assemble when they deliberate on anything either good or evil. And this character of the people and the palace is more clearly indicated by the object being, not simply to take Jesus, but to take him by subtilty,—an attempt which expresses the idea that in the Jewish church they

not only were opposed to the Word, but employed the subtilty of their intellects to pervert and destroy it.

The high priest, who headed and encouraged the council, deserves our especial attention. Caiaphas is one of those persons, several of whom are mentioned in the Scriptures, who unite high official gifts with degraded personal qualities. Caiaphas it was who spoke "not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 51). Yet he who uttered this great truth, when speaking under the inspiration of the Almighty, could conspire with the unprincipled Sanhedrim when they "consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him." He was like Balaam, "which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty," uttering sublime truths while meditating a diabolical action,—willing to curse him whom it was his duty to bless. More effectually did the purpose of Caiaphas work against Jesus, as "the Star that should come out of Jacob, and the Sceptre that should rise out of Israel," than did the will of Balaam, to use enchantment against Jacob and divination against Israel. But Providence had a beneficent end in preventing the one and permitting the other. In the time of Caiaphas it was expedient "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not;" and the high priest himself was a suitable instrument for promoting the accomplishment of the prophecy he uttered. Can we, then, fail to see in Caiaphas, the high priest of the Jews, a type of the Jewish church, and of every corrupt member of the church, when intellectual enlightenment and moral corruption go hand in hand, when the understanding can see and speak from the light of heaven, while the will feels and acts from the fire of hell?

5. When the whole Sanhedrim had determined to take Jesus, their subtilty was displayed in the resolution they adopted to take him, *not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.* The Lord was, however, taken on the feast day; but it was at the suggestion and through the agency of one still more wicked and subtle than themselves—Judas, the traitor. The feast day of the passover was a type of the Lord's redemption, and the paschal lamb which was then killed and eaten was a type of the Redeemer himself. Appropriately was the Lord's death accomplished during the celebration of the passover; and appropriately was he led as a lamb to the slaughter on the day that the paschal lamb was killed. Yet the

Jewish priesthood wished to avoid this day lest there might be an uproar among the people. The multitude, though often hostile to Jesus, were not actuated by the same deadly hatred against him as their rulers, nor did they deal with him with the subtilty of the priesthood. The rulers were like Pharaoh and his servants, who attempted to defeat the Divine purpose to redeem Israel, while the people, who inclined to follow the Lord, were like the mixed multitude that went up with the children of Israel out of Egypt.

6. A striking contrast to this wicked conspiracy of the rulers of the Jewish church to effect the Lord's destruction, is presented in the tender and beautiful scene exhibited *when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper*. As Bethany was the town of Lazarus, whose resurrection from the dead typified the raising up of a church among the Gentiles, the Lord's presence in Simon's house, and the anointing of his head with oil, are expressive of the loving reception of the Lord by the Gentiles when he was rejected by the Jews.

7. When Jesus was in the house of Simon, *there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat*. As Simon was a type of faith in the Lord, the woman was a type of love to him. This woman, as we learn from John xii. 3, was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. Mary is the recognized type of those devoted souls who have chosen "the one thing needful," the love of Jesus, as their all; and who sit at his feet, and hear his word. And such will imitate Mary, also, in the costly offering which she made to her Saviour. Mary's pious act was a significant one. Anointing was practised in the representative church on all solemn and important occasions; in particular, it was employed in the inauguration of kings and priests. Types of the Lord, their unction was representative of his. He was truly the LORD'S ANOINTED. The oil with which Jesus was anointed was the Divine love itself, of which the holy oil was the symbol. In the secondary sense, holy oil was the symbol of brotherly love. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments," (Ps. cxxxiii.) Unity among brethren is cemented by brotherly love. The precious ointment brought by Mary was a symbol of her love to her Saviour; as it is love that unites man to man, it is love that unites man to the Lord. Love is precious in proportion as it has cost us much—as we have purchased it with much self-denial and devoted service, and have then enriched it with wisdom and experience. Mary

brought her ointment in an alabaster box. True faith, filled with pure love, is the alabaster box of precious ointment which Mary poured upon the head of Jesus. Those whom Mary represents imitate Mary's act of devotion when they reciprocate the love which they have received from Jesus; and they pour the precious ointment on his head when they seek conjunction with him in the celestial degree, of which the Lord's head is the symbol. John (xii. 3) says that Mary anointed the *feet* of Jesus; and to reconcile the two statements, commentators offer the conjecture that Mary anointed both his head and his feet. Whether this be the case or not, there is a reason for the apparent discrepancy. The head signifies first principles, from which all lower principles are derived; and the feet signify lowest principles, in which all the higher are contained. The anointing of the head and the anointing of the feet have the same signification, so far as this, that the anointing of each signifies the sanctifying of the whole man—the one, all as proceeding from the first; the other, all as included in the last. And the anointing of the feet is recorded in John, because his gospel describes regeneration in its greatest fulness—when the first is in the last, the highest in the lowest.

8. This grateful tribute of tender love and exalted devotion on the part of Mary did not receive from all who witnessed it the approval it deserved. *But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?* This is not the only instance in which the disciples showed less love and devotedness to the Lord than the pious women who followed him. The different character of the male and female mind accounts for this. Women act more from affection, men more from intellect. Every one, indeed, has both these essentials of humanity in himself, although the sexes have not both in the same degree. The difference between Mary and the disciples may therefore be seen by every one in his own experience. Warm and generous impulses sometimes prompt us to noble or generous actions, but when the calculating faculty comes into play, it condemns as wasteful what the heart had conceived as necessary. Second thoughts are sometimes best; but in the present state of human nature they are often less disinterested than the first. It is for this reason that the church, when personified, is represented as a woman; because it is the will, and not the understanding—love, and not faith—that essentially constitutes the church, and which is the virgin daughter of Zion and Jerusalem, the bride and wife of the Lamb. Every true member of the church has both these elements of religion, but love is the essence of all his true worship, and the grace

which unites his soul to his Saviour. Intellect, truth, faith, when alone, have nothing devotional or conjunctive in them, but tend rather to self-worship, and therefore to disjunction and division. The disciples on this, as on some other occasions, presented an image of the mind when too much under the influence of faith as a separate grace, and therefore of faith as opposed, rather than favourable, to true love and its precious offering. In regard to the conduct of the disciples on this occasion, Judas Iscariot was the author of this censure of waste, and according to John (xii. 4), he alone uttered the complaint; and this he did, "not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." According to the rule that the first of a series marks the general character of the whole, we have here a representation of the intellectual state of the church, when self-love and self-interest are allowed to influence our thoughts. Even the man of the church, when he takes a merely intellectual view of divine worship, asks, "To what purpose is this waste? God cannot be exalted by our praise, nor persuaded by our petitions. The time and the means that are devoted to anointing him who in himself is holy might have been sold for much and given to the poor." Yet acts proceeding from these nobler sentiments would frequently be acts done to the Lord himself—acts that had less of self and more of him—acts such as those which he himself ascribed to the righteous, when he said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

9. The difference between the woman and the disciples, as types of the celestial and spiritual, is further manifested in the remark, *For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.* She thought of the Lord; they thought of the neighbour. With the celestial the Lord is first; with the spiritual the neighbour is first. Do we not sometimes hear it objected, "To what purpose is this waste of time and energy which you devote to pious meditation and prayer? Why not give them to the poor? God does not require all this service. You cannot exalt him with your praises, nor move him with your prayers. Your brother can be benefited by your service, and requires all you can render him. That which is most beneficial to man is most serviceable to God." True; but the highest form of love to the neighbour comes through love to God. True love to the neighbour is love to man from love to God. When the prophet would increase the famishing widow's handful of meal, he required her first to make him a cake. And that he might bless the harvests of Israel, God required the first-fruits, the gleanings of which were

left for the poor. Why was this? To teach us that the acknowledgment of the Giver sanctifies the gift, and makes its secondary use more excellent and beneficial. But the disciples thought it might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. We read, indeed, of something similar to this in the Lord requiring a would-be disciple to sell all that he had, and give to the poor. But his possessions were a hindrance to his becoming a disciple of Jesus. The woman had purchased the ointment to show her devotion to the Lord. To have sold it again, to give the money to the poor, would have been to forsake the Lord with the view of doing service to men. As this woman represents the church, and specifically the Gentile church, she is to be considered as standing between the Lord as the All-sufficient, and the poor as the destitute.

10. But *when Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman?* Our Lord alludes to this good work in what follows. We may confine our attention at present to the inquiry how this act could operate as a good work upon him. As this woman pouring ointment on the Lord's head represented the church seeking conjunction through love with the Lord's divine humanity, the good work she wrought upon Jesus, in regard to herself, is the union effected with him, by the reciprocation of his love on the part of the church. The spiritual trouble the celestial when they judge of their state by their own, and insinuate their own spirit into them, or make them the subjects of their influx. The lower acting upon the higher causes them disturbance. *For she hath wrought a good work upon me,* said our Lord. This work is afterwards mentioned, and will be considered when we come to it.

11. The reason the Lord gives for not disturbing or hindering the woman in her pious work is, *For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.* There are two kinds of poor, and many degrees of poverty. There are the poor in the natural sense, who have a scant share of this world's goods, and the poor in a spiritual sense, who have but a small share of heaven's wealth. Of the spiritually poor there are some who, though yet poor, think they are rich, and in need of nothing; and there are some who are sensible of their poverty, and desire to receive the true riches. There are the poor distinct from ourselves, in the persons of others, and the poor within us, in our own impoverished faculties. These we too certainly have with us always. But Jesus we have not always. His spirit of meekness and lowliness of heart, of love and mercy, of forbearance, forgiveness, of patience and endurance,—this is not always with us.

When the heavenly graces and virtues in which he dwells are active, then is he with us. And then is the time to pour out the affections of our love and devotion, as the woman poured upon his head the precious ointment—the sign of her grateful homage and profound adoration.

12. A further reason the Lord gave the disciples not to touch the woman was, *For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.* Burial is the symbol of resurrection; for when the body dies and is buried, the soul rises into its true and complete life. But the Lord's resurrection was also his glorification; and this is included in the signification of his burial. The angels know not about death and burial, but only about life and resurrection. Therefore, when the language of men is translated into the language of angels, mortality is changed into immortality. What, then, does our Lord mean when he said of the woman, "In that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial?" It is well known that Jesus was called Christ from his being the Anointed of Jehovah. The holy oil with which he was to be anointed signifies the Divine love. "The Lord alone, as to his divine humanity, was the anointed of Jehovah; for in him, from conception, was the Divine good itself of the Divine love, and from that he made his humanity Divine truth itself when in the world; and, moreover, by union with his essential Divinity he made that also the Divine good of his Divine love." As Jesus was the anointed of Jehovah, so was he the anointed of heaven and the church. But the anointing by the church was only the reciprocation of his own gifts—the return of her love to him as the fountain as well as the object of her love. But this love was directed to the Lord in his humanity glorified; and as its glorification was about to be completed in his resurrection, therefore he said the woman had poured it on his body for his burial. To see this subject in its practical bearing, we must consider it in reference to the Lord's resurrection and glorification in ourselves. It is by love from his Divinity that his humanity can be glorified in us, and become the true object of our love and worship. That love is the precious ointment which the loving and grateful disciple pours upon his head, as a sign of the heart's acknowledgment of Jesus as the Author of the soul's salvation.

13. The Lord further declares to his disciples respecting the woman, *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.* Literally has this been fulfilled. And worthy

must the deed have been to obtain the promise of an imperishable fame. But there is a promise within this promise, whose memorial is not on earth, but in heaven; not without in the world, but within in the heart. The Lord's language seems to suggest another meaning. It is not the genius of his religion to promise temporal rewards for heavenly services. The record of the righteous is on high. According to the spiritual sense, the world signifies the world within—the human mind. Wheresoever here the gospel is preached, or the glad tidings of salvation are revealed and received—in a word, wherever the Lord's saving truth is accepted—there the good to which it leads is made known; but made known as a memorial, a lesson impressed upon the outer man, of an act that has been performed in the inner man, and which is prospective to its being realized in the outer man also.

14. It is remarkable that this touching act of love to the Saviour should be immediately followed by the traitorous act of him who originated the complaint against the waste of the ointment. The Lord had spoken of the woman having by anticipation embalmed his body for burial; and then, as if the mention of the subject had awakened a slumbering idea, *one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests.* Taking the character and the act of Judas as they are represented to us in the plain and unqualified language of Scripture, we cannot imagine any consummation of iniquity more complete than we find it in him. It is needless to enlarge upon this. Every one sees it. Judas has become a name to express the lowest depth of humanity; and his case affords, if not an example, at least a type of the extremity of human degradation and depravity which rendered the Lord's death at once inevitable and necessary; for the very evil which procured his death was that which his resurrection provided against. As the woman who poured the precious ointment on the Lord's head represented the Gentile church, which in her representative act gave a token that that church was about to receive the Lord from the dead, so Judas represented the Jewish church, which was about to betray and crucify him, killing the Just One, whom they professed to be longing and looking for as their deliverer. But Judas, besides representing the Jewish church, represented a possible character in the Christian church, and still more a principle or element in human nature in every age of the church. He represented the lowest, and now the most degraded, principle of human nature. He was in the last age of the world what the serpent was in the first—the betrayer of innocence, the bringer-in of death. But there was this overruled difference; the last death was the conquest

as well as the consummation of the first. By death Jesus overcame him who had the power of death, and opened again the way to the tree of life, which the fall of man had closed. Life and immortality, brought to light by the gospel, were realized in the resurrection. Thus did evil become the permitted means of working the overthrow of its own dominion. The principle in human nature which Judas represented is that which is called the sensual and corporeal, or what in the apostolic writings is called the carnal, which is in man's fallen state hostile to the spiritual. This principle is therefore in deadly opposition to the Lord in man; it is the Judas of the human heart, and is ever ready and seeks opportunity to betray him. But this carnal principle seeks to effect its purpose by leaguings itself with, or rather becoming the willing instrument of the powers and principles of the corrupt and perverted church, as Judas did by acting into the hands of the chief priests.

15. But while Judas offers his services to the enemies of Jesus, he does it for the sake of reward. He says to the chief priests, *What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?* It would appear from this and the subsequent part of Judas's history, that he was not actuated so much by hatred of Jesus as by the love of himself. He appears rather as one who has given himself so entirely up to that all-devouring avarice which is the root of all evil, as to be willing to sacrifice his best friend to gratify his ruling passion, which indicates a state still worse than that of a personal enemy. "What will ye give me?" is the question and the object. We might well ask how could this be possible in a disciple of Jesus, if we did not see and do the like. For what is the sacrifice of acknowledged religious principle to avarice and selfishness but a betraying the Lord afresh, and putting him to an open shame? But there is an avarice of another and still deadlier kind than the sordid love of money—the sordid love of knowledge. Knowledge is to man spiritually what money is to him naturally—the means of life. Truth and goodness are the principles of life; but if these are sold for knowledge, knowledge becomes the means of death instead of life. The price for which Judas sold the Lord, and for which the chief priests purchased him for his destruction, implies the little value which the Jewish church attached to his merit, and his redemption and salvation. *And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.* This number signifies somewhat little in respect to that of which it is predicated. In the parable of the sower, the seed sown in good ground brought forth some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold, thirty being the measure of the least productive. Judas

and the Jewish priests individually made no account of the Lord and his works ; but what they did represented what the people thought—the general estimation in which the Lord and his redemption were held. These thirty pieces of silver were the price at which the Saviour of the world was valued. Do we value him more ? If so, how much is his price ?

16. *And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.* The *state*, to which *time* corresponds, was the potential consummation of the Jewish church. In relation to individual life the state of mind which seeks opportunity to betray the truth and good, or to deliver them into the hands of their enemies, is one in which the proprium or selfhood is in intense activity, and tending to the ultimate destruction of the human principle.

17-30. We come now to a deeply important part of the gospel history—the account of the Lord's eating the passover with his disciples, and his instituting the sacrament of the Holy Supper. The institution of the new ordinance on the occasion of celebrating the old was most appropriate and significant. The Jewish passover had been instituted to foreshadow what the Christian supper was instituted to commemorate : or rather, the passover was instituted to commemorate the shadow, while the supper was instituted to commemorate the substance. The redemption of Israel from the bondage of Egypt was a type of the redemption of mankind from the bondage of hell. The paschal lamb, the sprinkling of whose blood upon the door-posts made the angel of death pass over the houses of Israel, was a type of the Lamb of God, whose blood cleanseth from all sin ; and the flesh of the paschal lamb, which the Israelites were to eat as the feast of their deliverance, was a type of the flesh of the Son of man, which he gives for the life of the world, as the food of the soul. We do not mean that the flesh and blood of the Lord's natural body possessed these virtues. His words were spirit and life ; and what is spiritually meant by the Lord's flesh and blood we shall see when we come to the institution of the Lord's Supper. It was well known by the apostles that the paschal lamb represented the Lord ; for Paul says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

17. *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover ?* The feast of passover was called sometimes the feast of unleavened bread, because bread unleavened was commanded to be eaten during its continuance. The feast lasted seven days. It commenced on the fourteenth day of the month Abib,

which was thenceforward to be the first month of the Israelitish year, and ended on the twenty-first (Exod. xii. 7). The year of which the month Abib was to be the beginning represented the year of the Lord's redemption, which commenced a new epoch in the spiritual history of the human race. "The passover represented the Lord's glorification, and thereby the conjunction of the Divine Being with mankind. And since the conjunction of the Lord with mankind is effected by love and charity, and by faith derived from them, these celestial and spiritual principles were represented by the unleavened bread which was to be eaten on the days of the Passover. Bread signifies in general all food, both celestial and spiritual; thus all celestial and spiritual things. That these should be free from all impurities was represented by unleavened bread; for leaven signifies evil and falsity, by which celestial and spiritual principles are rendered impure and profane. It was to prevent the defilement of these principles by anything profane that leaven was forbidden, under the penalty of being cut off from Israel; for they who profane what is celestial and spiritual must inevitably perish." The first day of unleavened bread was the first of the seven days during which the feast lasted. It therefore signified the beginning of a new state. In regard to the Lord himself, the new state, the beginning of which was represented by the feast of unleavened bread, was that full and final state of glorification which was completed by the passion of the cross. The Lord's glorification was a successive as well as a continuous work. It advanced by distinct as well as by continuous degrees: and the last was that upon which he was now about to enter. The Lord therefore said to his disciples, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you *before I suffer*" (Luke xxii. 15). The bitterness of his trials, temptations, and sufferings, which were to form his dark passage into transcendent glory, was significantly pointed to by the bitter herbs which were to be eaten with the paschal lamb. As with the Lord, so with the disciples who follow him in the regeneration. The Lord's disciples asked him, "Where wilt thou that we prepare?" The question here is one which every true disciple requires to ask. Place signifies state. The question involves the desire to know the *state* which enables the disciple to unite with the Lord in eating the Christian passover, and to be directed and led by him to its attainment. And this is essentially necessary when we consider that the question is, "Where wilt thou that we prepare for *thee* to eat the passover?" It is possible for the disciple to eat the passover without the Lord eating it with him, or the feast being his. Unless the

Lord is present, and eats with us, the feast is not his, and does not conjoin the soul with him.

18. To the disciples' question, "Where?" the Lord answers, *Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.* According to Luke xxii. 7, the disciples were not directed to the man of the house, but when they entered the city they were to meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, and to follow him into whatsoever house he entered. As the city, Jerusalem, in its genuine sense represented the doctrine of the church, a house in the city represented the good which all true doctrine contains. The disciples were to be led to the house in which the passover was to be celebrated, by following a man bearing a pitcher of water, to teach us, representatively, that if we follow where truth leads, we shall be introduced into a principle and state of goodness. Water being the symbol of truth, he who bears the pitcher of water is the type of one who is instructed in the truths of the church, and possessed of spiritual intelligence. Thus understood, we can see a reason for the Lord directing the disciples to the city, besides the miraculous character of the transaction, for all the Lord's miracles are instructive. When the disciples entered the house, they were directed to address the householder in these remarkable words, "The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." This is not the man whom Luke speaks of as guiding the disciples to the house, but him whom he calls the goodman of the house; he signifies, therefore, truth conjoined with good, or the understanding united to the will. What the Lord says to any one, spiritually means an inward perception or dictate from him of the truth expressed. The time of which our Lord speaks was not the time of eating the passover, but the time when he, as the true Paschal Lamb, was to be killed. The man probably understood not this saying; it was hid from the most privileged of the apostles. It was sufficient that his word had power, and that it has the power of spiritual instruction. Time, like place, is expressive of state, and the Lord's death was also his glorification. Near at hand signifies proximity of state. To see the force of this practically, we must consider it experimentally. The Lord's time is at hand with us when his glorification is about to be realized in our regeneration—when he is about to be born again from the dead in our hearts and lives. The consent as well as the perception of the understanding is meant by the disciples announcing this to the man of the house; its consent that the will be the receptacle of the Divine love, and be

conjoined, through love, with the Lord himself. Jesus does not, however, ask the man's permission, but simply expresses his will to occupy his house. The Lord does not overbear our freedom; but when we are disposed to be the Lord's, there is nothing more needed than to know his will, that we may do it. His will is expressed in his words, "I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." We have already remarked that the will is the place where the Lord dwells with man, and enters into conjunction with him; and this is expressed in the Lord's message to the householder to whom his messengers were led. In the house the Lord was to eat the passover with his disciples. The disciples represented all the principles of goodness and truth which constitute the Lord's kingdom in the human mind. To eat the passover with the disciples in the house, is to conjoin to himself, by his communication and their appropriation of good, all the principles of love and faith, when elevated into the human will.

