

The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah

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Book III-a Jordan to the Mount of Transfiguration

Chapter 19 Return to Capernaum

Healing of the Centurion's Servant

(Matthew 8:1,5-15; Mark 3:20,21; Luke 7:1-10.)

We are once again in Capernaum. It is remarkable how much, connected not only with the Ministry of Jesus, but with His innermost Life, gathers around that little fishing town. In all probability its prosperity was chiefly due to the neighbouring Tiberias, which Herod Antipas had built, about ten years previously. Noteworthy is it also, how many of the most attractive characters and incidents in the Gospel history are connected with that Capernaum, which, as a city, rejected its own real glory, and, like Israel, and for the same reason, at last incurred a prophetic doom commensurate to its former privileges.

But as yet Capernaum was still exalted up to heaven. Here was the home of that believing Court-official, whose child Jesus had healed. Here also was the household of Peter; and here the paralytic had found, together with forgiveness of his sins, health of body. Its streets, with their outlook on the deep blue Lake, had been thronged by eager multitudes in search of life to body and soul. Here Matthew-Levi had heard and followed the call of Jesus; and here the good Centurion had in stillness learned to love Israel, and serve Israel's King, and built with no niggard hand that Synagogue, most splendid of those yet exhumed in Galilee', which had been consecrated by the Presence and Teaching of Jesus, and by prayers, of which the conversion of Jairus, its chief ruler, seems the blessed answer. And now, from the Mount of Beatitudes, it was again to His temporary home at Capernaum that Jesus retired. Yet not either to solitude or to rest. For, of that multitude which had hung entranced on His Words many followed Him, and there was now such constant pressure around Him, that, in the zeal of their attendance upon the wants and demands of those who hungered after the Bread of Life, alike Master and disciples found not leisure so much as for the necessary sustenance of the body.

The circumstances, the incessant work, and the all-consuming zeal which even His friends could but ill understand, led to the apprehension the like of which is so often entertained by well-meaning persons in all ages, in their practical ignorance of the all-engrossing but also sustaining character of engagements about the Kingdom that the balance of judgment might be overweighted, and high reason brought into bondage to the poverty of our earthly frame. In its briefness, the account of what these friends or rather those from Him' His home said and did, is most pictorial. On tidings reaching them, with reiterated, growing, and perhaps Orientally exaggerating details, they hastened out of their house in a neighbouring street to take possession of Him, as if He had needed their charge. It is not necessary to include the Mother of Jesus in the number of those who actually went. Indeed, the later express mention of His Mother and brethren seems rather opposed to the supposition. Still less does the objection deserve serious refutation, that any such procedure, assumedly, on the part of the Virgin Mother, would be incompatible with the history of Jesus Nativity. For, all must have felt, that the zeal

of God's House was, literally, consuming Him, and the other view of it, that it was setting on fire, not the physical, but the psychical framework of His humiliation, seems in no way inconsistent with what loftiest, though as yet dim, thought had come to the Virgin about her Divine Son. On the other hand, this idea, that He was beside Himself afforded the only explanation of what otherwise would have been to them well-nigh inexplicable. To the Eastern mind especially this want of self-possession, the being beside oneself, would point to possession by another God or Devil. It was on the ground of such supposition that the charge was so constantly raised by the Scribes, and unthinkingly taken up by the people, that Jesus was mad, and had a devil: not a demoniacal possession, be it marked, but possession by the Devil, in the absence of self-possession. And hence our Lord characterised this charge as really blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. And this also explains how, while unable to deny the reality of His Works, they could still resist their evidential force.

However that incident may for the present have ended, it could have caused but brief interruption to His Work. Presently there came the summons of the heathen Centurion and the healing of His servant, which both Matthew and Luke record, as specially bearing on the progressive unfolding of Christ's Mission. Notably these two Evangelists; and notably with variations due to the peculiar standpoint of their narratives. No really serious difficulties will be encountered in trying to harmonise the details of these two narratives; that is, if any one should attach importance to such precise harmony. At any rate, we cannot fail to perceive the reason of these variations. Meyer regards the account of Luke as the original, Keim that of Matthew both on subjective rather than historical grounds. But we may as well note, that the circumstance, that the event is passed over by Mark, militates against the favourite modern theory of the Gospels being derived from an original tradition (what is called the original Mark Ur-Marcus).