19. *And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.* We are not informed here who these disciples were; but in Luke we learn they were Peter and John, who represent truth and goodness, or faith and love, and therefore stand for the disciples generally, for these are the general principles of which the others are the particulars. And these make ready the passover: they prepare the mind for the full reception of the Lord and heaven, and for the confirmation of the principles of his kingdom of love and peace in the heart.

20. The celebration of the passover, as the last meal which the Lord partook with his disciples before his death, comes now to be considered. *Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.* We have already spoken of the distinction between the passover and the Lord's Supper. In their spiritual import the passover treats of the Lord's work of redemption, and his supper of the work of salvation; or what is the same, the first treats of the work of reformation, the second of the work of regeneration. The one passes into the other, and in it finds its completion and fulness. We have therefore a deep and eternal interest in these two great representative feasts. And as the greater includes the less, we have in the Lord's Supper all that was contained in the passover. Indeed, that sacred ceremonial of the Christian church includes all that was represented in the entire circle of feasts and sacrifices which belonged to the Israelitish church, all these being embodied in the sacrament of the holy supper, as all the washings were embodied in the sacrament of baptism. Although,

therefore, the ritual law was abolished, yet an epitome of the rituals of the law was preserved, to form the ceremonial worship of the Christian church. The even, in the Scripture sense, was the beginning of the day, which consisted of "the evening and the morning." The even on which the Lord assembled with his disciples to keep the passover was the beginning of the new day, the day of salvation. To the Jewish church this even was the beginning of the night, for to it no morning ever dawned again. To the Lord it was the even of the night of his darkest and direst temptation, previous to the morning of his resurrection in transcendent glory.

21. In conformity with this, the first words that the Lord addressed to his disciples had immediate reference to this dark stage of his experience, and to the still darker part which one of their number was to act in regard to it. *And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.* We shall not now speak of the crime itself which the Lord declares one of his disciples would commit, but of the Lord's revealing this while they were eating the passover. As the even represented two opposite states, the feast represented two opposite things. It was eaten by the Israelites on that night when a complete and final separation was effected between them and the Egyptians, followed by a judgment which drowned their enemies in the Red Sea, and placed them in freedom on its opposite shore. A similar separation and judgment were signified by the passover which the Lord ate with his disciples. Judgment was about to pass on the Jewish church; the faithful and the unfaithful were about to be separated from each other—the former to be rejected and the latter saved. The unfaithful were represented by Judas, who, in the general sense, was a type of the Jewish church; and the faithful by the rest of the disciples. It was during the passover, therefore, that the character of Judas was developed, that his treason was foretold, and that the awful judgment of Divine Truth was pronounced upon him; and it was immediately after it that he went out and offered to the chief priests to deliver his Master into their hands. The subsequent history of Judas and the rest of the disciples further exemplifies their representative characters; for while the traitor, like the Egyptians, perished, the others, like the Israelites, passed through trials before they were established in righteousness. There was a peculiar propriety in the Lord being betrayed by one of his own disciples. The distinction between the true disciples and the false is, that the true are principled in faith grounded in charity, and the false are in faith without charity; and it is faith without charity that betrays the Lord.

22. When Jesus had declared that one of his disciples should betray him, *they were exceeding sorrowful*. Sorrow signifies temptation. The Lord is said to bear our sorrows, because he suffered temptations for our sake, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. This sorrow leads to self-examination. And, indeed, one of the uses of temptation is, that evils may be excited, and so discovered, that they may be put away. The form of the inquiry of the disciples is most instructive. They individually ask, not "Who is it?" but, "Is it I?" They *began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?* True self-examination is not a general but a particular search, and with the view of discovering the particular evil that tempts us to sin, and where it lies concealed. This is a discovery that cannot be made by the light of our own reason, but by the light that comes from above; the Lord alone can reveal the hidden evil to our minds. To him every one must look and say, "Lord, is it I?"

23. To their question the Lord did not give a direct reply. *And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.* The dish used at the passover is said to have contained a bitter sauce, in which the guests dipped their morsel before eating it. The bitter herbs used in this ritual signified, as we have seen, the bitterness of temptation. The word dip is derived from that which means to baptize, and baptism also includes the idea of temptation. The hand of Judas being with that of Jesus in the dish, tells us of the suffering which one was to inflict, and the other to endure, in the approaching day of trial. The hand is the symbol of power. The hand of Judas was the symbol of the power of hell itself,—for Satan had put it into his heart to betray him, and when he had taken the sop, Satan entered into him (John xiii. 27). The hand of Jesus was there to resist and to overcome that power; for his hand was the symbol of that power which he possessed as the Word made flesh. This mutual dipping in the dish, no doubt, implies also the familiarity of friendship, as expressed by David in Psalm xli. 9: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." Eating bread with one generally denotes communion with him by good. Of course, in the case of hypocrites, it can only denote simulated goodness and hollow profession. In regard to the Jews, whom Judas represented, their eating the Lord's bread denotes their possessing and reading the Word; other expressions of friendship, such as taking sweet counsel together, and walking to the house of God in company, being expressive of the delight which that church took in external knowledge

and worship, while at the same time they were in a state of inward rebellion against him, which showed itself in their cruel hostility to Jesus, whose destruction they breathed and finally effected.

24. The Lord continues. *The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.* It had been foretold that the Messiah would be cut off out of the land of the living (Dan. ix. 26; Isa. liii. 3). Although Divine wisdom and mercy brought an infinite good out of the Lord's death, it was no less criminal in those who compassed it. That wickedness recoiled upon the head of Judas, and upon the Jewish church, which Judas so fitly represented. But he also represented those by whom the truth is betrayed—those who know and profess themselves its disciples, and yet profane it by making it subservient to their own selfish and worldly purposes. They profane it to their own destruction. The "woe" of everlasting ruin hangs over them; and good would it have been for such if they had never been born. This does not signify natural but spiritual birth, for the real profaner is one who has been born from above, but has destroyed the life of heaven in himself. Good had it been for this man if he had never been born.

25. When the Lord had spoken these terrible words against him who was to be his betrayer, Judas *answered and said, Master, is it I?* It seems extraordinary that Judas should ask this question, knowing that it was his settled purpose to betray his Lord. He might have known that Jesus also knew what his intention was. Perhaps in this Judas affords an instance of the double mindedness of those he represents. All who are in truth, and yet in evil, know and do not know that the Lord sees them. They know, but do not believe; and therefore their knowledge has no influence on their lives, nor even on their inward thoughts. Yet it was necessary, spiritually, that Judas should ask the question, and that Jesus should answer it. Self-examination would be fruitless if it did not result in discovering where the evil lurks. And now that it was brought to light, the evil could be separated from the good. Although there is no record of it here, yet we learn from John xiii. 30, that, "having received the sop, he went immediately out" to execute his purpose. And as, in relation to man, Judas represented the corporeal principle of human nature, it is here we are to find the root of evil, especially of the cupidity which would sell the Saviour and salvation for a base and momentary gratification.

26. We now come to the institution of the holy supper. *And as*

they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. The holy supper, the most sacred solemnity of worship, was instituted as a perpetual remembrance of the Lord's mercy in our redemption, and as a representative and a means of his giving himself to his people for their regeneration and salvation. It was instituted instead of the passover. By the holy supper we are to understand the same thing as by the paschal supper, bread and wine being received in the one instead of the lamb and herbs of the other. In instituting the supper, the Lord called the bread his body and the wine his blood. But what are the body and blood of the Saviour? They cannot be material; and if they were, they could not be received by the soul, nor could they, if their reception were possible, support its spiritual life. Nor are the Lord's body and blood mere figures of speech. His humanity is no longer material, having been glorified and made divine. But it has in it divine principles corresponding to the flesh and blood of the material body which he had upon earth. These divine principles are goodness itself and truth itself. These constitute the very humanity of the Lord, the body and blood which the Christian can eat and drink, and without eating and drinking which he has no life in him. Of these divine principles in the Lord's humanity the bread and wine used in the holy supper are the symbols. As bread and wine nourish the body, divine goodness and truth nourish the soul. Bread signifies the same as flesh, or the body, and wine the same as blood. It was for this reason that the Lord used these, and appointed their use, as the elements of the holy supper. But what connection is there between the natural reception of bread and wine in the outward ordinance, and the spiritual reception of goodness and truth from the Lord in the inward operation of his Spirit? There is a connection by correspondence. By correspondence earth is connected with heaven, and natural things with spiritual, and men with angels, and the body with the soul, and all with the Lord. When we devoutly and intelligently partake of the holy supper, assuming that our devotion rests upon holiness, without which there can be no true worship, we come into more immediate connection with the Lord and heaven, and more perfectly into the capacity of receiving the divine and heavenly principles to which the bread and wine correspond. The external man comes also into more perfect correspondence with the internal; and in these circumstances, what affects the lower disposes it to receive corresponding impressions from the higher. Thus is the devout recipient of the holy supper brought into a state in which

the true bread, which cometh down from heaven, can enter into and strengthen his heart. From these general views let us turn to the divine narrative before us. When the Lord took the bread and blessed, he performed an act that signified, in respect to himself, the elevation of his humanity into union with his divinity, by which it was sanctified; and when he brake the bread, and gave it to the disciples, he performed acts which meant that his sanctified humanity is accommodated to the varying wants and capacities of his children, and imparted to them for their salvation. The Lord therefore said of the bread, "This is my body." The form of this divine sacrament thus represented both the ascent and descent of the Son of man—the glorification of the humanity, and its descent as the Holy Spirit into the minds of men. The Lord's body and the bread signify the humanity as to divine good, which is the principle received by the human will; and his asking the disciples to take and eat teaches what we have to do to realize the offered good. The Lord gave the bread to the disciples, but they had to take it. We have to co-operate with the Lord by freely and actively receiving what he freely gives. We have also to eat, to appropriate or make his good our own. As earthly food must be eaten, that it may enter into the body for its support, so must heavenly food be appropriated or made our own by use, that it may enter into the soul, and nourish it unto eternal life.

27, 28. When the Lord had given the bread, *he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* The same acts here have the same signification. We need only notice what in this is peculiar. Mention is here made of the Lord taking the cup, not the wine. It is true that the wine is understood. But the cup, as a vessel containing the wine, signifies the external, in which is the internal. In reference to the Lord, it implies that in the humanity the very recipient vessels of the truth were made divine; but in relation to the Word, it implies that the Lord never instructs his church and people by the internal sense immediately or alone, but gives them the spirit in and by the letter. As the Lord called the bread his flesh, so he calls the wine his blood. And although the wine is considered the symbol of his blood, yet both terms are symbolical, and each has a distinct though similar meaning. The wine is the symbol of spiritual truth, and the blood of celestial truth; and the same may be said of bread and body. And this duality is introduced, that the holy supper might represent the Lord's love to the whole human race, both celestial and spiritual, and

the reciprocal love of men towards him. The Lord therefore calls his blood "the blood of the new testament"—more correctly, of the new covenant. A testament is an instrument by which one bequeaths property to another; but a covenant is an agreement between two, implying conditions on both sides. This is the nature of the new covenant in the Lord's blood, or in his divine truth. That covenant differs from the old covenant in this: the old covenant was made by the law written on tables of stone, but the new covenant was written on the heart (Jer. xxxii. 33). The sacrament of the holy supper is therefore a covenant; for to those who receive it worthily it is a signing, sealing, and testifying that they are the children of God, and heirs of his kingdom. But the Lord speaks of his blood of the new covenant as being "shed for many for the remission of sins." The shedding of his blood upon the cross, as being the last of his sufferings, is put for the whole, and is an expressive and compendious phrase for all that he endured for his creatures' sakes. The Lord's sufferings were, in the first place, the means of overcoming the powers of darkness and perfecting his humanity; and, in the second place, are the means of perfecting his creatures, for he was tempted that he might succour them that are tempted. It is said that his blood cleanseth from all sin, and that the saints wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. vii. 14). This is figurative language. So far as it may be understood of the Lord's material blood, it cleanses by enabling us, through the Lord's sufferings and death, which are meant by the shedding of his blood, and the blood which he shed, to pass triumphantly through the sufferings of temptation and the death of sin, by which sin is removed or remitted. This is in agreement with what is said of those who had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that "these are they *that have come out of great tribulation.*" Tribulation was the means of their purification, and this effect of Christian tribulation is the result of the tribulation which the Saviour himself passed through. But the Lord's blood has a spiritual meaning. The blood of his material body was the symbol of the divine truth of his glorified body. This is the blood of the Son of man which the disciples must drink that they may live (John vi. 35), and which cleanses from all sin. This meaning of the Lord's blood does not invalidate the other. It is within it, and concordant with it. The shedding of his blood on the cross was the necessary precursor and means of shedding forth his Spirit on the day of Pentecost—as necessary as it was for him to suffer those things, and to enter into

his glory (Luke xxiv. 26). The regenerating spirit that the Lord then shed and now sheds forth is that of his humanity, and, as a regenerating spirit, did not actually exist till the Lord was glorified. This blood of the new covenant is said to be shed for *many*. Does this mean that he died for and redeemed a certain number of the human race? The universality of redemption is too distinctly declared in Scripture to admit of such an interpretation. "He tasted death for every man." The many for whom the Lord's blood is shed are those on whose hearts it is shed abroad; and this number is determined, not by a divine decree, but by human choice. The Lord foresees the number of those who will receive his truth, but he does not determine what that number shall be. God wills that all men should be saved; and if it depended only on his will, none would be lost. The Lord's will towards the whole human race may be expressed in his words to the disciples, "Drink ye all of it."

29. When the Lord had sent round the cup, he said, *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.* This was, literally, the last supper the Lord was to eat with his disciples upon earth; but the feast was to be renewed with them again in heaven. How beautiful the truth! how comforting the promise! The last supper on earth is the beginning of a perpetual feast in heaven. Yet this experience is not entirely limited to the other life. The Father's kingdom is not heaven only, but the church, and the man of the church in whom are the Lord's love and truth. In agreement with this the Lord speaks not of the cup, nor even of wine, but of the fruit of the vine; for wine signifies spiritual truth, and the fruit of the vine celestial truth; and the fruit of the vine is new when this new and higher state is attained; and this state and government of love is meant by his Father's kingdom.

30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.* What a hymn was that which the Lord of life and glory sung with his humble followers in the upper room in Jerusalem! Angels had sung at his birth, when they announced that event as tidings of great joy which should be to all people; and they no doubt now took up this song of completed redemption—for the Lord's supper celebrated by anticipation his finished work—a song that will never cease, but will for ever go on increasing in fervour and harmony on earth and in heaven. But what is expressed in the singing of this hymn? There are two elements in human language—sound and articulation. Sound is the expression of affection, articulation of

thought. In sacred songs both these elements are present; and the true hymn is "perfect music set to noble words." What a theme does redemption afford for this form of glorification!

What is the thought that we should utter with the fervour of holy affection in contemplating the Lord's divine work as celebrated by us in the sacrament? Is it not the Lord's marvellous love, in doing and suffering, to save us from sin and its miseries? Our song should be praise to him who has brought us up out of an horrible pit, and set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings, and put a new song in our mouth, even praise to our God. But to praise the Lord we must sing with melody in our hearts. There is the seat of true harmony, the music of the affections, which brings them into unison with those of angels. When the Lord and his disciples had sung a hymn, they went into the mount of Olives. This mount, above all others, was the symbol of divine and heavenly love. Thither the Lord went, and led his disciples, to teach us that he ascends with his redeemed into a state of holy love, when they have received into their hearts and understandings the living principles of his redeeming goodness and truth.

31. This love introduces the disciples into the mystery of the Lord's sufferings and death, and of their own as the result of his. *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night.* Startling announcement to those who had risen from a feast in which all their best affections towards the Lord had been brought out, and the happiness of communion with him had been highly exalted! But how tenderly does our Lord proceed to speak of this defection! It is the fulfilment of prophecy, and comes rather from the loss of their divine Pastor than from any disposition of their own to wander. *For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.* Truly, those who rightly trusted so much to the care of their Shepherd might be excused for being unable to endure the shock of his apprehension. Their conduct is a lesson to us. These are the types of trials which fall to the lot of all true disciples. We have repeatedly had occasion to remark that the history of the Lord's life in the world is spiritually the history of his life in us; for we are regenerated as he was glorified. In a general sense, indeed, the Lord's treatment by the Jews represented the manner in which the Jewish church had treated the Word, perverting and torturing it even to its entire destruction. But even this has its spiritual counterpart in each of us, our evil nature being still the origin of such rebellious passions as those which led the corrupt

descendants of Israel to the great evils they committed against the Incarnate Word. When the Lord said to his disciples, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night," he alluded to the night of deep temptation, when the powers of evil stir up the dark and corrupt passions of the human heart, and cause them to assault the very life of love and truth in the soul. The disciples are the affections of goodness and truth, in which the Lord dwells within us; and these are offended because of the Lord when the power of evil has a temporary ascendancy over the power of goodness. This is expressed in the language of correspondence when the Lord adds, "for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." The Lord is our Shepherd as to his divine love, and the sheep of his flock are the affections of charity. When love is smitten, the affections of charity, in which that love dwells, are scattered. When in the hour of temptation love to God seems to fail, the affections and perceptions of charity to man have for the time no central power to sustain and unite them, they are scattered abroad, severed at once from the Lord and from each other. Such is the effect of that temptation which the Lord foretold would befall his devoted disciples.

32. The trial of which the Lord warned his disciples extended over the whole of his subsequent sufferings, including his crucifixion. But he did not leave them without promise and without hope. He directed their minds to his resurrection. *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* This still is the promise and hope of the Christian disciple. "If we be dead with Christ, we shall also rise with him." To die with the Lord is to realize his death in ourselves. The disciples of the Lord died with him when they laid down their carnal views of him and of his kingdom, and they arose with him when they received spiritual views of him and his kingdom. So is it in every renewed heart and mind. But the Lord promised to his disciples that after he was risen he would go before them into Galilee. Smitten by the Jews, he was, as a shepherd, to go before his flock into Galilee, as a sign that his church was transferred to the Gentiles; and, in reference to the Christian disciple, that when the Lord has risen in the heart, he goes before, and leads the principles of goodness and truth out into the affections and perceptions of the natural mind, there to manifest himself; for when the natural mind is regenerated, the whole man is new.

33. When the Lord had told his disciples of their coming defection, *Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended.*

because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Self-confidence is the cause, and shows the need of trial. The Lord permits us to be tried, that we may see ourselves as we are, and be humbled by our experience. Before we are tried we cannot believe that our hearts contain evils so great as those of which experience makes us conscious. Peter therefore only expressed the common conviction of those in this condition of devoted and zealous but untried disciples, when he protested that though all men should be offended, he, at least, would not.

34. Our Lord repeated his prediction, but now addresses it, not to the disciples generally, but to Peter individually. *Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.* The others forsook the Lord. Peter denied him, not once only, but three times. The dawn, when the cock crows, is the commencement of a new state of light and love which follows the night of temptation. Thrice to deny the Lord implies complete denial. In regard to those who are being regenerated, Peter's sin represents the Christian's temptation, when, in the dark hour of trial, his faith in the Lord as his Saviour almost fails. But this prediction of our Lord, and Peter's denial, have reference to the state of the church, and extend beyond the Jewish to the Christian dispensation. Peter represented the principle of faith; and the night and the morning signified the end of the old church and the beginning of the new. Peter's denying the Lord in the night represented that at the end of the church faith would utterly fail, even to an entire denial of the Lord as the God of heaven and earth.

35. If the Lord was more emphatic in his second declaration of Peter's defection, that apostle was also more positive in his second promise of fidelity. *Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.* We know how this promise was fulfilled. Yet Peter and the others were no doubt sincere in making it. Their defection was without premeditation and malice. In this respect their conduct was entirely unlike that of Judas. Their failure was caused not by the strength of bad principles, but by the weakness of good ones. Their love for Jesus was sincere, but it was feeble, because it was as yet more natural than spiritual. They confided in their own strength, and the result convinced them of their own weakness. A most necessary and useful lesson does this teach us. To die with Jesus is to die to self and the world—voluntarily to crucify our entire evil nature. Before the sacrifice has been demanded of us we may sincerely think that nothing could induce us to shrink from it when the trial comes. This is not the weakness of

the Peters of the church only. All the disciples promised to die with the Lord rather than deny him. Yet it was just because they were unprepared to die with him that they forsook him and fled, and that he who had the greatest confidence in himself made the most signal failure. Naturally, it seems almost incredible that all the eleven, after being so distinctly and solemnly warned, should have so completely fulfilled the Lord's prediction and falsified their own promise. They seem even to have forgotten both promise and warning. It is when truth is in the memory only that it is most readily forgotten. Adversity and trial remove it from the mind's view. Only when it is rooted in the heart can it avail us in the hour of temptation. But in that dark hour, although the truth may vanish from the memory, if the good ground of faith is preserved, the truth will re-appear, and produce its fruits in repentance, when faith of the heart will succeed to faith of the understanding.

36. We now come to an event in the Lord's life of the most solemn importance. *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane.* Gethsemane is only exceeded by Calvary in awful solemnity and moral grandeur. The Lord's sufferings in the garden were mental—those on the cross were of the body also. Gethsemane signifies an "oilpress." No name could be more expressive of the conflict of which it was the scene, and is now the memorial. The olivepress, like the winepress, was the symbol of temptation. No more expressive symbolism is employed in the Word to describe the Lord's conflict with the powers of darkness, and his victories over them, than that in Isaiah. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come" (Isa. lxiii. 1-4). The olivepress only differs in its signification from the winepress in its being expressive of still deeper temptation. For while the vine, in relation to the Lord, signifies his divine truth, the olive signifies his divine love. Those, therefore, who are trodden in the olivepress are the powers of darkness who are more directly opposed to the Divine love, and who cause temptations of the most direful kind. Such was the

character of the temptation which the Lord endured in Gethsemane. Jesus coming to Gethsemane implies his entering into that state in which his love for the human race was to be opposed by the powers of darkness from their deepest hatred to mankind, hell bringing its greatest power to bear upon the Redeemer, to prevent, if possible, the completion of his divine work. When the Lord came unto the place, he *saieth unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.* Those who were desired to "sit here" were such of the disciples as represented the members of the Church who are not able to enter with the Lord into the interiors of that state to which such a temptation as he was now about to endure is incident. He desired them to *sit* where he left them—to remain steadfast in the state to which he had thus far mercifully conducted them. Some are able to go so far with him in his temptations; while others are able to follow him whithersoever he goeth. But while they patiently wait where they are desired to remain, the Lord is preparing a higher and more interior place for them; therefore Jesus, when he said to his disciples, "Sit ye here," added, "while I go and pray yonder." His prayer, like his temptation, had for its end their redemption and salvation.

37. But while the Lord desired certain of the disciples to remain where he appointed them, *he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee.* On important occasions the Lord selected these three disciples to be with him. One of these occasions was his transfiguration. As they were the chosen witnesses of his transcendent glory, so were they the selected spectators of his deep humiliation. The reason of this selection, we have seen (ch. xvii. 1), had a spiritual ground. Peter, James, and John represented the three great essentials of religion—faith, charity, and good works; and they were chosen to accompany the Lord on great occasions, to teach us representatively that those who have these essentials of religion enter with the Lord into the heights and depths of his experience; and that these principles in the individual mind are in more immediate connection with the Lord, and are the immediate recipients of his love and truth. In the presence of these three disciples Jesus *began to be sorrowful and very heavy.* The last and darkest cloud of temptation, which finally descended so low as to darken the earth at the crucifixion, began to gather around the Son of man. Hell, that had been moved to meet the Lord at his coming, was now moved to its lowest depths, to prevent, if possible, the completion of the Lord's redemption and glorification which drew nigh. As the lowest hell is opposed to the highest heaven, as the worst evil is opposed to the

greatest good, as the lowest affections of the natural mind are opposed to the highest affections of the spiritual mind, temptation, which consists in a conflict between those opposites, becomes more severe as the perfection of life increases. Lower states are opened, and lower evils are brought into activity, in the natural mind, as higher states are opened and become active in the spiritual; and as the opposition is greater, the conflict is more severe. As the Lord was truly man, his temptations were of the same nature, and were subject to the same law as those of any other human being. But as humanity in him was infinitely and for ever perfected, whereas in us perfection is finite and progressive to eternity, his trials were infinitely more severe than ours. The severity as well as the nature of this temptation is indicated by the terms in which its effects upon the Lord are described. The expression, "to be sorrowful," conveys, in the Greek, the idea of horror; and the word translated, "to be very heavy," implies the loss of pleasure derived from other objects. The horror which the Lord felt, like the horror of great darkness that fell upon Abraham (Gen. xvi. 12), is expressive of the effect of temptation produced by the interception of divine light, as it descends from the internal into the external of the mind; while heaviness is expressive of the deprivation of delight, such as men feel in deep sorrow, when the world appears to them a blank, because they have no pleasure therein. What must have been the sorrow and heaviness felt by the Lord, whose "delight was with the sons of men," as the objects of his redeeming love!

38. The temptation increases. *Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* The nature of the Lord's temptations may be understood, because in this respect they were like those of men; but their severity is above all human comprehension, for the love from which the Lord contended in his temptations was the love of the whole human race, which love in itself is divine. What must have been the anguish of the Lord when even the sense of death came over him! His was not the fear of bodily death; it was his soul that was exceeding sorrowful. But it may be inquired, How could the Lord's soul be sorrowful unto death, when his soul was the Divinity itself? The soul which was sorrowful was not, however, the soul or life which the Lord derived from the Father, but that which he inherited from the mother; it was the life of his external, not of his internal man. It was that of which the Lord spake when he said, "I lay down my life (or soul) for the sheep" (John x. 15: see ch. x. 39). We know that divinity can neither be

tempted, nor be sorrowful, nor die. That in the Lord which actually died, the life which he laid down, was the human principle and life which he inherited from the mother, and which was fallen and finite. But the sorrow which he experienced in temptation, like that which the regenerate man endures, did not originate in the maternal, but in the paternal soul—thus, not in the old man, but in the new; not in the body, but in the soul; not in the external man, but in the internal. The natural man knows no temptation, and therefore no sorrow of soul in resisting evil. The anguish of temptation is caused by the love from which we resist evil being assaulted, and by the fear of losing the object for which we contend. That from which a mere man resists temptation is the love of eternal life, the danger of losing which makes his soul sorrowful, and, in extreme temptation, sorrowful even unto death. But this sorrow does not really invade the soul, but is the sorrow which is of the soul in the body. Whatever is of God, and therefore whatever is truly good, shrinks from evil, as the apple of the eye. The soul does not suffer with the body, but when the body suffers the soul mourns. So with the internal and external man. Evil and temptation do neither of them penetrate into the internal, but the internal is in the external, as the soul is in the body; and the anguish and sorrow which temptation produces are the external feelings that proceed from internal principles. When the Lord's soul was thus sorrowful in an intensified degree, he said to the three, as he had said to the others, *tarry ye here, and*, he added, *watch with me*. Even these, the chosen three, were only able to see a certain amount of his sorrows. The disciples are to be with the Lord in his temptations, but there is a limit in their companionship with him in his tribulations beyond which the best and most perfected of them cannot go. "Sit here," and "tarry ye here," must ever be the law of progression in following the Lord in the regeneration. But the Lord said to his disciples, "Watch with me." To watch is to keep the understanding awake to the concerns of eternity, guarding against the dangers that threaten the soul. But there must be something special in watching with the Lord. "Watch with me." Watch while I watch; watch as I watch. The temptations that were then directed against him were directed also against his church; and as she participated in the danger, so ought she in the vigilance required to meet and avert it. But how are the disciples in our time to watch with him? The Lord still watches over us and in us. That his watchful Providence may turn aside the machinations of Satan, we must watch with him in his protecting and

saving work. We must watch with him, that he may guard us; as well as work with him, that he may bless us.

39. While the Lord desired his three disciples to tarry where they were, and watch with him, he himself went from them to pray. *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* We have already spoken of the Lord's deep temptation in Gethsemane; we will here direct our attention to some of the particulars respecting it. He "fell on his face." Prostration is the posture expressive of the deepest humiliation; and humiliation is a sense of our own nothingness and vileness in the presence of the All-perfect One. It is deep humiliation that empties man of himself, that he may be filled with all the fulness of God. In mere man this humiliation and its results are but imperfect in degree at best, and limited in extent. Jesus became perfect man; we can never be more than images of his perfection. His humiliation was as much deeper than ours as his exaltation was greater. The depth of his humiliation is expressed by his falling on his face, for the face signifies the interior of the mind. To fall down in worship expresses humiliation; to fall on the face, interior humiliation. "And prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." This cup was, no doubt, naturally the passion of the cross; but this, the cup of the Lord's sufferings, was not filled up by the apprehension of natural death, cruel as was its mode of infliction. Natural death was but the cup; spiritual death was the bitter draught which it contained, and which the Lord had to drain to the last drop. This spiritual death included in it all the evil of human suffering, especially the suffering of temptation; all the misery which the fall had introduced, and which then existed in the whole spiritual and in the natural world. The ground of all suffering the Lord took upon him, hereditarily, as the son of Mary; all hell pressed in upon him through that hereditary nature; all the power of hell he had to contend against; all in the humanity that formed the ground of infernal assault he had to die to; all this, in dying, he had to overcome. Such was the cup the Lord had before him when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Can we be surprised at the tenor of his prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He well knew, and had repeatedly told his disciples, that this last trial awaited him. He had looked forward to it and spoken of it with the calmness of perfect composure. Can we imagine that its near prospect now appalled him? We may freely admit that there was some

analogy between the Lord's experience and that of man, in the near prospect of a violent death. The virtuous and innocent look death in the face with serenity. What must have been our Lord's experience? The ground of his sorrow and of his serenity was far different from that of man. Human trial and sorrow, under the fear of spiritual death, can alone furnish a true image of our Lord's. But our Lord's fear was not for the loss of life to himself, but for the loss of the spiritual and eternal life of the whole human race,—fear lest the final cause of creation might be frustrated. This was the Lord's fear. It was the fear lest the humanity which he bore might prove too weak for this great trial. As he said to his disciples, so he felt: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." But the Lord was at this time suffering from temptation. And the climax of every severe temptation is despair—that is, despair of the end or object contended for. In temptation we have to resist self, and yet there is something of self in our resistance. We have to use God's communicated power as if it were our own, and there is something of our own in using it. Despair is the prostration of this power—the feeling that we have no power to resist, but that the opposing power is about to overwhelm us. This is the horror of great darkness that falls upon the soul, which quenches hope, and leaves us a prey to blank despair. Such was the state through which our Lord passed in Gethsemane, and in the extreme of which he was when he prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." There was, indeed, a reservation; his prayer was not absolute, but conditional. He only asked for exemption, if within the range of moral possibility. Had he asked for it absolutely he would have failed absolutely. We see here the weakness of the flesh, but the strength of the spirit. This is still further evinced in the Lord's words to the Father, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." We have the human will and the divine. There is a most important consideration here. The will of the humanity shrunk from the last trial, and at the same time submitted itself entirely to the supreme will of the Divinity. But it was not the same element in the will. In the Lord were the human and the divine; but in the human itself there were the flesh and the spirit—the external and the internal. The spirit in itself was willing, but the weakness of the flesh re-acted against the spirit, and for the time overshadowed it; but still the spirit was there, moderating and controlling, distinguishing between the desirable and the possible, between the will of the human and the will of the Divine. Many of our Lord's sayings have come to be the universal language of Christian wisdom and experience.

This is one of them, and one of the most expressive, because all who know what spiritual trial is, feel it to be the very language of their state and their duty. "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," is expressive at once of the weakness of the flesh and the strength of the spirit—of the strong disposition to rebel, but the still stronger desire to submit to the will of him whose will ought to be supreme in all things.

40. When he had finished this prayer, *he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?* It is remarkable that both on the occasion of his transfiguration (Luke ix. 32), and on that of his great temptation, his disciples should have fallen asleep. They could not have been indifferent to the grandeur of the one and the solemnity of the other. The sleep was evidently supernatural. It was caused by the Lord's divine sphere then acting immediately and powerfully upon them, and which, after the Lord's glorification, caused John to fall down at his feet as dead. While this sleep of the disciples had a supernatural cause, it had a spiritual signification. Sleep, as opposed to wakefulness, signifies a natural state of life as opposed to a spiritual state. The disciples being drowsy and asleep while the Lord was in states of wakefulness, implies that they were yet too external to be able to enter into those interior states in which the Lord then was. The Lord desires, indeed, that his disciples should be as their Master, even in his highest and deepest states of experience, and therefore he says unto them, "Watch with me." And when he comes unto them and finds them asleep, and administers a gentle reproof, it is to express the desire of his love that they should be in a state of conscious and active co-operation with him, all whose works are for their salvation. This gentle and affectionate reproof is addressed immediately to Peter, implying that when faith is as yet natural, the mind is incapable of that sustained wakefulness and watchfulness which keeps the disciple in the Lord. And furthermore, Jesus asks Peter if he could not watch with him one hour. Time is the symbol of state, and the hour of the Lord's sufferings was the state itself of his watchfulness, lest he should yield in his awful temptation.

41. The Lord exhorts the disciples, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* If the disciple cannot watch with the Lord, he is exhorted to follow him—to watch with the understanding, and pray with the heart—and to do this, that he enter not into temptation. It is the duty of the disciple to watch and pray against being tempted. Temptation is indeed necessary, and therefore unavoidable; but it is

equally necessary for us to have a salutary fear of a state of trial, which is attended with danger, and which is never so dangerous as when we brave or despise it. Let him who thinks he standeth take heed lest he fall. The reason of this danger, and of the necessity of watchfulness and prayer against it, our Lord explains. *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* The weakness of the flesh is the ground of danger and of apprehension. The flesh is another and expressive name for the whole natural mind, with all its natural affections and appetites; and this mind is weak because the natural affections and appetites are of the earth, earthly. The spirit is the spiritual mind, consisting of all the new affections born of the spirit, This in its own nature is willing to do and submit to the Lord's will. but frail and deceitful nature is ever inclined to yield to the solicitations of the world and self.

42-44. *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.* The Lord, we find, goes away and prays "the same words" the second and the third time, returning after each to the disciples again. This iteration of the prayer implies, no doubt, as many distinct trials or temptations; yet there is more than the fact involved in the number of his conflicts. The number three signifies what is full, and what is progressive to the end of a complete state. These three acts of temptation, like the three temptations in the wilderness, represented the fulness of temptation, and the fulness of perfection resulting from his overcoming the tempter, and also the Lord's endurance unto the end, by which redemption was accomplished, and his humanity fully glorified. There is another truth represented in this. The kingdom of darkness, which the Lord overcame in temptation, is a triple kingdom. Hell descends, as heaven ascends, by three distinct degrees. The Lord overcame the whole kingdom of darkness, but he did so progressively by three distinct series of temptations. These were his three temptations. And as he thus successively overcame hell, he successively opened heaven. While, therefore, the Lord went away three times into the depth of the garden to pray, he returned three times to the disciples, who represented the church and heaven; for as far as the Lord shuts hell, he opens heaven. And so does he in each of us. As he by regeneration overcomes the evil in the outer man, who is an image of hell, so he opens the inner man, who is an image of heaven.

45. When the Lord had prayed for the third time, *Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest.* In Luke (xxii. 46) this is expressed interrogatively, "Why sleep ye?" and some are of opinion that this is its meaning here. As the evangelists wrote by Divine inspiration for different states of the church and of men, and for different steps of the regenerate life, such differences, if they exist, do not involve any internal discordance. Our Lord says, *behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* The betrayal of the Son of man into the hands of sinners was a sign of the profanation of the Lord's divine truth by the Jewish church. The Lord calls himself the Son of man when he is treated of as the Truth or the Word. The Jews treated him as they had treated his Word. The hour which was at hand was the hour, the state, of the church's consummation, when it was about to fill up the measure of its iniquity—when hypocrisy was the instrument of violence.

46. The Lord now says to his disciples, *Rise, let us be going.* Their sleep represented an external and obscure state; so now he bids them rise, which always expresses spiritual elevation—rising out of sin and darkness. The present is like the exhortation of the apostle: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life." Rising signifies especially elevation of the affections of the heart; not elevation of feeling, but elevation from a lower into a higher state of goodness. Hence the Lord further says, "Let us be going;" for to go is spiritually to live, and, in this instance, to live a life of goodness—to act from that state of the love of goodness into which the disciples had risen. How necessary is this exhortation when danger is near, as it was when our Lord added, *behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.* The betrayer is in the corrupt heart of each of us: how necessary is it, then, that the good and the faith that the Lord has implanted in our minds should rise out of sleep, and go forth into action, to form a countervailing force against the debased selfhood in the hour of trial.

47. *And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.* Judas is here introduced as one of the twelve. The twelve apostles represented the church, and, abstractly, all the principles that constitute the church in man. Collectively, they thus represented the Lord's mystical body, which in some measure and degree they formed. But the Lord's mystical body is an image of his own body. The Lord's temptations and sufferings

had also their analogies, or images, in those of his disciples. In the Lord's humanity there was that which in prophecy is called the "heel"—the lowest and most vulnerable part, which the serpent was to bruise. Judas, as one of the twelve, was the heel which Satan was to bruise among the disciples and in the infant church. Judas represented the corporeal principle in man and in the Lord's mystical body; and the *heel*, which the serpent bruised, represented the same principle in the Lord's own body. This was the reason that Judas was chosen an apostle, and why he betrayed the Lord. The bruising of the Lord's heel, or the corporeal principle of his humanity, was the extreme of his temptations, and had its cause in the perverted state of the corporeal principle of fallen human nature. Therefore Judas, who represented that principle, committed the crime of betraying the Lord. It is through the corporeal principle in us that the Lord is still betrayed, or that we are tempted to betray him. It is therefore written in Psalm xli., "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." But we have also said that Judas represented the Jewish church, because the church had become corporeal or carnal; and indeed the corporeal in the Jewish church, in the infant Christian church, and in individual man, and in the Lord himself, was simultaneously acted upon when redemption was being effected. The great multitude with swords and staves who came with Judas from the chief priests and elders of the people, represented the numerous affections and thoughts that originated in the ruling principles—the loves of self and the world—which the chief priests and elders represented; the swords and staves signifying the falsities and evils which were used as instruments of offence against him who was truth and goodness itself.

48, 49. Judas, in acting the part of a treacherous enemy, assumed the character of a loving friend. *Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.* Kissing signifies conjunction by love. Hence it is said in Psalm ii., "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way." That of Judas was a treacherous kiss, a feigned affection. The kiss of Judas has come to be an expression for the greatest of all hypocrisies—the betrayal of innocence by simulated love. It is Satan as an angel of light seeking to compass hellish ends by heavenly means. His kiss was to be a sign to those who accompanied him. This was indeed a sign that all virtue was consummated—that falsehood imprinted its deceitful and polluted kiss upon the lips of truth, that death might

seal them for ever in silence. Such was the object of those who were concerned intentionally in this diabolical plot to destroy him who was truly, as he had declared himself, the light of the world, to quench that light lest their deeds should be reprov'd. The kiss of Judas was indeed a sign of the seeming veneration for the Divine name, and reverence for his Word, that prevailed in the Jewish church, but under which there was the most malignant hatred of the Divine will and the principles of eternal truth. It was a sign of the ceremonial homage the priesthood paid to the letter of the law while they violated its spirit, leading the people by that very simulation to violate the law, as the multitude laid hands upon Jesus.

50. When Judas had kissed him, *Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?* There are two different words which our translators have rendered *friend*—one implying affection and regard, the other not. One is properly rendered friend, the other expresses more nearly what we mean by companion. It is this less endearing word which is given to Judas in this place. A friend, spiritually, is one who is in the good of charity and in the truth of faith; a companion is one who is in the truth of faith, but not in the good of charity. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Judas and those whom he represents are so far in the truths of faith as to know the Lord, but they use their knowledge to betray him. It is only those who know him that can act so directly and cruelly against him. But Jesus demanded of Judas, "Wherefore art thou come?" This searching question, which should lead us to reflect on the motives of our acts, does not seem to have received any answer but this, *Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.* The Jews had often attempted to lay hands on Jesus and take him. It was only now that they succeeded, and in this instance, it would seem, only through the treachery of one of his own disciples. It is not by hatred, but by simulated love—not by opposition, but by treachery—that the Son of man is delivered into the hands of sinners, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified. This was the first act of that crime which the Jews had long meditated, and were now about to complete, in the death of Jesus.

51. When the disciples saw what was done, *one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.* This one was Peter (John xviii. 10). It might seem that the apostle who represented the grace of faith was here acting the part of one of the faithful, and used the sword of truth in defence of the Truth itself.

But here Peter practically showed his offence at the cross of Christ. His sword was employed to defeat the permitted means of his Master's glorification. And the sword of truth used falsely is turned into what is false. Peter did not indeed intend evil, but he acted from intemperate zeal undirected by knowledge; and such zeal, however well-intentioned, is often evil in its results. Such was Peter's. Jesus submitted to the high priest's authority, and his disciples should not with carnal weapons have opposed that of his servant. To show that he did not wish to be defended by such weapons, the Lord healed the servant whose ear Peter had cut off (Luke xxii. 51). But the cutting off of Malchus' ear has a spiritual meaning. The ear is a symbol of perception, and of hearkening and obedience, the right ear signifying the perception of truth from goodness. When the high priest was consecrated, the blood of the sacrifice was put upon his right ear (Exod. xxix. 20), as a sign that the perceptive faculty should be consecrated to the hearing and obeying of the Word of God. The cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant was a sign that in these last days of the church the perceptive faculty was destroyed, and with it all spiritual hearing and obedience. The prophet Ezekiel, treating of the corrupt church under the figure of a lewd woman, says to her of her lovers, "they shall take away thy nose and thine ears" (ch. xxiii. 25), meaning that her impure loves would deprive her of the perception of goodness and truth.