If we keep in view the historical object of Matthew, as primarily addressing himself to Jewish, while Luke wrote more especially for Gentile readers, we arrive, at least, at one remarkable outcome of the variations in their narratives. Strange to say, the Judæan Gospel gives the pro-Gentile, the Gentile narrative the pro-Jewish, presentation of the event. Thus, in Matthew the history is throughout sketched as personal and direct dealing with the heathen Centurion on the part of Christ, while in the Gentile narrative of Luke the dealing with the heathen is throughout indirect, by the intervention of Jews, and on the ground of the Centurion's spiritual sympathy with Israel. Again, Matthew quotes the saying of the Lord which holds out to the faith of Gentiles a blessed equality with Israel in the great hope of the future, while it puts aside the mere claim of Israel after the flesh, and dooms Israel to certain judgment. On the other hand, Luke omits all this. A strange inversion it might seem, that the Judæan Gospel should contain what the Gentile account omits, except for this, that Matthew argues with his countrymen the real standing of the Gentiles, while Luke pleads with the Gentiles for sympathy and love with Jewish modes of thinking. The one is not only an exposition, but a justification, of the event as against Israel; the other an Eirenicon, as well as a touching representation of the plea of the younger with his elder brother at the door of the Father's House. But the fundamental truth in both accounts is the same; nor is it just to say that in the narrative the Gentiles are preferred before Israel. So far from this, their faith is only put on an equality with that of believing Israel. It is not Israel, but Israel's fleshly claims and unbelief, that are rejected; and Gentile faith occupies, not a new position outside Israel, but shares with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the fulfilment of the promise made to their faith. Thus we have here the widest Jewish universalism, the true interpretation of Israel's hope; and this, even by the admission of our opponents, not as a later addition, but as forming part of Christ's original teaching. But if so, it revives, only in accentuated manner, the question: Whence this essential difference between the teaching of Christ on this subject, and that of contemporary Rabbinism.

Yet another point may be gained from the admissions of negative criticism, at least on the part of its more thoughtful representatives. Keim is obliged to acknowledge the authenticity of the narrative. It is immaterial here which recension of it may be regarded as the original. The Christ did say what the Gospels represent! But Strauss has shown, that in such case any natural or semi-natural explanation

of the healing is impossible. Accordingly, the Trilemma left is: either Christ was really what the Gospels represent Him, or He was a daring enthusiast, or (saddest of all) He must be regarded as a conscious impostor. If either of the two last alternatives were adopted, it would, in the first instance, be necessary to point out some ground for the claim of such power on the part of Jesus. What could have prompted Him to do so? Old Testament precedent there was none; certainly not in the cure of Naaman by Elisha. And Rabbinic parallelism there was none. For, although a sudden cure, and at a distance, is related in connection with a Rabbi, all the circumstances are absolutely different. In the Jewish story recourse was, indeed, had to a Rabbi; but for prayer that the sick might be healed of God, not for actual healing by the Rabbi. Having prayed, the Rabbi informed the messengers who had come to implore his help, that the fever had left the sick. But when asked by them whether he claimed to be a prophet, he expressly repudiated any prophetic knowledge, far more any supernatural power of healing, and explained that liberty in prayer always indicated to him that his prayer had been answered. All analogy thus failing, the only explanation left to negative criticism, in view of the admitted authenticity of the narrative, is, that the cure was the result of the psychical influence of the Centurion's faith and of that of his servant. But what, in that case, of the words which Jesus admittedly spoke? Can we, as some would have it, rationally account for their use by the circumstance that Jesus had had experience of such psychical influences on disease or that Christ's words were, so to speak, only an affirmation of the Centurion's faith something between a benedictory wish and an act? Surely, suggestions like these carry their own refutation.