52. *Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place.* The place of the sword is its scabbard; and a scabbard, like a quiver, signifies doctrine, where truth should be put up when it has been used in opposing the purpose of divine mercy, for there it is in safety, and thence only should it be drawn forth to fight against the enemies of our own hearts. This, it would seem, was the first and the last time that the sword was employed by the immediate disciples of the Lord in the cause of the gospel; and, as in every other subsequent instance, it was used against the will of its divine Author. In all cases where faith draws the sword to defend the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ, his command is, "Put up thy sword into his place." And this duty is enforced by a reason which ought to be a warning. *For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* Christianity perishes by the carnal sword that is used in its cause. But, spiritually, all who, by a false application of truth, obstruct the progress of regeneration by refusing to submit to the trials which lead to it, which is to refuse life by refusing the conditions on which its allotment depends, shall perish.

53. Had the Lord seen good to defeat the object of his enemies, he could have overwhelmed them by a display of his own divine power. *Thinkest thou*, he said in rebuking Peter, *that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?* Twelve legions means the whole angelic host; more than this is omnipotence. The Lord speaks of obtaining this power by praying to his Father. The divinity within him was the Father; and had his divine power been exerted against his enemies, they would have been consumed like stubble.

54. *But how then*, as our Lord continues, *shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* Peter knew not yet of this great mystery. But our Lord, in addressing these words to that zealous disciple, speaks to his disciples in all future ages who, in similar circumstances, act from zeal without knowledge. The disciples remained, even after the Lord's crucifixion, in ignorance of what the Word taught on the subject; and one of his first acts after his resurrection was to teach them that "it behoved Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory;" and to expound to them "in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke xxiv. 26). Such, no doubt, will ever be the disciples' experience. The Scripture abundantly teaches us that the way to glory is through suffering; but our human nature desires to have the end without this painful means. "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

55. From calmly commanding and reasoning with his disciple on the subject of his death, the Lord turns with equal calmness to the multitude, and says to them, *Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.* They treated as a thief or a robber him who had come to restore that which he took not away (Ps. lxix. 4). They laid no hold on him in the temple, but sent to seize him in the garden. The temple was the seat of his power, and Gethsemane was the place of theirs. By the mere show of his power he had expelled the whole throng of sacrilegious traders from his Father's house. He who spake as never man spake, when he taught in the temple, must have unnerved and disarmed his enemies. The temple was the consecrated symbol of his humanity; and, considered in relation to the world without, was the type of his humanity, where his divinity more immediately dwelt. On the other hand, the wilderness and Gethsemane represented his humanity as to its exterior part, where infirmity resided and where temptation had place. In Luke's account of this event the Lord adds, "This is your hour, and

the power of darkness." And Gethsemane was the place, as the night was the hour; for both the time and the place were the suitable representatives of the state in which the powers of the world and of hell had the temporary ascendancy which the end required, and which the Lord therefore permitted.

56. *But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.* Of course, the prophecies were made for the event, not the event for the prophecies. In the Lord's case every prophecy was accomplished, every promise was performed. In a more comprehensive view, all that took place in the Lord's history, as the means of his glorification, was written in the Word in its inmost sense; and all that takes place in the regeneration of man is written in the Word in its spiritual sense. Even the temptations of the Lord are described most minutely there; so that all which the Jews did to secure his death, partially revealed in the letter, is fully unfolded in the spirit. The fact of the disciples forsaking him in his hour of trial had been predicted in the prophets; for Zechariah (xiii. 7) had written, as our Lord had already declared, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad." The Jews were against him. *Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.* Spiritually, good and truth in the Lord and his Word received no support from the goods and truths of the church. Not that the church can add anything to the Lord's power, for the church derives all her power from him. When temptation is extreme, the internal and the external appear to be separated, as the Lord and his disciples were in his last and severest trial. This separation has place both as to will and understanding, or as to goodness and truth, as it is said of the disciples that they forsook him, and fled.

57. *And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.* He who was the supreme good and truth was brought to be judged by the deepest evil and falsity. The Sanhedrim, or supreme council of the Jewish church, represented the ruling evils and falsities by which the Lord as the Divine truth was opposed, and they represented these principles as they existed in the church. The Lord's being led away to Caiaphas and the scribes and elders, is spiritually descriptive of the Lord's divine truth being brought under the power and dominion of the evil and false principles that ruled in the church, by which the whole Word was perverted and profaned.

58. Although, when the Lord was rudely seized by the multitude, the disciples had forsaken him and fled, yet, when he was led away, *Peter*

followed him afar off, indicating that the young church, though too unstable to adhere to the Lord in his trial, was yet remotely connected with him by faith; and so, in the interior sense, is the external with the internal in states of temptation. Peter even went *unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end*. The servant of Jesus and the servants of the high priest are seated together, the concealed friend with the open enemies. So strikingly is exemplified the character of the disciples, and the nature of the principles they represented. Truth and falsity are together in the external church and in the external man, but they are there not openly as opposites, but seemingly as associates. Peter only desires to see the end. His is the faith that looks forward to the end, but shrinks from the trial that leads to it. The trial now commences.

59. *Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death*. To bear false witness, in the spiritual sense, is to declare, and try to persuade others, that what is false is true, and what is true is false; and also, that what is good is evil, and what is evil is good; and, in the highest sense, to blaspheme the Lord and his Word. The object of the council in seeking false witness against Jesus was to put him to death. And as all that the Jewish rulers and people did to the Lord represented how the church had come to treat the Word, their long-cherished purpose, now sought to be effected, of putting him to death, represented that last act of a corrupt church—the falsification of truth, and the consequent blaspheming of the Lord and his Word.

60, 61. But although they sought false witness against Jesus, they *found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none*. *At the last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days*. It was a law of Moses that, "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death" (Deut. xvii. 6). This law was enacted to teach us that no one is condemned to spiritual death for evil in one faculty only—in the will, or the understanding, or in the life—but that two or three of these must unite their testimony against any one to make him worthy of death. The *two* witnesses required are the will and the understanding, or evil and falsity. As the union of good and truth makes heaven, the union of their opposites makes hell. It was not possible to procure more than *two* false witnesses against the Lord. They accused him of saying,

"I am able to destroy the temple." In this they accused him falsely, his words being, "Destroy (*you*) this temple, and in three days *I* will raise it up." Their testimony was a perversion of his words, and represented falsification of his divine truth. Falsification of truth consists in putting a false construction on the declarations of the Word, so as to make them teach error instead of truth.

62. The high priest considered this accusation a sufficient charge against Jesus. *And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?* It may be assumed that the high priest had waited a sufficient time to allow Jesus to speak, and at last demanded of him why he did not answer the accusation. The council had procured the false witnesses, and yet the high priest appeals to Jesus, as if he wished to give him an opportunity of vindicating himself. So those who in their own hearts have negated the truth, even after they have made a foregone conclusion against it, profess to be willing to allow the Word to speak for itself.

63, 64. *But Jesus held his peace.* Why was this? It may seem as if the Lord encouraged the lie by saying nothing against it. This could not be his intention. We may presume that he held his peace because he knew that his assertion would go for nothing. But there is a deeper reason for his silence than this. The Lord, as the incarnate Word, did as his written Word does. The Word does not answer idle and insincere questions. It does not vindicate its own truth to those who have determined that its testimony shall not produce conviction. Even in respect to these, the letter of the Word is a sword that turns every way, to guard the way of the tree of life. Truths that could not be perverted would be blasphemed, and would increase men's condemnation. Therefore the Word, in certain appeals to it, is silent. To sinister interrogations it gives no answer. Therefore it was that the Word made flesh was dumb before his unjust judges and false accusers. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Isa. liii. 7). But even to the appeal of the high priest Jesus made no answer. "Jesus held his peace." *And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said.* Why did the Lord now answer this question? It was because he was not now asked to admit or deny a false accusation, but to admit or deny a great truth—to confess whether he was the Christ or no. The Word, too, declares its own eternal and immutable truth, and the divinity of

its origin, as Jesus acknowledged himself to be the Christ, the Son of God. But the Lord added, *Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* "Nevertheless" should rather be "moreover, besides." "Not only do I confess myself the Christ, but I tell you that the day is coming when *you* yourself will be compelled to confess it also, when he who now appears before you in human weakness will be revealed to you in divine power." The event to which our Lord here refers in the general sense is his second coming; and at his second advent, it is said, "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." This advent of the Lord was a coming to judgment, not, indeed, in the natural, but in the spiritual world, at the end of the church; and when he would be manifested to the evil and the good. Regarded as a universal truth addressed to the high priest, and through him to all who belong to the church, these words of our Lord have an important meaning. We have already explained this imagery as it occurs in chap. xxiv., where it is shown that the Lord's coming in the clouds signifies a revealing of himself in his Word, even in the very letter. There are two additional particulars which our Lord here introduces. His sitting at the right hand of power means that his humanity was about to be made divine, and thus become omnipotent for the salvation of men; and his coming in the clouds of heaven means that he was about to open his Divine Word, and give men a clearer revelation of himself as their Saviour. The point here emphatic is, that even the evil would *see* him thus exalted and revealed. By this is meant that after his coming they should manifestly *see* the predictions concerning him in the prophetic parts of the Word which they had not seen before; and that they should see them still more manifestly at the time of his second coming, when the spiritual sense of the Word should be revealed.

65. When the Lord had made this acknowledgment and declaration, *the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.* Rending the clothes signifies mourning on account of the destruction of truth; the high priest therefore rending his clothes, and saying that the Lord blasphemed because he confessed he was the Christ, the Son of God, signified that he believed no otherwise than that the Lord spake against the Word, and thus against truth divine. The conduct of the high priest shows that those who in heart deny the divinity of the Lord and of his Word find a confirmation of their denial in the testimony of the Word itself.

66. The high priest then appealed to the council for their judgment. *What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.* This is like the will appealing to the understanding, not for counsel but for confirmation. This act of the Jewish Sanhedrim was the intellectual consummation of the deed which they had long meditated, and used every means to effect. In that judgment was involved the denial of all that is divine in the Word, and the consequent consummation of the church amongst them. It was they who were guilty of blasphemy; and this crime is still further manifest in their dreadful treatment of the Lord after they had pronounced this iniquitous sentence.

67. *Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands.* By this was represented and signified that the Jewish nation was merely external, for all things mentioned in the Word relating to the Lord's passion represent and signify arcana of heaven and of the church, and specifically of what quality the Jews were in relation to the Word, to the church, and to worship. The Jews showed great moral depravity in opposing themselves to one who uttered such wisdom and performed such beneficent works as Jesus did; but when the highest amongst them offered such indignities as these to a pure and holy being, what must have been their blindness and hardness of heart! Such deeds are true symbols of the spiritual evils which their acts represented. For by spitting in his face is signified the deepest contempt for, and opposition to, his divine truth; and by buffeting him is signified the deepest hatred of, and opposition to, his divine goodness; while their striking him with their hands and with rods signifies still further and fuller violation and rejection of his love and truth. The three acts of violence offered to the Lord express the entire rejection of him and of his Word from the will, the understanding, and the life.

68. Those who struck him demanded of him, *saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?* Luke (xxii. 64) records that they had blindfolded him, which is, indeed, necessary to be understood to see the force of the demand to prophesy or tell who smote him. Alas! how many besides the Jews have committed this cruel mockery! Mockers and unbelievers, like the Jews, first put out the eyes of the truth, and then demand of it to prophesy who smote it. The demand, in these instances, is made in the belief that it cannot be complied with. And in this case, too, the Lord permits the wicked to remain in the conviction that they have demanded an impossible act. Jesus knew, but did not prophesy, who smote him. He held his peace. They remained in their infidelity. Had he spoken,

he would only have added to their condemnation. So does the Lord through his Word. He refuses to prophesy when men have closed their ears against the truth.

69-74. From the trial of Jesus before the Jewish council, the evangelist turns to the trial of Peter's faith. *Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.* The apostle had witnessed the trial, listened to the false witnesses, heard the judgment, and beheld the indignities heaped upon his innocent and beneficent Master. He could not have remained unmoved. It is only surprising that his impetuous temper and generous nature did not break forth in some passionate demonstration in favour of his beloved Lord. But ready as he had been to defend his Master with his sword, he was now as ready to deny him with his tongue. How striking and instructive is the contrast between the disciple and his Lord! Jesus, forsaken by those whom he called his friends, and unjustly condemned and cruelly treated by his enemies, betrays no sign either of fear or resentment; while Peter, with his Master's exalted example before him, shrinks from the slightest glance of recognition, terrified at the thought of being known as one of his disciples. But while we make these reflections for the purpose of learning of the Lord as our example, we must not, in judging of Peter's conduct, overlook the fact that this was their hour, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). That the power of the world and of hell, acting upon Jesus in every possible way, did not move him from his sublime integrity, is only to be accounted for on the principle that in him humanity was exhibited in its highest moral perfection. These events have, however, a spiritual signification. Peter's confident perjury is a symbol of the character of faith when it is alone, even with the example of the Lord before the eyes of the believer. Peter's conduct represents the character of faith at the end of the church. In this application, his thrice denying the Lord represented the practical and plenary denial which lies concealed in faith alone, which is the last form that religion assumes in a declining or expiring church. The cock-crowing is the end of the old church and the beginning of

the new, when men are restored to faith by repentance, and turn to the Lord with a pure heart.

But this subject has relation to ourselves while the church is being formed in us. The facts relating to Peter describe the crisis in our spiritual life, when the old man and his natural faith die, and the new man and his spiritual faith begin truly to live. In the three different yet similar circumstances we see the trial of faith in the will, the understanding, and the life. In the first instance, Peter is found sitting in the palace of the high priest; but in the second he is found standing in the porch. These describe states of the will and of the understanding. Considered in relation to a house, a palace is emblematical of the understanding; but considered in relation to a porch, it is emblematical of the will. The will is as a palace, where the ruling love, like the high priest, has its residence; but the understanding is a porch which leads into it. The will is within; the understanding is without. Again, sitting is expressive of a state of the will; while standing is expressive of a state of the understanding. Peter being accused, first in the palace and then in the porch, implies temptation, first in the will and then in the understanding. He was accused by damsels, who represent affections, the first damsel denoting an affection of the will, and the second an affection of the understanding; and Peter's being accused by them, signifies that the temptations which those of Peter represented originated in such affections in the mind itself. But a third accusation was preferred against Peter by the persons generally around him, "they that stood by," and these represented all the affections and thoughts of the natural mind; and their accusation is expressive of temptation that has reference to the outward life. In the first of these instances, too, the Lord is called Jesus of Galilee; and in the second, Jesus of Nazareth. Galilee is a province, Nazareth is a city—pointing again to the Lord's love in the will, and his truth in the understanding. Jesus is not named in the third instance, but Peter is simply accused of being one of them—one of those who formed the brotherhood of which Jesus was the head; or what these men would regard as a band of religious agitators and disturbers of the peace. This, too, is expressive of that general and more indiscriminate assemblage of thoughts and feelings that pertain to the natural mind and to the outward life. Peter's denial becomes more vehement as the accusation proceeds. First he simply denies; then he denies with an oath; and at length he curses and swears. Simple denial belongs to the will, with which everything is yea and nay; the understanding confirms with an oath, for an oath signifies confirma-

tion ; but denial with cursing and swearing is not of reason, but of passion. It does not follow that the Christian disciple, like Peter, gives way in temptation so far as to be guilty of actually denying the Lord, or his good and truth. Peter's sin, like the sins of other Scripture characters, represented the sins to which the Christian disciple is tempted. In his fall we are admitted to a view of our own tendency to fall, and are taught how impossible it would be for us to stand, were it not that the Lord was tempted in order to aid us in temptation. Peter's temptations were comparatively external, because he was as yet a comparatively external man. His was as yet chiefly a personal attachment and devotion to the Lord ; he loved him as the restorer of the temporal kingdom to Israel, and the Lord's apprehension threatened the entire overthrow of this object of hope and ambition. The Christian disciple shares, indeed, in Peter's natural views and desires, but they are directed to a spiritual and eternal kingdom ; and therefore eternal life and glory are the objects of his aspirations and of his temptation-conflicts. When Peter had uttered for the third time his denial of the Lord, *immediately the cock crew.*

75. The words of the Saviour rushed into his mind and pierced his heart. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.* This touching incident reveals something truly child-like in the character of this strong-minded apostle. The sudden recollection, the poignant remorse, the passionate contrition, and, indeed, his previous forgetfulness and denial, are much more like those of a child than of a man. During the long and sad hours he waited in the palace, both his memory and his conscience seem to have been asleep ; and not until startled by the cock's shrill clarion does he seem to have had any distinct impression of his sinfulness. This is accountable only on the principle that both he and the new church, of which he was the first-fruits, were then in the infancy of their spiritual life. As representative of the states of the church, it is equally striking and instructive. The crowing of the cock was the announcement that the night was past, and that the day had dawned. The oblivion of the truth in Peter's mind was the moral darkness which had closed upon the church, and his returning consciousness was the effect of a new light that broke in upon his soul. And in the life of the Christian disciple analogous states are experienced. When the night of temptation spreads its pall over the soul, so that no ray of light can enter to guide and cheer the mind, prophecy, and promise, and hope fail, and extremity induces despair. But the ending of

the night is the dawning of the day. The influence of the morning is felt even before light is visible, and produces convictions and change in correspondence with itself. When Peter remembered the words of the Lord, "he went out, and wept bitterly." He went out from the palace of the high priest—from the scene and state of his temptation, which is a state of constraint, into a state of liberty. He wept bitterly. Bitter are the tears of repentance for presumptuous sins. Weeping, as distinguished from shedding tears, we have had occasion to remark, signifies the deepest degree of sorrow for sin—that which flows at once from the heart and the understanding, which expresses at once a sense of the natural contrariety of our hearts to the Lord's love, and of our understandings to his truth. When the soul not only weeps, but weeps bitterly, it is a sign that a deep ground of evil has taken away all the delights of life. But the more bitter the tears of repentance, the sweeter the delight of the regenerated life, and the more settled the peace that succeeds conflict.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. The day whose dawn brought repentance to Peter found the Jewish rulers impenitent and unbelieving, and still plotting how they might become murderers of the Just One. *When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.* The chief priests are evils of the will, and the elders of the people are evils of the understanding; and their taking counsel together is their combining to procure the destruction of heavenly goodness in the person of Jesus.

2. *And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.* We bind Jesus when our evil affections restrain and control the Word; and this is the case when we subject it to the dominion of our own will and wisdom. When the Jews had bound Jesus, they led him away, and delivered him to Pilate the governor. A Roman and Gentile, Pilate represented natural reason, or the natural understanding. Hence we find that Pilate, though he manifests some better traits of character than the Jews, yet lends himself as an instrument to carry out their wicked designs against Jesus.

The Sanhedrim had already declared Jesus to be worthy of death, but as the Jews had not at this time the power of life and death, the priesthood had to contrive how they might induce the Roman gov-

error to condemn him. Hence their leading him away to Pilate. Their binding Jesus was an expressive act, the meaning and form of which may be learned from the Lord's words to Peter after his resurrection: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John xxi. 18). Although this was spoken naturally of Peter's death, yet it spiritually describes the condition of faith at the end of the church. In its youth faith was free; in its old age it is bound,—the understanding is reduced to obedience, and led whither the church will. The binding of Jesus represented the binding of the Word itself, so as to bring it into subjection to the will of man.

3. The evangelist here introduces the sequel of the history of Judas. *Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders.* The history of Judas forms a contrast to that of Peter. Both sinned, and both repented. But how different the nature and results of their repentance! The one was humbled, and became a new man; the other died by his own hand. But Judas and Peter stand in contrast to each other in their representative characters as well as in their personal history. Judas represented the Jewish church; Peter represented the Christian church. The repentance of Judas represented the repentance which needs to be repented of (2 Cor. vii. 10). His was the conversion against which the Lord hardens the heart and blinds the understanding—the conversion which is followed by profanation, which brings upon the soul the greater condemnation. The restitution and confession which Judas makes is a revelation, rather than a change, of state. The returning of the thirty pieces of silver is the rendering back to the Jewish church the truth which had been profaned by being employed for so evil a purpose. Knowledge of truth, like money, which is one of its symbols, is in itself the same whether possessed by the good or the evil, or employed for good or evil purposes. When a church comes to an end, or an individual is judged, the knowledge of truth is taken away from them, according to the law, "he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have."

4. But Judas confessed, *saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.* This represents the laying open of the state of the church, and her own mouth condemning her of having

violated and profaned the Word, and so betrayed the Lord. To the confession of Judas the chief priests and elders answered, *What is that to us? see thou to that.* These men did not concern themselves about the innocence of Jesus; they had paid the price of his blood, and were determined to shed it; their unworthy agent had only to settle the question with himself. And thus it is when a false understanding, penetrated with gleams of light, revolts against an evil will, it finds it is unheeded, and receiving no reciprocation, has to fall back upon itself.

5. When the priests and elders would not accept, for the release of Jesus, what they had paid for securing him, *Judas cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.* Truth profaned in the understanding cannot deliver divine truth from bondage and condemnation in the will: it can only be cast down in the temple, and left as an unclaimed treasure. It has been much discussed whether Judas died by his own hands or fell a victim to remorse. The last opinion is considered to be favoured by the statement of his end in Acts i. 18. The account of the evangelist necessitates the idea of strangulation in some way, and most probably by his own agency. This is all that the spiritual sense requires. For hanging, or strangulation, or suffocation, which have all been suggested, signifies destroying the connection between the internal and the external, and the consequent destruction of both. The neck, as the means of connection between the head and the body, signifies the connecting medium between the internal and external of our minds. Judas hanging himself, represented that in the Jewish church the conjunction of the internal and external was broken, by which the church was utterly destroyed.

6. *And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.* This was considered to be in agreement with a law of Moses (Deut. xxiii. 18), though not expressly mentioned in it. The money, as they had given it, was the price of blood; it was given to compass the wicked end of putting Jesus to death. But the blood of the Lord has two meanings. The Jews shed the Lord's blood for evil—the Lord permitted it for good; that which was death to them was life to the world. It was so ordered, therefore, that the price of Jesus' blood should not return into the treasury of the Jewish church. As the high priests, by procuring the Lord's death, had been unwilling agents in procuring the redemption of the world, so, in the final disposal of the price of the Lord's blood, they unconsciously did an act which represented

the reception of the Lord's salvation by others, as mentioned in the next verse.

7. *And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.* The work of the potter signifies the work of regeneration. This is clear from Jeremiah xviii. 4. The prophet, by divine command, goes down to the potter's house to see a work on the wheel. "The vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter : so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." Every one, as he now comes from the hand of his Creator, is a marred vessel, but every one who comes from the hand of his Re-creator is another vessel, made as seems good to the potter to make it. He is renewed according to the will and into the image of God. The silver given by the Jews as the price of the Lord's blood was given to buy the potter's field, to represent that the truth originally revealed to the Jewish church, which that church had perverted, to destroy the very end for which it had been given, was now to be transferred to the Gentiles, to become with them the means of that regeneration which the Jews had wilfully refused. The potter's field is the Gentile church, including the idea of a capacity and desire for being regenerated. This idea is included also in the use for which the potter's field was purchased—to bury strangers in. Burial, in the first place, signifies resurrection ; for burial to the body is resurrection to the spirit. When the body returns to the dust as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it. But in the second place, burial, like resurrection, signifies regeneration, which is the resurrection from the death of sin into the life of righteousness. When the Jews purchased the potter's field to bury strangers in, they no doubt intended that the cursed means should be devoted to a cursed use—to provide sepulture for the outcast and the destitute, perhaps that their own dust might not mingle with that of the unknown wanderer. But how expressive is this despised use to which the price of the Lord's blood was devoted ! In Jesus the stranger finds a friend ; in his blood, salvation ; in his resurrection, life. The price of the Lord's blood is his merit and righteousness ; and, despised and valueless as these were in the estimation of the Jews, they are precious to the stranger,—to him who is a spiritual sojourner in the earth, seeking for a home in heaven.

8. *Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.* *Aceldama*, the name which the potter's field acquired, sounds of violence in its historical associations, but in its spiritual sense of salvation and life eternal. All that is comprehended in the meaning of the Saviour's

blood, as realized in Christian experience, is expressed in the "field of blood." On the one hand, the Lord's temptations, sufferings, and death; on the other, his resistance, his triumphs, and his life—all are included in the meaning of his blood. His blood is his divine truth. And when the Christian has, through his truth, suffered and died with Christ, then does he share in his triumphs and his life. "For if we be planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. vi. 5). The field of blood is therefore the field of regeneration, and it will ever continue so to be. When the evangelist tells us it is so called "unto this day," he reveals an eternal truth. With the Word, as with the Lord, to-day is for ever. In the concerns of the soul and eternity, to-day is not a portion of time, but a state. And the state of regeneration which has been purchased by the price of the Lord's blood will be available to the spiritual stranger, world without end.

9-11. *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.* The purchase of the potter's field was the fulfilment of a prophecy. This prediction the evangelist ascribes to Jeremiah, when yet it is found in Zechariah. Various explanations of the difficulty have been offered. Noble thinks that the subject of the prophecy properly belongs to Jeremiah, the mourning prophet, but had been put into the mouth of Zechariah, to show the inspiration of the evangelist in assigning it to its true place. The text is found as it is in many ancient manuscripts, though not in all. We incline to think the most reasonable conjecture to be that the passage in Matthew did not originally contain the prophet's name, but read, "then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet," and that "Jeremiah" was inserted by some early transcriber. It is surprising the chief priests were not aware, when they "took counsel," that their deliberations should result in the literal fulfilment, in every particular, of a prediction uttered centuries before by an inspired prophet. But the thirty pieces, the price of him that was valued, are expressive of the little estimation in which the Lord was held by the Jewish people. By the priesthood the Lord was hated. But in this transaction they unconsciously did what was symbolical of the estimation in which the Lord and his redemption were held by the Jewish people as a whole. Thirty is a number which, wherever it occurs in the Word, signifies comparatively little. And lightly indeed were the Lord's merit and redemption esteemed by the degene-

rate descendants of Israel. After recording these circumstances concerning Judas, the evangelist returns to Jesus, who had been delivered bound to Pontius Pilate. *And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.* This was a form of acknowledgment. The Lord did not offer any explanation or qualification of his affirmation, so as to enlighten or conciliate the judge. He was a king, but his kingdom was not of this world. He was not the king of the temporal, but of the spiritual Jews of the church which the kingdom of Judah represented. The Lord is called a king and a priest. He is a king as divine truth, and a priest as divine good. Truth rules, and good ministers. But when he is called the King of the Jews, truth grounded in good is meant. There were two kingdoms after the time of Solomon. The kingdom of Israel then represented the government of divine truth in the church, and the kingdom of Judah represented the government of divine good in the church.

12-14. It is remarkable that, when questioned by Pilate, the Lord answered him, but *when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.* The chief priests were Jews; Pilate was a Gentile. In the Jewish church the voice of Divine Truth was now for ever silenced; among the Gentiles, who were to form the new church, there was a disposition to hear it, though, as we shall see, not the capacity to receive it directly. As indicative of the negative state of the Jews, which quenched the voice of the Truth amongst them, and of the affirmative state of the Gentiles, which gave utterance to the truth so far as they knew it, the priests and elders only dealt in accusations against Jesus, while Pilate asked a question, which on his part contained no accusation, and admitted, as it received, an affirmative answer. And even when appealed to by Pilate, who said unto him, *Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? He answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.* Pilate, like the simple-minded, when they hear learned unbelievers accuse the Word, or professed believers maintain views that involve an accusation of its divine truth, are liable to be disturbed with doubts, and to demand for them an instantaneous and direct answer; and when that answer is not vouchsafed, they are further liable to experience great perplexity, which is expressed by Pilate's marvelling greatly. The Word, like the Lord, does not accept the challenge of the unbeliever, but leaves every man to work out his own conviction, as it leaves him to work out his salvation, of which conviction is a part, with fear and trembling. This lesson Pilate

had not yet wrought out for himself, as we shall see in the sequel.

15-17. At the feast of the passover, *the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.* We come now to see how the people were affected towards Jesus, as shown in the exercise of that singular privilege which the Roman government had conferred on their Jewish subjects. In this case the body of the people could have defeated the purpose of the priesthood. *They had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.* The choice was given them to claim the release either of *Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ.* This privilege conferred upon the people the free choice between guilt and innocence, evil and good; and they chose the evil, and rejected the good.

18. Pilate made this offer to the people, in the hope, it would seem, that they would ask for the release of Jesus, *For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.* Envy is one of the worst of passions; hatred presumes the imputation of a fault, but envy is the acknowledgment of an excellence. It is truly hatred without a cause. How truly must this have been the ground of the priestly aversion to Jesus! Their eye was evil, because he was good. This was the last form which the hatred of the Jewish rulers took against Jesus; and it implied the deepest and most causeless opposition, not only to the truth, but to the good of which Jesus was the impersonation. Envy, therefore, implies aversion of the worst kind, and the most deeply rooted.

19. *When he was set down on the judgment seat, before the people had made their decision, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.* Dreams had been made by Divine Providence the vehicles of several messages from on high to those who had duties to perform in relation to the Messiah. And now the wife of his judge is made the medium of an admonition to him to refrain from any act that might do him injustice. It is worthy of remark how entirely Jesus is left alone in his last great trial, as if the powers of darkness had succeeded in turning the whole tide of human action, if not of human sympathy, against him. The Jews persecute him; Judas betrays him; Peter denies him; the rest forsake him; and now the Roman, otherwise indifferent, plays into the hands of his enemies against him. Had human ingenuity strained its powers to contrive a plot to show the moral grandeur of a hero, not braving, but enduring with dignity and meekness the accumulated wrongs of an evil

world, nothing could have exceeded or even equalled the reality here so naturally developed and so simply related. All this was but the outbirth of spiritual agents and elements against which the Lord had to contend, and from which, indeed, he came to redeem and save mankind. It was an exemplification of the truth of the Scriptures themselves, that all, both Jews and Gentiles, were included under sin, and that while we were yet enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. While Jews and Gentiles were both included under sin, there was this important difference between them, that the Jews had sinned against the clear light of revelation, the Gentiles had sinned against the dim light of tradition and indirect transmission. With the Gentiles there was an affection in favour of the truth, and some obscure perception of its excellence. This affection for truth was the wife of Pilate; this obscure perception of its excellence was her dream. But the intellect of the Gentile world, like Pilate, was not yet prepared to act under the influence of this better affection of the will. It was no doubt necessary that human nature as it was among the Gentiles should have a share in the catastrophe out of which the redemption of the world was to be educed; and this Gentile humanity was appropriately represented by Pilate. The much suffering which the wife of Pilate endured on account of Jesus, shows that there was a conscience in the Gentile world that revolted against the crime which the Jews, without compunction, were thirsting to commit.

20-23. Left by Pilate to choose whether he would release unto them Jesus or Barabbas, *the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.* The people listened. They demanded that Barabbas should be released, and that Jesus should be crucified. To the question of Pilate, *Why, what evil hath he done? they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.* Considered as a matter of solemn choice, it seems as if Pilate might have adopted the words of Moses, "Behold, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Life and good were personally manifested in the Lord, who now stood before them; and Barabbas, who, we have reason to fear, was something like the incarnation of their opposites, death and evil. And in this wicked preference of the murderer to the sinless Saviour was truly the choice

of evil rather than good, and of death rather than life. They who could make such a choice showed that they were disposed to exalt in their own hearts the evil which they let loose in Barabbas, and to crucify the good which they were anxious to destroy in Jesus. Demoniacal as it seems in the Jews to have thus inverted all the principles of justice and benevolence, we must remember that we ourselves inherit with them a common nature, and are capable, and may be guilty, of doing spiritually what they did naturally; and many of them, it is to be feared, spiritually also. When the internal intends evil, how easy is it to persuade the external to carry out the evil intention! When the internal and the external are united under one common end, animated by one common object, and that object an evil one, the choice, when it is to be exercised between opposites, is sure to select the evil and leave the good. "Not this man, but Barabbas," is still the cry of them who hate good and love evil—who have inverted the ordinary good in themselves; who have put evil for good, and good for evil; who have put darkness for light, and light for darkness.

24. *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.* Pilate's act is easily recognized as a symbolical mode of testifying his innocence of the crime of condemning a just person. But the act has a spiritual as well as a figurative sense. To wash the hands, figuratively, is to *declare* one's self blameless; to wash the hands, spiritually, is to *make* one's self blameless—to purify the life from evil and the soul from guilt by the truth of God's Holy Word. Water is the symbol of that truth, and the hands are the symbols of power, as manifested by the will in act. The psalmist says, "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord" (Ps. xxvi. 6), where washing is expressive of the act of purifying, not simply of asserting purity. Pilate is a faithful representation of those who are in good without truth, who are easily overborne by those who are in truth without good. The heathens who are in simple good learn the vices sooner than the virtues of their more civilized neighbours, not only because their nature inclines them to evil, but because they are deficient in that intelligence which shows the inherent and distinctive characters of virtue and vice. Pilate saw that Jesus was a just man, but allowed the envious Jews to carry out their determined purpose to destroy him, washing his hands to clear himself from the guilt of a crime which he had allowed, but to which neither the law nor his conscience consented.

25. But if Pilate shrunk from the guilt of innocent blood, the Jews did not. When the governor said, "See ye to it," *Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.* Awful imprecation! too faithfully fulfilled! The children of Judah, as a people, continue to this day to treat the Just and Holy One as an impostor, and still look for a Messiah whose kingdom is of this world, and who will exalt them above other nations. Why should the Jews invoke the curse of this flagrant crime on the children as well as on themselves? Guilt, descending from parents to children, expresses the spiritual law that evil, once confirmed in the heart, descends into all the affections and thoughts which derive their existence from it.

26. When Pilate had *released Barabbas unto them*, then commenced that series of indignities to which Jesus was subjected, and which only terminated with his death. *And when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.* The whole of this treatment of Jesus, as the incarnate Word, represents, as we have had occasion to remark, the treatment which the written Word received at the hands of the Jews. It may seem as if it were lessening the force and sanctity of the relation to understand the cruel indignities and mockeries offered to the person of the Lord, as representing treatment to which the written Word had been subjected. This subject can only be understood, and its importance appreciated, when we see the essential identity of the written and the incarnate Word—the written Word being the Divine Wisdom revealed, and the incarnate Word the Divine Wisdom manifested. The incarnate Word came to do for man what the written Word had failed to accomplish. He came to do for man what man had failed to do for himself. He came to fulfil the law—that is, the Word, which man had made of no effect. As the Lord fulfilled the whole Word perfectly, his life was the written Word acted out. His life was a practical revelation. His life (including his teaching) was a living refutation of the errors, a living reproof and condemnation of the evils, of the Jewish church. It is on this ground that the treatment which the Lord received at the hands of the Jews represented their treatment of the Word. His enduring these effects of their evils was meant by his bearing their iniquities. It is to be observed that the last sufferings of the Lord were legally inflicted by the Romans, because the Jews had not then the power of administering the criminal law; but they were inflicted by the Jews morally, because they were the authors of all that Jesus endured. The Lord mentioned this on a previous occasion, when he said of the chief

priests, they "shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify" (Matt. xx. 19). Nevertheless, the Jews were personally guilty of many of the indignities which the Lord now suffered. We therefore read of Pilate, that "when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified." This scourging and crucifying are here mentioned to express, generally, all kinds of opposition to the Lord and his Word. This is of two kinds,—the opposition of falsity to truth and the opposition of evil to good; crucifying signifies the destruction of good by evil. These acts have this meaning, because the cords with which scourging was performed signify falses, and the wood on which crucifixion was inflicted signifies evil. This is the signification of crucifying as distinguished from stoning—the two modes of capital punishment among the Jews; stoning signifying to destroy by falses, and crucifying to destroy by evil.

27. *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.* Soldiers, in the genuine sense, signify those who defend the truth; in the opposite sense, as here, those who assault the truth, and who themselves are in the falses of evil. Pilate, therefore, delivering Jesus into the hands of the soldiers signifies the truth being delivered over and made subject to falsities; and not to some only, but to all—"the whole band" being "gathered unto him," and united against him. The "common hall" into which they took Jesus was the prætorium—the governor's palace—and signifies here the understanding, where all falsities are collected.

28. *And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.* The profane mockeries to which our blessed Lord was subjected are almost too painful to dwell upon, except to impress upon us the deep corruption of humanity in his tormentors, in which we participate; and to see the spiritual state of mankind in reference to the Word as it then existed, and is more or less the state of every natural man. The outer garment of the Lord represented the literal sense of the Word. The soldiers' stripping Jesus does not, indeed, signify that those whom the soldiers represent deprive the Word of the letter; but that they deprive the letter of its meaning, and substitute for it a meaning of their own, which is meant by the soldiers putting upon Jesus a scarlet robe. In putting this robe upon the Lord, they insulted him with the mock honour of royalty. The Lord was indeed a king, for truth is a king; nay, he was *the* king, for he was *the* truth; but the mock royalty with which they invested him was the derision of the truth, and the substitution of falsehood in its place.

29. They invested the Lord with other mock emblems of royalty. *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand.* The Lord crowned with thorns has furnished a study for Christian artists to work out the ideal of meek suffering. No less worthy is the spiritual idea of being realized to the mind than the natural suffering to the sense. Thorns, in the Word, signify the falsities of concupiscence. The thorn was the first fruit of the ground after it was cursed for fallen man's sake; and now the thorn is placed as a fitting diadem on the brow of the Son of man. Such was the triumph of the principle that had its birth with man's fall. The head of the Son of man represented divine truth in first principles, as revealed in the Word and manifested in the Lord; and a crown is the emblem of wisdom. We still crown the Son of man with thorns when we exalt our own sensual intelligence above the wisdom of God, and glory in such profane mockery. But they also put a reed in his hand as a sceptre. The reed is a striking emblem of the letter of the Word without its spirit. The Lord's own comparison of the people's ideas of John the Baptist, who also represented the Word, shows this. "What went ye out for to see? a reed shaken with the wind?"—the letter of the Word, the sport of every wind of doctrine,—every breath of human opinion? As the head of the Son of man signifies divine truth in first principles, his hand signifies divine truth in last principles, such as it is in the letter of the Word. In its ultimate sense divine truth is in its fulness and power, of which fulness and power the hand is also the emblem. Divine truth in ultimates is the Lord's sceptre; and "the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (Ps. xlv. 6): his is a true, righteous, equitable dominion. Ultimate truth is also the rod of the Lord's strength, with which he rules in the midst of his enemies (Ps. cx. 2). But the Son of man with a reed in his hand for a sceptre is his Divine Word with the form of power without the reality; so that the reed is a symbol of man's power over and by the Word, in place of its power over him. This is, indeed, sufficiently evinced in what follows. *And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, king of the Jews!* The Jews, in their normal state, represented the church, the ruling principle of which is love to the Lord; so that the Lord, as King of the Jews, is the Divine truth ruling in the heart and life. The profane mockery of saluting Jesus as King of the Jews represented the still more profane mockery of paying the homage of love to the Lord, and reverence to his Word, when there is nothing but contempt and hatred in the heart.

30. *And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.* Spitting in the face was one of the most determined expressions of contempt. It was a law of Moses, that when a man refused to take his brother's wife, she should loose his shoe and spit in his face; by which was spiritually meant, that one who refuses to comply with the law of marriage, or that of the union of good and truth, is destitute of all genuine goodness and truth, internal and external. The internal is meant by the face, the external by the foot, the shoe of which was loosed. The Lord's face and his head signify the inmost of the Word as to love and wisdom. To spit in his face and to strike him upon the head represent contempt and violence offered to the highest and purest principles of the divine goodness and truth as revealed in the Word, and manifested in the person and exemplified in the life of the Lord. The reed, we have seen, was a symbol of the letter without the spirit of the Word. To strike the Lord on the head with the reed was, therefore, to turn the letter against the spirit—the external against the internal, of the Word—and thus to prevent and destroy divine order.

31. *And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.* It may seem as if, by removing the robe and restoring his own raiment, the soldiers were undoing what they had done, and restoring what they had taken away. Not so, however. They had ended one act of their cruelty; they were now about to commence another and greater. Instead of being scourged, he was to be nailed to the cross; he was to be a second time stripped of his garments, that they might be rent in pieces. Putting his own garments on the Lord was therefore only doing naturally what those do spiritually who cease from the Word, when they have subjected it to one series of profanations in order to subject it to another. They now therefore "led him away to crucify him." It is error that leads away; it is evil that crucifies. The Lord's being thus led away to be crucified represents a part of the dark passage to the cross through which the Son of man was led in his temptations, so far as they originated in the natural reason of man, to which the natural will gives him up to be scourged and crucified. Outwardly, indeed, as to the body, he was led away by the Roman soldiers; but that outward leading was the effect and the type of another and interior leading, in which the whole powers of darkness were urging forward the crisis on which rested their last hope of success against the Redeemer and redemption. But in leading the Lord away to be crucified, a new agent is introduced.

32. *And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name : him they compelled to bear his cross.* Executions took place beyond the city, as originally they did out of the camp. This fact regarding Jesus is mentioned in the New Testament. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. xiii. 12). The reason of this practice was, that the camp and the city signified heaven, and without signified hell; and capital punishments were inflicted there because they signified the death which is spiritual and eternal. It was in accordance with the representative character of the Lord's death that he should suffer without the gate; for he was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse (Gal. iii. 13). It is true that Jerusalem was at that time full of wickedness, and that the Lord was condemned within the city, though he was crucified beyond it. Understood in its profane sense, the Lord's being condemned in the city, and being led out of it to be crucified without the gate, represented that he, as the Divine Truth, was condemned internally and crucified externally in the church; for we condemn the Lord in our minds, and crucify him in our lives. When malefactors were led to execution, it was customary to make them carry the cross on which they were to be crucified; and our Lord was not exempted from this cruel indignity. John speaks of the Lord, and of him only, as the bearer of the cross. "And he, bearing his cross, went forth" (ch. xix. 17). The other three evangelists mention Simon only as the bearer of this burden. It is reasonably supposed that Jesus had been made to bear it first, and that Simon had been compelled to bear it afterwards. There is a spiritual reason for the seeming difference in the recorded fact. In John, where the Lord's deepest and highest states are described, both as they were in him and as they are in us, the record appropriately speaks of Jesus only as the bearer of his cross; and the other gospels as appropriately mention only Simon. The Lord's bearing of the cross was only the physical and degrading labour done in the sight of men which he had all along been doing spiritually in the sight of angels; and Simon, bearing it "after him," as Luke (xxiii. 26) expresses it, was only doing what the disciple who follows Jesus has spiritually to do. Simon bearing the cross after the Lord was an outward sign of an inward spiritual labour to be performed by those who would follow the Lord in the regeneration. But if this is the truth represented in the present circumstance, why was it not divinely ordered that one of his own disciples should have been selected and compelled to bear his cross? His own avowed disciples had all forsaken him and fled. In the Lord's

last trial, not only was he condemned by those who represented the world, as the Romans, and by those who represented the church, as the Jews, but he was forsaken by those who represented the truths of his own blessed Word, as the disciples ; and all this was done to describe the extent and severity of his last temptation, when he not only had to endure the assaults of all the powers of evil, but had to endure the absence of all the opposite powers of good. The Lord had yet one stay. He was now in the very state of which he himself had spoken : " Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone : and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me " (John xvi. 32). The hour was approaching when he should be forsaken even by the Father. Then, indeed, would the Son of man be alone. This crisis, awful and mysterious, has not yet arrived. We shall not anticipate it, but reverentially follow the Lord to the scene of his passion, with Simon, the Cyrenian, bearing the cross on which the last temptation is to be endured and human redemption completed. There is no doubt a providential similarity of name between the bearer of the cross and Simon Peter, to whom the cross was such an offence. Simon, among the disciples, represented faith ; but Simon Peter represented faith within the church ; while Simon the Cyrenian represented faith without the church—among the Gentiles ; for Cyrene was out of the land of Canaan. There is this also to be remembered respecting Simon,—that this was the name of the Lord's first disciple when he first received the gospel, but afterwards surnamed Peter. Simon the Cyrenian represented faith as it exists among the remoter Gentiles, and among the simple in heart, before they are instructed in the truths of the gospel. There is reason to believe that Simon became a disciple of the Lord. He is spoken of by Mark (xv. 2) as the father of Alexander and Rufus. And the apostle Paul speaks highly of two of Simon's household. " Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine " (Rom. xvi. 13). It is pleasing to think that he who bore the burden of the natural cross of Christ should have come to take up his spiritual cross, and follow the Lord to a mount still more sacred than the mount Calvary, on which he was crucified.

33. The place which forms the termination of the cross-bearing journey is *Golgotha*, called also Calvary, which have both the same meaning—the *place of a skull*. The name speaks for itself regarding the spot as a place of common execution, where he who was " numbered with the transgressors " was appointed to suffer. The opinion that the mount was named from its shape is not so probable. Suitable emblem

was this place of the state of the church which was about to put to death him who was himself the Life! The ghastly remnant of the noblest part of man's material frame, so perfectly and wonderfully made—the empty skull—speaks also of the Word emptied of its living and spiritual contents, and reduced to a mere dead letter, having in relation to the church neither life nor power. Golgotha or Calvary, emblematical as it is of the utterly devastated state of the church which crucified the Lord, and of every church and member of the church who crucifies the Lord afresh, yet it is to the repentant sinner the end of death and beginning of life. There the Lord died for him; and there he is himself to die, to lay down the life of his corrupt nature, and crucify every lust and imagination of his evil heart.

34. When they came to Golgotha, *they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.* It was customary to administer to criminals, before or during execution, a drink that deadened their nervous sensibility, and thus diminished the intensity of their sufferings. The Lord refused this human means of mitigating pain. There was a spiritual reason for this: for everything which was done to the Lord, and which he did, teaches us some great lesson. Vinegar, from its sourness, is the symbol of what is false; and gall, from its bitterness, is the symbol of what is evil. The Lord's refusing to drink of the vinegar mingled with gall was intended to instruct us that what is false mingled with evil can find no acceptance with him, or that those in whom error and evil are united cannot enter into his kingdom. But although the Lord refused the vinegar mingled with gall, he took the vinegar alone. "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John xix. 28-30). The prophecy is no doubt very specific, and was as specifically fulfilled. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps. lxix. 21). It is almost impossible to suppose that the prophecy and its fulfilment had only a historical connection and purpose. If his meat was to do the will of his Father, and to finish his work, must not this have been his drink also? The Lord's natural thirst was but the outward expression of his divine thirst—his desire for the salvation of the human race; for this was the will, the desire of his own infinite love, which was the Father that dwelt within him, and

that originated all his desires, and words, and works (John v. 30; xiv. 10). How appropriate, then, after receiving the vinegar which was offered him to quench his thirst, the Lord's exclamation, *It is FINISHED!* His last drink indeed was vinegar; for that which vinegar symbolized was the best that the church and the world could supply. Truth was extinct; error and falsity everywhere prevailed. There was nothing to quench the Lord's thirst but vinegar; but when it was offered unmingled with the gall of bitterness, the Lord in mercy received it, and it allayed his burning thirst. So ardent is his divine desire for the salvation of his lost creatures that he refuses not those who are in error; for if error be of the intellect only, free from dissimulation, and from the deliberate evil of a corrupt heart, it is not an absolute cause of separation between man and the Lord. In the absence of an evil purpose, there underlies religious error a desire for purification; and it is this desire that not only removes from religious error its negative character and separating power, but makes it the means of conjoining the soul with God; for there may be religious principle where there is no pure religious truth. This desire of purification was meant by the hyssop on which the sponge containing the vinegar was placed, to be held to the lips of the dying Saviour; for hyssop was used in the representative church as a means of legal purification, as in the purification of the greatest of all uncleanness, that of the leprosy (Lev. xiv. 4).

35. But we are drawn from the contemplation of this beautiful and instructive incident in the history of the crucifixion to another of those acts that have a far different character and meaning. *And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.* It is remarkable that most of the particulars connected with the Lord's crucifixion should have been special subjects of prophecy. The fulfilment of these predictions having been the work of his enemies, this serves to confirm the historical truth of Jesus being the Messiah. But a higher evidence is afforded by the spiritual significance of the circumstances themselves. This teaches some important facts respecting the treatment of the Word by the church. The psalm from which Matthew cites these prophetic passages is singularly minute in its description of most of the incidents that occurred at the crucifixion. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture (Ps. xxii. 18). Matthew himself does not mention the inner and outer garment, this information being supplied by the prophetic passage he

adduces. As all that the Jews did to Jesus represented the manner in which the Jewish church had treated the Word, this act is most significant. The Lord's outer garment represented the outward or literal sense of the Word, and his inner garment represented its inner or spiritual sense. Their dividing his garments represented that the Jewish church had dissipated all the truths of the literal sense of the Word. This, indeed, was done by the soldiers; but we have seen that, being instruments in carrying out the purpose of the Jews, the soldiers represent the militant principle in that church. Among themselves, the Jews were, like Christians of the present day, divided into sects, each contending against the others for what each called the truth, when yet the truth of each was but a variety of the common error, so that amongst them the Word was rent in pieces and dissipated. The Lord, however, provides that this division and dissipation of the truths of the Word shall have a limit; otherwise the Word would be destroyed, and salvation rendered impossible. It is only the literal sense of the Word that is capable of this kind of division; for the truths of the letter of the Word are for the most part apparent truths, admitting of different interpretations, and therefore forming the means of various and discordant opinions. But the internal sense of the Word does not consist of apparent but of pure or genuine truths. These are not, therefore, subject to the changeful and sinister interpretations of men, nor are they capable of being severed from, much less of being set up against, each other. Like all real truths, each is in harmony with all the others, and all combine to form one grand and indivisible whole. This is the Lord's vesture, woven without seam throughout. However the letter may be divided, this is preserved for ever entire. It is not parted, but is disposed of by lot; and this lot is the Providence of God, which passes it on uninjured from one dispensation of the church to another. The difference between the internal and the external of the Word is like the difference between the church and the dispensation. Dispensations pass away, but the church never dies. Dispensations grow corrupt, and die by corrupting and dissipating the truths of the letter of the Word; but the church, consisting of internal vital religion, never dies, but is preserved entire in some minds, that the seed of a new tree may be sown when the old one has fallen into decay. Were the internal sense of the Word to be perverted and destroyed by the church on earth, the connection between angels and men would be entirely cut off, and its renewal would be impossible.

36. When his enemies had carried out their long-cherished desire

of nailing him to the cross, *sitting down they watched him there*. Naturally, this is sufficiently expressive of official indifference to the suffering, combined with care to prevent the release of the sufferer. Spiritually, it teaches another and deeper lesson. Sitting signifies a state of the will; watching signifies a state of the understanding. The murderers of Jesus "sitting down" after his crucifixion, signifies a confirmed state of the will in favour of that which the crucifixion represented—the destruction and profanation of the whole Word, and consequently a confirmed state of opposition to all true goodness. Their watching Jesus signifies the vigilance of the understanding to keep the Word in that state of profanation, and prevent any argument or intellectual force from being exerted by those in favour of the Word, so as to deliver it from their power.

37. They also *set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS*. There was a difference between the Jews and Pilate respecting this inscription. They wished him to alter it to "He said I am the King of the Jews," but Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." The Lord provided that his cross should be crowned with the truth; so that, while we look at his cross as the very emblem of suffering, we may see over the head of the holy sufferer the promise of triumph and the hope of glory, its inseparable and sanctified fruits. The difference between the Jews and Pilate expresses the difference between the Jew and the Gentile,—the Gentile writing the truth as the Jewish accusation, the Jew denying the accusation to be the truth. The inscription itself expresses the Lord's character as divine truth from divine good; for a king signifies truth, and the Jews, like Judah, from whom they were derived, signified good; in other words, the King of the Jews denotes divine celestial truth reigning in the hearts of those who are crucified to self and the world.

38. *Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left*. These represented—the same as the sheep and the goats on the Lord's right hand and on his left in the judgment—those who are in charity and faith, and those who are in faith without charity. Of these we say nothing further at present, as we shall have to speak of them again.

39, 40. Our Lord now undergoes another series of insults, involving another series of temptations. *And they that passed by reviled, or blasphemed, him*. The chief priests, with the elders and scribes, mocked him; and the thieves iterated what the others uttered. They who passed by represented those who are in falsity; the chief priests repre-

sent those who are in evil; and the thieves represent those who are in both. We will briefly consider them apart. In the passers by we see the children of this world too eagerly engaged in its pursuits and pleasures to bestow more than a passing glance on divine and spiritual things, and then only to revile and contemn them, if not with their lips, at least in their hearts. *Wagging their heads.* These revilers wag their heads to betoken the supreme contempt which those who are wiser in their generation than the children of light have for the Light itself, when eclipsed by their own materialized apprehensions. These signs of unbelief are such as indicate intellectual opposition to the truth, as does also their argument: *Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.* Here the Lord seems to be assailed by the self-righteous, the irreligious, and the lawless. All are united against him; as if every possible agency was, by every possible means, to try to shake his confidence, to overwhelm his spirit, and to drive him to utter despair. The arguments made use of by these Jewish unbelievers are just such as have been employed by infidels of all ages, being, in fact, the natural suggestions of the human mind in the negative state, which knows nothing, and believes nothing, of the necessity of the cross as the means to salvation. To such minds, the Lord's claims and his end must seem to be an entire contradiction. He claims divine power, yet shows the most absolute human weakness; asserts divine glory, and is exposed to public shame and degradation; asserts the highest virtue, and dies as a malefactor; claims allegiance as a king, yet submits to be treated as the meanest subject; declares himself able to raise the temple in three days, yet cannot deliver his own body from the cross; assumes to be the king of Israel, yet cannot come down from the cross; has saved, or pretended to save, many, and even to raise some from death, yet cannot save himself. These contradictions arise out of, because they answer to, the contrariety that exists in fallen human nature between the carnal and the spiritual mind. It is the unwillingness of the carnal natural mind to submit to spiritual indignity, and humiliation, and shame, and death, that makes one unwilling to recognize and unable to feel the need of a Saviour who passed through them all. Like the prophets, the Saviour was a sign unto his people. He came to do that for proud man which proud man despised to do for himself. He came to take upon him that natural mind which in itself is so lofty, and proud, and greedy of honour, and in love with life, that he might humble and abase it, and dishonour and crucify it, as the only means of its reconciliation

with the spiritual man, and of its becoming his obedient servant. It was because the natural man had exalted himself above the spiritual, and despised and trampled upon him, that the Lord came into the world to subdue him. Such were his sufferings. But these were but the means to a glorious end. They were the passage to glory. True exaltation arose out of them. The true glory of the natural man consists in his being the honoured servant of the spiritual. That which was created to serve cannot be honoured by ruling. Is the body honoured by ruling over the soul? Is it honoured by gluttony, and drunkenness, and lust? Are the appetites honoured by ruling over the reason? Is the world honoured by contemning heaven? Is matter honoured by denying spirit? Is nature honoured by denying God? The temple was the Lord's body—his humanity—which his enemies were to destroy; but as these accusers represent those who oppose falsity to the truth, they repeat this false accusation against him. The temple also represented the Lord's divine spiritual principle, which is, indeed, that which is contemned and blasphemed by lovers of the world. They deny and, indeed, ridicule the idea of a divine humanity, of which they think the passion of the cross is a sufficient refutation. And this is but the natural or spontaneous language of the heart that refuses to yield submission to the cross. The passers by challenged the Lord to show that he was the Son of God, by coming down from the cross. The Lord did not suffer as the Son of God, but as the Son of man; not as divine good, but as divine truth; not as to his divine, but as to his natural humanity. A prevailing idea is, that if the world was governed by a righteous Being, the just would never suffer; and, of course, if the Lord had been divine, being just, he would have prevented the Jews from putting him to death.

41-43. In the chief priests, with the scribes and elders; we see the children of the church; and in the mockery of these we see the blasphemy of the church against the Lord, and of those who are in the evil of self-love, against the divine good of his love. These say, *He saved others; himself he cannot save.* If he has saved others, he must be able to save himself; if he cannot save himself, how can he save others? The sentiment itself is true in a certain sense, though the application of it is false. The Lord glorified himself as he regenerated others; the two works were inseparably connected with each other. These works are meant by salvation. Still further, salvation is effected by the Lord from his divine love or goodness, as redemption is by his divine truth; and the Lord became the Saviour by

becoming or making his humanity divine good. The fallacy of the chief priests consisted in supposing that the Lord must show his power of salvation by coming down from the cross, and this fallacy they shared in common with the passers by. But this was the very opposite of the way which the Lord himself had taught men to look for salvation from him. The Lord had said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." His elevation on the cross represented this lifting up—this glorification. But these men did not desire to be drawn up from the earth to the Lord; they required that the Lord should come down to the earth to them. And so it is with every natural man. He does not desire a religion that will raise him above the world, but one that will come down to and consent to his worldly desires and appetites; least of all does he wish to be raised by means of the cross, by being crucified to the world and the world to him; to attain to glory through suffering, life through death. Many would believe him if he would show himself to be the King of Israel by coming down from the cross; for what communion is there, in the eyes of the natural man, between sovereignty and suffering? Much of what is said by the chief priests is found, almost word for word, in Psalm xxii.; and it is particularly deserving of attention, from its connection with the context. At the 8th verse we read, "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." It immediately follows: "But thou art he that took me out of the womb." This is the key to the mystery of the Lord's seemingly unheeded sufferings and humiliation, but one that the natural man will not consider, and does not comprehend. The new birth is the end which Divine Providence has in view in permitting sufferings which, to the righteous, are indeed as the pains of a woman in travail, who hath sorrow when her hour is come, but who, as soon as her child is born, remembereth no more her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

44. But the thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. We have already stated (v. 38) that these two thieves represented the same as the sheep and the goats. This rests on the relation of Luke, who says (xxiii. 39) that one of the malefactors railed on him, while the other acknowledged and prayed to him. It is an opinion that both thieves had at first joined in the reproaches of the spectators, but that one of them had been converted on the cross. If such had been the case, we can hardly imagine so interesting a fact would have been passed over unnoticed. We do not well see how the penitent thief could have rebuked his companion for conduct of which he

himself had just been guilty. Nor are we to overlook the great improbability of an entire change of state in so brief a space. It seems more consistent to suppose that one evangelist mentions the circumstance in a general, and another in a special manner. So much for the mere historical sense. The spiritual sense no doubt required both relations to supply a complete basis for itself. To see the spiritual sense, we must, in the first place, consider these two thieves as representing two classes of sinners—one representing those who are in evil and falsity, the other representing those who are in falsity but not in evil. In the historical sense, therefore, they represent the Jews and the Gentiles. Matthew and Mark, who speak of both thieves reviling the Lord, describe them as they were in their first state, both included under sin; but Luke, who gives the account of the penitent thief, describes them in their second state, when the Gentiles acknowledged the Lord, and were accepted as his future church, and the Jews, by persisting in unbelief, forfeited their election, and became reprobate. There is an analogous view of this incident in reference to the regeneration of man, the gospels describing the progress of this work; but under the present passage we are hardly justified in pursuing it, for the subject here treated of is the first phase, when the light and the darkness are yet undivided.

45. And now, as if the moral darkness by which the dying Saviour was surrounded and assailed were not enough to try his troubled soul, the sun of nature hides his face, and the most alarming and oppressive of all gloom—that which suddenly overspreads the world at noonday—comes to complete the scene of horror and desolation. *Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.* The sixth hour of the Jewish day was noon. The spiritual darkness of which this natural darkness was but the image is repeatedly spoken of in the prophets. “And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day” (Amos viii. 9). The darkness that fell upon the scene of the crucifixion was an emblem of the state of falsity, and of evil derived from it, that overspread the whole church; the three hours, also, during which it prevailed signified that the state was full and final, as well as universal. This darkness taking place at noon did not imply that the church was then in the zenith of its glory. The sun that was darkened was the Sun of Righteousness that even then shone from the cross, the closing of their eyes and hearts against whom brought them into darkness. As the outward appearances were the shadows also of the Lord’s inward states, this dark-

ness was the symbol of that horror of great darkness which culminated in despair of the end for which the Saviour was suffering, which formed the extremity of his last temptation, the utmost limit of inward suffering which even the incarnate Word could endure without yielding.

46. *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* This exclamation is expressive of a deep and awful state, which by us can be but imperfectly understood, and even in our own experience but faintly realized. In all the previous history of the Lord's last sufferings, we have seen that he was forsaken by men, even by those who were his most devoted followers and friends; and now we find him at last forsaken by God also. This may present some difficulties to the mind. How could the Lord be forsaken by God when he himself was God as well as man? Was he a different and divine being, or a different person, from that God to whom he uttered this despairing cry? One truth is a sufficient answer to these and all such questions. The Lord united in his person two distinct natures—the divine and the human. The human nature was alone capable of suffering, and of having a sense of being forsaken. We sometimes hear language that seems to imply that the Son, as a divine person, might be forsaken by the Father as a divine person. In states of humiliation the Lord's human nature had a sense of dependence upon, and even of separation from, his divine nature, although the divine nature dwelt within the human as the soul dwells within the body. These were natural and necessary parts of the Lord's human experience. It is important to remember that the Lord passed through all human experience, and in order to do so he must have had all human consciousness and sensation. Does not man, in states of severe trial and deep temptation, feel as if he were forsaken of God? The Lord must have had the same feeling, else his trials would have been unlike ours, and would have provided no succour for us under them. Still, some will think, and perhaps say, But the Divine dwelt within him, as our soul dwells within our body. Yes. But do not we frequently speak as we feel, according to the sensations of the body? Man, while possessing an immortal soul, can reason against, and even deny, the soul's immortality. The consciousness may thus be contrary to the reality. So is it in temptation. The Divine support seems to be withdrawn—the Divine itself to have forsaken us. The words which the Lord uttered on the cross had been uttered by the psalmist in his

own states of trial (Ps. xxii. 1), to show that the Lord came to endure and to sanctify human suffering. Temptation in extreme cases proceeds even to despair. Such extreme temptation is necessary to effect the conjunction of the external with the internal man, and, as a consequence of this, with God; and the conjunction of the internal with the external is regeneration, and the conjunction of man with God is salvation. The union of the human with the Divine in the Lord was the great pattern of this work in man; for the Lord was glorified as man is regenerated. On this great subject the writings of the church speak with great clearness and power. "Glorification is the uniting of the humanity of the Lord with the divinity of his Father. This was effected successively and permanently by the passion of the cross. The reason why that real union was fully effected by the passion of the cross is, because it was the last temptation which the Lord underwent during his abode in the world, and conjunction is effected by temptations; for in them man is, to all appearance, left to himself alone. Yet it is but in appearance, for God is then most present with him in the inmost principles of his mind, and supports him. When, therefore, a person conquers in temptation, he is then most intimately conjoined with God; and this was the case with the Lord in his union with his Father. That the Lord, during his suffering on the cross, was left to himself, is evident from his exclamation, and also from his own words: 'No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father' (John x. 18). It is evident, then, from this, that the Lord did not suffer as to his divinity, but as to his humanity, and that at the time of suffering, the most intimate, and therefore the most complete, union was effected. This may be illustrated by the fact, that whilst man suffers with respect to the body, his soul does not suffer, but only mourns, which mourning God removes after victory, and, as it were, wipes the tears from his eyes." This union of the Divine and the human in the person of the Lord was the great work of atonement or reconciliation, through which man is atoned or reconciled to God.

47. When the Lord uttered the exclamation we have now been considering, *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.* This would have been a call from the living to the dead. But they misunderstood him. So does the natural man misunderstand the Word of the Lord, changing its divine into human ideas, and substituting trust in man for trust in God. But Elias was himself a representation of the written Word. What

then, is spiritually involved in this misunderstanding? It is, to mistake the dead representatives in the Word for the living principles which they represented, and to imagine that life and power can be derived from that which only symbolized them.

48. The false principle which the misconception of these persons symbolized, with some is an error, with others persuasion; for with some it is in the understanding only, with others it is also in the will. Those with whom it is only an error, and not an evil, are represented by the one which *ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.* We found that when they offered the Lord vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink, because to have drunk that mixture would have represented his acceptance of those who are principled in falsity united to evil. But here the Lord is offered vinegar without the gall, and he drinks it, because he accepts those who are in error, when not at the same time in evil. The sponge which contained the vinegar was put upon a reed, to represent that these errors are derived from the letter of the Word by unintentional misinterpretations. From John we learn that this vinegar was given to the Lord to drink, in response to his uttering the words, "I thirst," which expressed his desire for the salvation of the human race; and his accepting the vinegar represented his will and his power to save unto the uttermost, by accepting all, whatever errors they may entertain even respecting himself, if their errors are not rooted in evil.

49. But there is another class who show no active love for the Lord; no tender desire to satisfy his thirst, even for their own salvation; and who would even hinder others from doing so for themselves. These are *the rest* who said, *Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.* Elias appeared with the Lord on the mount, and spoke with him concerning his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. It was a misapprehension, therefore, to suppose that Elias would come to prevent that which he had previously confirmed. So is it a mistake to expect that the written Word can teach salvation by saving the life of the selfhood; for he who saves his life shall lose it, and he who loses his life shall find it.

50. *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* Luke tells us what this last utterance of our Lord was: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." In the two separate cries of our Lord we see, both in the character of the feelings expressed and in the language in which the Lord expressed them, the distinction which we have had occasion repeatedly to note,

—the distinction between the Truth and the Good, or between the Lord's intellectual and voluntary life. The first has reference to the intellectual principle of the humanity; the second to the voluntary principle. The first expresses a sense of being forsaken; the second, a feeling of confidence: the one expresses fear; the other, love. In the first instance the Lord addresses the Divine by the name of God, in the second by the name of Father; the first of these being expressive of the Divine Truth, the second of the Divine Good, or the first of the Divine Wisdom, the second of the Divine Love. Although Matthew does not relate the words which the Lord uttered on the second occasion, he uses a term which conveys the same idea that the words express. He says, "Jesus cried with a *loud* voice," more literally, with a *great* voice; and the term *great*, whenever it occurs in the Word, is expressive of goodness or love; so that a *great* voice is the voice of love. So here the very sentiment is expressive of love, with its unbounded trust. When the Lord had uttered the *great* voice, "he yielded up the ghost"—he rendered up the spirit into his hands to whom he had commended it. Thus died the Saviour. And what a death was that! When the Lord expired, it was not life, but death itself that died. We do not speak of natural death. The Lord did not come to abolish this death, for natural death did not originate with the fall. He came to abolish spiritual death, the death which man had incurred by eating the forbidden fruit. By assuming our fallen nature, the Lord became subject to this death, or rather, he took this death upon himself; and this was essentially the death that died upon the cross, and which was within the natural death which the body suffered. "In that he died, he died unto sin once" (Rom. vi. 10). This was the *great* death out of which life was educed. This was the agonizing death which our Lord endured. Natural death, by itself, could have been no terrible endurance to him. In that spiritual death hell originated and had its life; and in causing that death to die, the Saviour had to resist and conquer the whole powers of darkness, for death and hell are the same. But the apostle who says of the Lord, "In that he died, he died unto sin once," continues, "but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." "He yielded up the spirit," and so became united in spirit to the Father; and when his body had risen from the dead, he lived unto God wholly, for the human was then wholly born of and united to the Divine, and became life itself, and the fountain of life to all who, like himself, die unto sin.

51. When the Lord by his death had finished the work of redemp-

tion and glorification, the effects of that divine work began to be manifested. *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.* This was evidently a miracle wrought for the sake of its significance. The temple, we know, was a symbol of the Lord's body; and the Divinity that dwelt within the veil was the hidden Divinity that dwelt in the temple of the Lord's humanity. When death rent asunder the veil of mortality within which the eternal Divinity dwelt in the person of the Lord, one grand purpose of the incarnation was accomplished—an immediate communication was opened between God and man. We say immediate, because, although the Lord's humanity is a medium, or a mediator, between God and man, yet, being divine-human, it brings the divine and the human—God and man—into the most direct and intimate saving relation to each other. This holy event was indeed represented in the temple and tabernacle service, and is clearly pointed out in the apostolic writings. In the epistle to the Hebrews we read—"There was a tabernacle made . . . and after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all . . . Into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: *the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.* . . . But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands . . . by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the *veil, that is to say, his flesh*; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 19). Thus the rending of the veil symbolized the glorification of the Lord's humanity; and the veil is said to have been rent from the top to the bottom, to represent the completeness of that divine work by which the humanity was glorified for ever, from first principles to ultimates. The rending of the veil represented also the effects of the Lord's glorification—in rending the veil of the letter, which gave access to the internal of the Word; by rending the veil of ceremonial worship, by which an internal church could exist; and by rending the veil of appearances in the human mind, by which a way was opened to the internal man, so that from being natural he might become spiritual. The entire change in the

state of the church is further described by the words; *and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.* The earth means the church, and an earthquake signifies the entire subversion of the church. The change in the state of the church which was effected by the Lord's advent was very different from all previous changes from one dispensation to another. All pre-existing churches were representative churches: they saw truth in the shade. After the incarnation the church was actual, and saw truth in the light.

52, 53. A further result of the Lord's crucifixion was that *the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* This opening of the graves and resurrection of the saints were not material but spiritual events. Had it been a natural transaction, would not these open graves have been seen? and would not risen saints—the first-fruits of the Lord's resurrection—have been afterwards found amongst the disciples? But not one word more is ever said about these liberated tenants of the tomb. The relation describes two results of the Lord's finished work. The graves here spoken of were the places in the intermediate region of the spiritual world where spirits were in prison, waiting to be delivered by the Lord at his coming. These were the prisoners, so often mentioned in the prophets, whom the Lord the Redeemer was to bring forth out of the prison-house. Death and the grave frequently in the Word mean the state of those who are politically or spiritually dead and buried. Thus, in *Ezek. xxxvii. 12*: “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 . . . and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live.” This relates literally to the restoration of the Israelitish people from captivity, though in the internal historical sense it relates to the same event in the spiritual world, to which the evangelist refers. To this event the Lord himself alludes when he says in *John*—“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (ch. v. 28, 29). The risen saints, it is said, went “into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” Risen saints appeared, indeed, in Jerusalem to some in vision. But as the event relates to the spiritual world, in which it actually took place, the opening of the graves, and the rising of the saints, and their appearing in the holy city, signify the deliverance of

the faithful from the lower earth in the world of spirits, and their elevation into heaven. In the spiritual sense, this opening of the graves and rising of many of the saints signified the spiritual resurrection of regeneration, which the Lord's finished work had provided for, and which was its final cause. To describe this saving effect of the Lord's glorification, a resurrection of the saints only is spoken of. Yet it may be asked, How, in this case, can the saints be said to be dead and buried? or, How can those who are dead in trespasses and sins be called by that holy name? In the spiritual sense persons signify principles. And man's spiritual resurrection consists in the holy principles of truth and goodness being raised out of his natural into his spiritual mind. These principles are man. In the natural mind they are dead, even buried; it is only when raised up into the spiritual mind that they acquire life and liberty. Spiritual resurrection always implies the pre-existence of this element of true humanity. It may exist but as a germ, but exist it must. Therefore the dead and buried are always supposed to be capable of hearing the divine voice that calls them forth. Thus in John: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (v. 25).

54. *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.* These Gentile soldiers represented the Gentile world, who were about to receive the Lord as their Saviour, whom the Jews had so entirely rejected. It may naturally seem that the Romans could have had very imperfect ideas of what their confession involved; but the effect of the Lord's character—the power of the divine sphere with which he was surrounded—was such as to produce extraordinary impressions upon impressible minds. But their acknowledgment does not necessarily imply a true knowledge of the divine character of Jesus. It only implies that they were struck with the conviction that he was a Son of God, according to their own ideas of divine sonship; although it may be understood that they now admitted Jesus to be, what in the course of these events they had heard him accused of having claimed to be, the Son of God. The definite article is not here used before "God" and "Son." In this respect the confession of these Romans differs from the famous confession of Peter (Matt. xvi. 16), where the language has the definite form, which is, too, expressive of a definite idea. But, perhaps, this more vague language of these Gentile soldiers better expresses the more general and obscure light then diffused

through the Gentile world ; as also the nature of the first perception of this divine truth in every Gentile mind.

55, 56. Besides the centurion and those that were with him, there were others who looked with deeper interest on the scene. *And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Josès, and the mother of Zebedee's children.* These were some of the devoted women who were disciples of the Lord, and whose characters shine forth with such heavenly lustre in the sacred page. Unlike the men, they were mute spectators. Silence best befitted, as it best expressed, their feelings. And they themselves represent the feelings, the affections, of the devoted heart. As the centurion and his men represent the intellectual principles of the Gentile church, these women represent the will principle of the Gentile church. They are therefore said to have come from Galilee (of the Gentiles), which, we have seen (ch. ii. 22), represented the Gentile element. The three Marys represent the three affections—the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural. They ministered unto the Lord. Ministering is the work of the affections of the heart, as serving is the work of the thoughts of the understanding. We minister unto the Lord when, for his sake, we do good from love.

57, 58. Another pious minister was Joseph of Arimathæa. *When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.* "When the even was come" he went to Pilate and sought the body of Jesus. Joseph was a second Nicodemus. He also was a master in Israel and a disciple of Jesus ; yet secretly, for fear of the Jews (John xix. 38), Nicodemus, at the commencement of the Lord's ministry, came secretly to him during the night to learn some of the mighty truths Jesus was teaching in public. And now, when the Lord had sealed his testimony with his blood, these two secret but faithful disciples came forward to perform his funeral rites. While Joseph furnished the sepulchre, Nicodemus supplied the spices ; and these two pious men embalmed the body, and laid it in the tomb (John xix. 38). None of the other male disciples—none even of the twelve—were present ; only the women beheld where he was laid. Providence reserved these two secret converts for this pious duty. We have to consider what is meant by this, what is here related of Joseph of Arimathæa. We have first a description of Joseph himself. He was a rich man—rich in the knowledge of the truths of the Word. He

was of Arimathæa. It is not known where or what this place was. It has been supposed to be the same as Rama. We only know it was "a city of the Jews" (Luke xxiii. 51), which intimates that he was in the good of the doctrine of the church. Everything else recorded of him agrees with this. He was a good man and a just, and had not consented to the counsel and deed of his brethren (*v.* 50). He waited for the kingdom of God; he was only an expectant; yet the other disciples were no more. Looking for a temporal kingdom, it is remarkable that when the ignominious death of Jesus destroyed all hopes of him being the restorer of Israel, his disciples should still have clung to him, and regarded his crucified body with all the tenderness of the most devoted love. This clearly shows that although their understandings were not opened to understand the Lord's truth, their hearts had been brought under the power of the Lord's love. But why should this pious duty of burying the Lord's body have been performed by one who had not openly followed or even avowed him? It is evident that none but an opulent or dignified Jew could have had sufficient influence with Pilate to obtain from him possession of the body of Jesus. There was a spiritual, even if there had been no natural reason, why Jesus, while put to death by his enemies, should be buried by his friends. It was necessary that the Lord's crucified body should be buried, not only by a disciple, but by one who stood in the relation to him that Joseph or Nicodemus did. Burial signifies resurrection. It signifies also, and proximately, the rejection of the old man as the necessary precursor of the resurrection of the new; for the old man must die, that the new man may live. We find, therefore, in the apostolic writings, two distinct thoughts expressed, and two distinct regenerative acts represented by the Lord's burial and his resurrection. The apostle Paul says, "We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. vi. 4, 5). "Wherefore, my brethren," he says again, "ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead" (Rom. vii. 4). The reason, then, it would appear, why Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus buried the body of Jesus, was that they themselves were connected with the Jewish church actually, and only to the Christian church potentially. The burial of the Lord's body signified the putting off of the residue of the humanity from the mother; and this residue belonged to the old dis-

penetration, and not to the new. It was meet, therefore, that men that belonged to the old, should embalm and lay his sacred body in the tomb. Yet it is no less meet that while they were in the old Jewish dispensation, they should not be of it. Externally belonging to the old, and internally to the new, they were the links that connected the past with the future, and were therefore the suitable mediums through whom the Lord passed from the one to the other. They did not merely stand between the future of the Christian church and the past of the Jewish, but between the past and the future of all time; between the two great epochs which the incarnation at once separated and united. We find, therefore, that while these two secret disciples received the Lord at his death, it was his open disciples who received him at his resurrection. Having performed their pious office to their crucified Saviour, we hear of them no more. But those who had forsaken him in his last great trial came again into the relation of disciples, with all their doubts removed, and new light imparted to them. But we have yet to consider the particulars respecting Joseph of Arimathæa.

59. *And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.* The garments of the Lord which the soldiers divided among them represented the letter of the Word. The linen clothes in which Joseph wrapped his body must also have represented the external of the Word; and as the Lord, when he rose, left them in the tomb (John xx. 6), we must understand them to represent something which served but a temporary use. "Fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. xix. 8); for genuine truths, which linen garments signify, are the means of acquiring the good of life. The clean linen cloth in which Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus signified the genuine truths of the letter of the Word, as they existed in the Jewish church, but purified from the defilement which the Jews had brought upon it. The clean linen provided by Joseph, and the spices supplied by Nicodemus, unitedly represented the understanding of truth and the affection of good in which the Lord is received by those of the external church. For the Jews to have buried the Lord with their own impious hands in one of their own whited sepulchres would have been an act of aggravated profanation; and would have represented, not resurrection, but damnation; not life, but death. Joseph of Arimathæa, while a sincere disciple of Jesus, was a Jew, whose circumcision was that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise was not of men, but of God (Rom. ii. 29).

60. Joseph laid the Lord's body *in his own new tomb, which he had*

hewn out in the rock. This new tomb, out of which Jesus was to rise new-born, represented the Word itself, in which the Lord was laid. Yet it was Joseph's own tomb. It did not, therefore, represent the Word as it had been desecrated and profaned by the Jews, but the Word as apprehended by the pure in heart and holy in life, such as Joseph was. The rock out of which it was hewn was the symbol of divine truth. As Joseph's own new tomb, and as hewn out of the rock, the tomb represented also the regenerate mind, as made new for the reception of the divine truths of the Word, these divine truths being the rock out of which it was hewn. But there is a sense in which it relates to, and may be realized by, the pure in heart. Jesus even now can be crucified afresh; and he is so crucified in every truth of his Holy Word that is profaned. But there are those who act Joseph's part, by taking the injured truth and wrapping it in the clean linen of pure thought, and laying it in the new tomb of a contrite heart, embalmed in their grateful affections; and those who perform this pious duty will receive it again from the dead. Joseph further *rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre.* This stone represented the literal sense of the Word. A stone signifies truth, and the term great is expressive of goodness; so that a great stone is expressive of truth grounded in goodness. Thus the Lord in the tomb, the door of which is closed by a great stone, represented the Lord in his Word, covered, and at the same time protected, by the literal sense—dead to one dispensation, but not yet alive to another. Joseph, when he had performed his pious office, *departed.* He had accomplished his use, and now retires, perhaps with the impression that he had covered up with the stone the tomb where his own hopes were buried with the crucified body of the Just One. He departs, that God may work in the final, as in every previous stage of the glorification of his humanity, *alone.*

61. Two of the Marys who beheld the crucifixion saw also the burial of the Lord. *And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.* These signify those who are in celestial and spiritual affection of love and truth. They are said to sit; for this posture signifies an interior state—one of settled intention, and is here expressive of interior devotion to the Lord in the hope of his resurrection in the heart. These loving ones had not, perhaps, any such hope. It was their hour of darkness, and despair rather than hope filled their hearts; but where there is love there is everything, which will be brought forth in due time, as the ways of God's providence advance.

62-66. But another of the contrasts that so frequently stand out in the New Testament history comes again into view. The Lord's pious disciples having, as they supposed, performed the last rites to him whom they regarded with extinguished hope, but with undiminished love, had left the tomb to its own silent tenant. But if the disciples had relinquished all hope, the Jews had not lost all fear. They remembered, what the disciples most unaccountably seem to have utterly forgotten, that Jesus, while he was yet alive, had said, *After three days I will rise again*. Verily the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. The next day, therefore, the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate, and having stated their case, and obtained his sanction, *went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch*. It is not, perhaps, necessary to dwell further upon this than to say, that the priests and Pharisees sealing the stone represented what the Jews had done with the Word, in making it a sealed book in all that related to the Lord and his kingdom, by perverting the letter and denying the spirit, and so doing everything in their power to falsify its promises and negative its teaching. To seal is therefore a figure employed in the Word, signifying to close up, conceal, hinder from being known. The Jews, on this occasion, did what Jesus himself, after his ascension, forbade his servant to do,—“Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand” (Rev. xxii. 10). But the Jews not only sealed the stone, but set a watch, implying not only their determination, but their vigilant care, to prevent the possibility of the result which they feared so much.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE evangelist now brings us to the splendid conclusion of that divine history which opens with the birth of the Saviour into the world, and ends with his ascension into heaven. The desires and the hopes of the nations are now realized, though, like many other human desires and hopes, even of the noblest kind, in a manner very different from that in which it had been expected. Prone to trace their miseries and their happiness no further than to the nearest cause, men look for relief and support to external things. By many who looked for redemption to Israel the Lord had been received as the promised deliverer, and followed as their leader to a temporal kingdom, in which all grievances were to be redressed, and all desirable blessings

were to be enjoyed. That vision had died away; but out of the tomb in which their hopes had been buried one now arises, as the conqueror, not of natural, but of spiritual liberty, and the sovereign, not of a temporal, but an eternal kingdom. This great event—the Lord's resurrection—had already taken place, unseen by mortal eye. How the knowledge of the risen Saviour came to be communicated to his disciples—how their eyes were opened to see the grand truth, and their hearts to receive it—and how their minds were prepared for proclaiming the great salvation,—this concluding chapter unfolds.

1. *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.* The Sabbath of the Jewish church was the highest representative of the Lord's glorification. The six days in which God is said to have created the world are expressive of the states through which the Lord passed while engaged in the work of Redemption; and the Sabbath, in which God is said to have rested, is expressive of the rest into which the Lord entered when that stupendous work was completed. It would seem to be appropriate, therefore, that the Lord's life of labour and temptation should end with the sixth day of the Jewish week, that he should rest in the grave during the Jewish Sabbath, and that he should rise from the dead on the morning of the first day of a new week, thence to be called the Lord's day, and be thereafter consecrated as the Christian Sabbath. As the last Sabbath of the old dispensation departed and the first of the new drew near, the two Marys came to see the sepulchre. "The last at the cross and the first at the sepulchre," the female disciples of the Lord will ever be conspicuous in the Word, and honoured in the church, as the patterns of affectionate and devoted attachment to the Lord Jesus, when "despised and rejected of men." Suitable types are they of the pure and ardent affections of the regenerate heart, which go out while it is yet dark to see the sepulchre where the body of Jesus is laid, which go in the hour of mental obscurity and temptation, to see the Divine Word, where love has its centre and hope has its grave. Theirs was a pilgrimage of devotion, to weep over the dead, and pour some fresh ointment over one whom they desired to preserve, but dreamt not of being able to restore.

2. But when they came, *behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.* Their minds must have received as great a shock as the earth by the convulsion. A new and unexpected scene was presented to their sight, in which wonder and

joy must have been contending emotions. But let us consider the spiritual import of these extraordinary circumstances. The earthquake betokened an entire change in the state of the church, and of the world itself. It was the fulfilment of the prophecies, "the earth shook and trembled—the foundations of the earth are out of course—the earth is moved out of its place." "The angel of the Lord had descended from heaven." Who was this angel? As angels derive from the Lord all that is angelic in their nature, an angel in the Word means some attribute of the Lord himself. This angel had descended from heaven to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. We know that no angel was needed for this purpose, except for the representative use that required it. For the Lord who rose from the dead could have burst open the sepulchre, or could have come forth without disturbing the stone, as he entered into the room where the disciples were assembled without opening the door. But when we know that the stone on the mouth of the sepulchre represented the letter of the Word, and that the Word must be unsealed, and the letter, as it were, removed, in order that the Lord may come forth in the power and glory of his resurrection, we can see a sufficient spiritual reason, though there be no sufficient natural reason, for the removal of the stone by an angel, who should represent the Divine power itself; for who can break the seal and open the Word but the Lord alone? When the strong angel proclaimed, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? no one in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. The Lamb who was in the midst of the throne was alone found worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof (Rev. v. 2, 3, 9). But the angel, after he had rolled away the stone, sat upon it. The power of the spirit of the Word resting upon and teaching from the letter, is meant by the angel sitting upon the stone, as the Lord sat on Jacob's well and instructed the woman of Samaria.

3. This angel is described as the Lord himself in his glory is described. *His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.* The countenance, as it is the index, so is it the symbol, of the mind, thus of the interiors, more especially as to love and goodness. But the original term is not limited in its signification to the face, but includes the aspect of the whole person. As the countenance signifies good, garments signify truths that invest good. As this angel represents the Lord as to the power of the Word, his countenance signifies the celestial sense, his raiment the spiritual sense, as

the stone on which he sat denotes the literal sense. Therefore his countenance is said to be like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; for the countenance is expressive of interior love, seen in the light of celestial truth, and this truth, like lightning, is a burning as well as a shining light, while spiritual truth is comparatively a snowy white, because comparatively without the warmth of love.

4. The aspect of the angel produced very different effects on the keepers of the sepulchre and on the women who came to see it. The keepers, indeed, had felt the earthquake and seen the stone, which they had been set to watch, rolled away; whereas the women saw but the effects, and the angel sitting peacefully on the stone after the shock had passed away. The keepers were the representatives of the old subverted church, the women were the representatives of the new. *And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.* Shaking signifies the effect of the change upon the understanding, and becoming as dead signifies the effect upon the will. To the understanding belongs power, to the will life. Fear, which the keepers felt, is an affection common to both.

5. *And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.* The women had fear, but it was the fear that accompanies love, which is holy fear, but which even love eventually casts out. The angel knew that they sought Jesus; and those who seek him, under whatever circumstances, shall receive an answer of peace. And even if they seek him crucified, they will find him risen.

6. The angel, therefore, continued. *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.* O joyful sound! not to these pious and adventurous disciples only, but to all his disciples in all ages. If the birth of Jesus was announced as glad tidings of great joy, which should be to all people, should not his resurrection? Yes. But his nativity looked forward to all that followed, even to the salvation for which he came into the world. Yet the disciples did not see the connection between his birth and his resurrection. It required a kind of second revelation to enable them even to understand it; so slow of heart is man to believe all the prophets have written respecting the necessity of Christ suffering and entering into his glory. But here is the secret. It is through suffering in us that he is glorified in us. This is one of the truths, therefore, that can only be learned by experience. We must suffer with him, that we may rise with him. The disciple must himself be risen before he can know him, and the power of his resurrection. Nor is it till then that the disciple can understand that the Lord is

risen "as he said." How this must have struck the women! "As he said." Verily the operation of the Lord's Spirit is required to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he has said unto them. While the women were told that the Lord was not there, they were invited to *come and see the place where the Lord lay*. The "place" where he lay signifies the *state* of humiliation to which he submitted for our sakes. We look at the place where the Redeemer lay when we look into the Word, in order to contemplate the sufferings, and temptations, and death which he voluntarily underwent for our sakes—when we follow him into the wilderness, and the garden, and to the cross; and when we look at what he endured for our sakes, imperfect as our estimate of his sufferings must be, we cannot but wonder and adore. But while we are invited and enabled to look into the Word, and see described in it the state of humiliation to which for our sakes the Lord submitted, we are at the same time instructed and enabled to see that he is not there,—that, having put off all infirmity and finiteness, he is risen in a humanity completely glorified.

7. The angel then said to them: *And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead*. The female disciples representing the affections of the will, through which the Lord first flows in with his love, the male disciples represent the thoughts of the understanding, which thence receive a perception of truth. We see in this providential arrangement. The affections are held under the influence of the Lord's love in states of trial; and even when the understanding may be clouded with doubts, and almost overcome with unbelief, light may be conveyed to it by an internal way, and faith and confidence restored. They were desired further to say: *and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you*. Galilee represented the church among the Gentiles. The Lord went there after his resurrection, to represent that he would be received by the Gentiles, and be acknowledged by them. Galilee represented also the natural mind, which is analogous to the Gentile mind, for the Gentile world forms the natural mind of man collectively, the church forming the spiritual mind. This was that mind which our Lord assumed and glorified in the world. Therefore, when he had risen from the dead he went into Galilee. And there, also, he desires his disciples to go. For as regeneration is an image and effect of the Lord's glorification, where the Lord goes, there must his disciples go likewise. The Lord goes before them. He leads and directs them thither. He still goes before his disciples into Galilee after his resurrection. His resurrection signifies that he rises, yea, is every moment

rising, in the hearts of the regenerate : and those in whose hearts he rises he leads into the good of life ; there they see him ; for they who do his will shall know his truth to be truth.

8. We read that *they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy ; and did run to bring his disciples word.* To depart or go is to live, or carry out a purpose or direction actually ; and to do this quickly is to do it fully and certainly ; for time signifies state, and thence quickly and speedily signifies a present state of affection and thought ; thus, what is certain and full. Running also signifies a state of eager affection ; and to run to tell signifies the affection of making known.

9. *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail !* The Divine purpose in thus meeting his overjoyed disciples was, no doubt, to give them the assurance of personal sight that he was really risen, and to enable them to carry the glad tidings to their brethren, confirmed by their own experience, and, with the words of Jesus himself upon their lips, require them to go to meet him in Galilee. We can imagine with what excess of astonishment and joy these women must have beheld their beloved Lord and Saviour alive. To see him with their own eyes, to hear him with their own ears—what transport of feeling must it have produced ; and so soon after they had gone to the sepulchre, to look with blank sorrow on the bloodless body ! And, oh, what blessedness to hear salvation sounded in their willing ears ! Health, spiritual, saving health, is the first salutation that issues from his sacred lips—health to them, and to poor diseased and suffering humanity wherever it exists. No wonder that these loving and overjoyed ones *came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.* This is supposed by some to mean, not that they actually clung to the person of the Lord, but that they prostrated themselves before him ; and this is supposed to be necessary to be understood to make the relation consistent with the Lord's words to Mary alone, "Touch me not." It is highly desirable to use all legitimate means of harmonizing the literal sense of the Scriptures. But when we are convinced that the letter is designed as a vehicle for the spirit, absolute literal consistency is not to be regarded as an absolutely necessary evidence of the inspiration of the Word, nor of its power of instruction in righteousness. Certain it is, that the words carry the impression which we naturally draw from them ; and it is the meaning of the relation, rather than the absolute nature of the fact, that forms the basis of the spiritual sense. Thus considered, their holding Jesus by the feet signifies conjunction with him by the divine natural

principle of his humanity, now glorified; and their worshipping him denotes that they rendered him the homage of their best and purest affections.

10. Jesus then addresses to them almost the same words which had been addressed to them by the angel: *Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.* While this may be regarded as, like all repetitions in the Word, the same thing addressed to a higher or different faculty, flowing from a higher principle, there is one momentous point in which it differs from the other. The Lord calls his disciples his brethren. This expresses a most profound, encouraging, and consolatory truth. It implies that the Lord, by the humanity he assumed and glorified, had come nearer to us—that he had become, so to speak, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. The Creator had taken on himself the form of the creature. And although he had put off all imperfection and finiteness, he retained all that was really human, and is therefore most truly man as well as God. Having, indeed, made the human divine and the Divine human, the Lord is truly GOD WITH US, because he is God-man. Thence the Lord condescends to call his disciples brethren. In the spiritual sense a brother, as distinguished from a disciple, is one who is connected with the Lord by love, as distinguished from one who is connected with him by faith. In the abstract sense a brother is the principle of love, and a disciple is the principle of faith; so that the same person may be at once a disciple and a brother: and it was because the Lord's followers were now capable of entering into this more intimate connection and relationship with their Lord that he tenderly invited them as brethren to meet him in Galilee. A distinction similar to that now noticed is involved in servant and friend,—as where the Lord said to his disciples, "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" (John xv. 15).

11-18. At the time these women left the sepulchre, *some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.* When the council were assembled, unable to resist the evidence of the soldiers that the Lord's resurrection had taken place, they bribed the guard to say that his disciples had stolen him away while his keepers slept—an account that acquired credence and currency among the Jews. It is needless to use any arguments to refute this theory. They may be found in literal commentaries. The fact presents a melancholy instance of the power of unbelief. Unbe-

liervers often plead want of evidence. Here is an instance of determined unbelief against admitted evidence. It is too seldom considered that belief or unbelief is but a means to an end. Belief or unbelief has its roots in the end we have in view—in the ruling love by which we are actuated. Hence that grand doctrine of the church, that faith has no ground but charity, and that where there is no charity, or love, there can be no faith. How marvellously, but painfully, was this exemplified in the whole course of the conduct of the Jewish leaders in relation to Jesus, and most of all in this climax of their cruel hatred and unprincipled opposition to the sinless, the just, the beneficent One! How instructive a lesson does this circumstance convey! It tells that the ground of unbelief is in ourselves, that nothing can give us faith that enters no further than the understanding, and that the clearest evidence will be repelled by evil cherished in the heart. And how does this sad relation tend to produce humiliation of heart, when we reflect that these false and malevolent rulers of the Jews are types of evils and falsities that are inherent in our own fallen nature, that rise up against the good and the truth which through divine mercy we may have received. This is an opposition from within that the faithful will ever have to encounter in becoming experimentally convinced of the great truth of the Lord's resurrection—against his rising in the heart itself. We refrain from a more minute consideration of this part of the history. We are told that the reason that certain passages relating to the sin of profanation are not minutely explained in the writings is, that the angels cannot contemplate this crime, nor even the subject itself, without horror. Let us therefore draw a veil over this last and most presumptuous instance of profanation of the truth relating to Jesus the Saviour by the Jews.

16. We proceed to the more agreeable and still more useful subject of the Lord's meeting with his disciples. *Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.* In the order of the history as derived from a comparison, and what is called a harmony, of the gospels, this is not understood to be the first meeting between the apostles and Jesus after his resurrection. Matthew has recorded only this one meeting, his gospel ending with it, without including the account of the ascension, when the greatest number of his disciples were assembled at once in his presence after his resurrection. It is certain, however, that Matthew has brought into the account of this one meeting circumstances that belong to several, which shows how subordinately the sacred writers, or rather

the Spirit which guided them, regarded mere historical accuracy, on which the mere literalist lays so much stress. Jesus met his disciples in a mountain in Galilee. Galilee, we have seen, represented the glorified natural principle in the Lord, and consequently the regenerate natural principle in man. This is the ground on which the Lord and his disciples meet after his resurrection; and this meeting in Galilee was *the* meeting, the one that had been alluded to by Jesus, even before his death, "I will go before you into Galilee" (ch. xxvi. 32). But this meeting took place in a mountain, to represent that love is the basis of the conjunction of the Lord and man—the very principle in and by which they are united. And what is this natural principle as to love in which there is union? The Lord himself expressed it when he said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John xv. 10). The natural principle, though the last in order, is not the least in importance. There are, indeed, two things in the order of succession, which are the best and the greatest—the first and the last; the first, where every good begins as an end, and the last, where it terminates as a use. When the Lord met his disciples in the mountain in Galilee, he gave us a sign, "that all religion has relation to life, and that the life of religion is to do good."

17. The meeting between the Lord and his disciples in the mountain in Galilee must have been an affecting one, if such an ordinary term can be applied to a meeting between Jesus and his disciples, who now had found all their temporal ideas and feelings cast into the shade, and higher views and purer motives dawning, at least, upon their hearts and minds. No wonder, then, that *when they saw him, they worshipped him*. There are several other cases recorded, in this and the other gospels, of Jesus being worshipped. We have not hitherto said much on this point, and cannot enter largely into it here. Nor is it necessary. The divinity of the Lord is so convincingly provable, and proved by every direct and indirect evidence, that it is not difficult to discover in such passages as this another evidence of that great truth. It is true that the word here employed is used to express a kind of worship that is also paid to men, as in Matt. xviii. 26; but this is the same word that expresses the worship which Paul deprecated when offered by Cornelius (Acts x. 28), and which the angel refused when offered him by John, and which that celestial messenger desired him to render to God, as its only proper Object (Rev. xix. 10). Jesus never refused worship, even when offered by all the host of heaven (see Rev. v., vi., &c). In accepting, then, on

this and other occasions, the homage which men and angels refused, he practically acknowledged himself to be God, the supreme Object of human worship. But it is not necessary to pursue this subject further. We assume that members of the true Christian church have settled views on this all-important point. It is enough to know that Jesus is the True God and Eternal Life; supreme worship becomes his due as a consequence. Every one worships the Lord according to his state; and whatever may have been the character of the worship of the disciples then, worship by the Christian disciple is the worship of Christ as God. It is of much importance here to know what the worship is which the disciples render to Jesus. The quality of the worship we offer is of still more importance than the understood character of the Object of our worship. Worship is the practical homage of all the thoughts and affections to Him who is their Author. To worship is to serve; and we only truly worship the Lord when every affection of good and perception of truth is employed, in word and act, in his service—in doing his will. While the disciples generally worshipped the Lord, *some doubted*. It is probable, as some suppose, that the eleven were not the only disciples who met the Lord on this occasion; for no one but Thomas had withheld belief. However, *some doubted*. And these doubters represent some doubts that may trouble even the sincere worshipper. And what are doubts but contradictions in ourselves to the unity and harmony of truth?—contradictions not in the perceptions only, but in the affections also; doubts that haunt many a mind, and that only depart as the Lord gains an ascendancy in the heart and life, or is glorified in our souls and in our bodies, which are his.

18. When the disciples worshipped the Lord, then *Jesus came and spake unto them*. It appears from this that at the very sight of Jesus, while they were yet at some distance from him, they fell down and worshipped him; and that, while they were thus engaged in adoration, Jesus drew near to them. The scene is impressive; but the relation itself is instructive. It reminds us of the promise, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James iv. 8). Nearness is proximity of state; and true worship brings him near who was before afar off, and makes him, when near, still nearer. And what words those were which the Lord addressed to his adoring disciples! *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*. These words are indeed of the highest significance, and teach the greatest truth—*one of the highest, if not the very highest, ever delivered by God to man*. They teach the truth that Jesus Christ is the great and only God, the

Governor of heaven and earth—that is, of the whole spiritual and material universe. This truth is precious for what it contains, which is not merely the fact that Christ is God, but that God is in Christ—the eternal Divinity exercising all its powers in and by the Divine humanity. What must have been the impression of the disciples when they heard this declaration from the lips of Jesus! They had seen him, they had followed him, they had been with him in his temptations, and he had called them brethren; and now he tells them that he with whom they had become familiar had all power in heaven and in earth. This is just the value of this great truth—that Jesus, who has entered into all our states and sympathies, is Ruler over the two worlds to which we belong, one of which we live in for a time here, the other in which we are to live hereafter for ever. Need we say one word on the seeming incompatibility of this language with that of supreme divinity? How could he possess independent divine power when he only received it? To all such questions it is enough to answer, This language is equally inconsistent with the notions either of Christ's being a second divine person or a mere man. A divine person could not receive such power; a mere human person could not contain it. The Lord's declaration can only be rationally understood on the principle that the power of the Lord's divinity was given to his humanity. This humanity was not the same as that of a mere man. "A body hast thou prepared for me," was pronounced from heaven in anticipation of the incarnation. The body which became the temple of the Divinity was prepared even in the womb of the virgin, by being begotten by that very power of the Highest, of which it had now become the sole possessor, and was raised from the dead by that same power. The humanity was thus a temple builded by the Divinity as a residence for itself, and now the power of the Divine is in the human, as all the power of the human soul is in the human body. Thus the power, like the presence, of God is with us in the humanity of Christ, that is kindred to our own. But there is another truth with this general one. Heaven and earth mean spiritually not only the church in heaven and the church on earth, they mean also the two corresponding parts and principles in every member of the church—the internal man, which is heaven in him, and his external man, which is earth in him. Jesus has all power in both; and his possession of power in these is to be contrasted with the power of which they were the subjects before the incarnation. Before God was manifest in the flesh, the Divine power in man was operative mediately through heaven, and men were ruled through

angels, for these were nearest to him; but since the Lord's glorification, the Divine power is operative immediately through the humanity in which God dwells, and in which he is immediately and intimately present with him, and he is therefore now ruled by the Lord himself. The Lord as a man is nearer to us than angels are—and when I speak of nearness, I do not mean nearness in space, but nearness in nature—for the Lord has a humanity, not only spiritual, like that of angels, but natural, like that of men—always understanding that, when we speak of the Lord's natural humanity, we mean divine-natural—a humanity analogous to ours, but as much more perfect as the Creator is more perfect than the creature.

19. When the Lord had thus instructed his disciples regarding the power which he had acquired by glorification, and which he was now to exercise in and amongst them, he gave them the commission on which they were to act. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.* When first sent forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom, they were required to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; now they are commanded to go into all the world. These two commissions were consistent with the different conditions in which they then stood. Their first labour was to be bestowed upon the internal; now it was to be extended to the external also. And their commission was to teach all nations. Nations, meaning naturally the heathen, spiritually signify those who are in states of good, especially of simple good, for these only are in the desire, and thence in the capacity to receive truth. In the abstract sense nations signify the principles themselves of good in the external or natural mind, as the lost sheep of the house of Israel signify the principles of good in the internal or spiritual mind; so that we are here instructed that even in ourselves we are to see that there is good to receive truth, and to see that where there is good it ought to be supplied with truth, to enlighten and guide it—in fact, to save it—for natural good is only made spiritual and saving by means of truth. The disciples were further commanded to *baptize* the nations whom they instructed. There can be no doubt that this command has reference to the formal baptism of all who receive the Christian faith, or are admitted into the Christian church. It is not our object to consider baptism as a Christian sacrament, to be administered in the Christian church. The doctrine of the church, as well as the words of the Lord, declare this to be of perpetual obligation, and to be of importance to us, both as a sign of introduction into the Christian church, and, at the same time, of connection with the church in heaven, and a memorial that the person baptized with water

is to be regenerated by the truth and the Spirit of truth. Spiritual baptism, therefore, which is the antitype and the end of water baptism, is the washing of regeneration. Baptism was to be performed *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. These are three names of the one Divine Being; but they are the names of three distinct principles or essentials of his nature. The Father is the Essential Divinity, the Son is the Divine Humanity, and the Holy Spirit is the Divine Operation of the Father and the Son. In a more interior but harmonious sense, the Father is the Divine Love, the Son is the Divine Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is the Divine Power. Those who were taught were to be baptized in the name of these. And when we reflect that in the Word a name of any person or thing means the quality of that person or thing, we are enabled to understand the instructive import of this command. For to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is to regenerate by the communication and reception of love from God, of wisdom from God, and power from God. But to see the full significance of this formula, we must further consider that man was created an image of God, and that he can not only be restored to the Divine image, but renewed in all the parts or faculties of his nature, by the reception into them of a finite measure of the qualities or principles that make up the perfect nature of God. Man has a will, created after the likeness and adapted for the reception of God's love; he has an understanding, created after the image and adapted for the reception of God's wisdom; and he has the faculty of acting, created after the image and adapted to the reception of God's power. Now, man is regenerated when he receives of God's love into his will, of God's wisdom into his understanding, and of God's power into his words and works. Nothing can baptize the heart but love, nothing can baptize the understanding but wisdom, and nothing can baptize the life but the power of these principles manifested in a life of true holiness. This is the baptism of the soul, and that which makes us members of the Lord's body.

20. The disciples were to teach the nations, or the baptized of them, *to observe all things whatsoever the Lord had commanded them*. Salvation can only be secured by doing all things which the Lord has commanded in his teaching—that is, throughout his whole Word, of which he is the Author. But the force of this part of the Lord's commission depends on the circumstance that baptism is to be followed up by his teaching. A teaching is to precede baptism, and another is to succeed it. The first is a teaching of principles, the second of duties, or, what

is the same, the first is a teaching of the internal, the second a teaching of the external. Further, the teaching which is to follow baptism is the teaching of duties that are to follow baptism, on the principle that, unless the regenerate continue faithful in persevering holiness to the end of life, there can be no salvation. "He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God." And how encouraging is the final promise of the Lord to his faithful followers! *And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The Lord promised to be with his disciples at the very time he was about to leave them. Here we see the difference between real and apparent, between spiritual and bodily presence. Well was this difference stated by the Lord himself in the course of his teaching. When promising his faithful ones that when he went away from them he would send another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, saying at the same time, *I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you;* he says respecting the Spirit, "For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John xiv. 17). It is this presence of the Lord *in* his disciples that is the real source of their comfort and power. It was this presence that the Lord promised. And this presence they were to enjoy to the end of the world. In the general meaning, the saving presence of the Lord with his people till the end of the church is promised. The world does not mean even literally the world as the habitation of man, the theatre of human action,—it means the age, the religious dispensation, the consummation of which is meant by the end. In reference to the members of the church individually, the end of their age is the end of life with those who persevere unto the end; for those who are faithful unto death, to them the Lord will give a crown of life. But with all the Lord is present unto the end. He never withdraws his presence from any. The Lord's words, literally rendered, are still more expressive and comforting. "I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age." He is with his church and people in all their states, to enlighten them with his truth, to influence them with his love, and to support them with his power. If the church declines, he never leaves her, but continues to be with her, and watch over her, even till her end comes, when she rejects him, and brings an end upon herself. If the member of the church, who has been baptized in the sacred name of the Lord, falls away, and turns to the beggarly elements of the world, the Lord is even with him always, even to the end of his state. But let us endeavour so to sanctify our minds and lives by the influence of his Spirit, and by the teaching of his Word, that we may

know no end but that which Providence appoints us, when we have completed our course here below, and are called into the higher mansions of his house, where we may be with him always, for ever.

Amen. Although this does not appear to be a part of the inspired text, it may be considered as the response of the church, by which it has been added. Even so, let us desire, and pray, and labour to secure the fulfilment of this divine promise—that Jesus may be our portion in time and in eternity.

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