Apart, then, from explanations which have been shown untenable, what is the impression left on our minds of an event, the record of which is admitted to be authentic? The heathen Centurion is a real historical personage. He was captain of the troop quartered in Capernaum, and in the service of Herod Antipas. We know that such troops were chiefly recruited from Samaritans and Gentiles of Caesarea. Nor is there the slightest evidence that this Centurion was a proselyte of righteousness. The accounts both in Matthew and in Luke are incompatible with this idea. A proselyte of righteousness could have had no reason for not approaching Christ directly, nor would he have spoken of himself as unfit that Christ should come under his roof. But such language quite accorded with Jewish notions of a Gentile, since the houses of Gentiles were considered as defiled, and as defiling those who entered them. On the other hand, the proselytes of righteousness were in all respects equal to Jews, so that the words of Christ concerning Jews and Gentiles, as reported by Matthew, would not have been applicable to them. The Centurion was simply one who had learned to love Israel and to reverence Israel's God; one who, not only in his official position, but from love and reverence, had built that Synagogue, of which, strangely enough, now after eighteen centuries, the remains, in their rich and elaborate carvings of cornices and entablatures, of capitals and niches, show with what liberal hand he had dealt his votive offerings.

We know too little of the history of the man, to judge what earlier impulses had led him to such reverence for Israel's God. There might have been something to incline him towards it in his early upbringing, perhaps in Caesarea; or in his family relationships; perhaps in that very servant (possibly a Jew) whose implicit obedience to his master seems in part to have led him up to faith in analogous submission of all things to the behests of Christ. The circumstances, the times, the place, the very position of the man, make such suppositions rational, even suggested them. In that case, his whole bearing would be consistent with itself, and with what we know of the views and feelings of the time. In the place where the son of his fellow official at the Court of Herod had been healed by the Word of Jesus, spoken at a distance, 18 in the Capernaum which was the home of Jesus and the scene of so many miracles, it was only what we might expect, that in such case he should turn to Jesus and ask His help. Quiet consistent with his character is the straightforwardness of his expectancy, characteristically illustrated by his military experience what Bengel designates as the wisdom of his faith beautifully shining out in the bluntness of the soldier. When he had learned to own Israel's God, and to believe in the absolute unlimited power of Jesus, no such difficulties would come to him, nor, assuredly, such cavils rise, as in the minds of the Scribes, or even of the Jewish laity. Nor is it even

necessary to suppose that, in his unlimited faith in Jesus, the Centurion had distinct apprehension of His essential Divinity. In general, it holds true, that, throughout the Evangelic history, belief in the Divinity of our Lord was the outcome of experience of His Person and Work, not the condition and postulate of it, as is the case since the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Ghost and His indwelling in the Church.

In view of these facts, the question with the Centurion would be: not, Could Jesus heal his servant, but, Would He do so? And again, this other specifically: Since, so far as he knew, no application from any in Israel, be it even publican or sinner, had been doomed to disappointment, would he, as a Gentile, be barred from share in this blessing? was he unworthy or, rather, unfit for it? Thus this history presents a crucial question, not only as regarded the character of Christ's work, but the relation to it of the Gentile world. Quiet consist with this nay, its necessary outcome were the scruples of the Centurion to make direct, personal application to Jesus. In measure as he revered Jesus, would these scruples, from his own standpoint, increase. As the houses of Gentiles were unclean entrance into them, and still more familiar fellowship, would defile. The Centurion must have known this; and the higher he placed Jesus on the pinnacle of Judaism, the more natural was it for him to communicate with Christ through the elders of the Jews, and not to expect the Personal Presence of the Master, even if the application to him were attended with success. And here it is important (for the criticism of this history) to mark that, alike in the view of the Centurion, and even in that of the Jewish elders who under-took his commission, Jesus as yet occupied the purely Jewish stand-point.

Closely considered, whatever verbal differences, there is not any real discrepancy in this respect between the Judaeian presentation of the event in Matthew and the fuller Gentile account of it by Luke. From both narratives we are led to infer that the house of the Centurion was not in Capernaum itself, but in its immediate neighbourhood, probably on the road to Tiberias. And so in Matt. viii. 7, we read the words of our Saviour when consenting: I, having come, will heal him; just as in Luke's narrative a space of time intervenes, in which intimation is conveyed to the Centurion, when he sends friends to arrest Christ's actual coming into his house. Nor does Matthew speak of any actual request on the part of the Centurion, even though at first sight his narrative seems to imply a personal appearance. The general statement beseeching Him' although it is not added in what manner, with what words, nor for what special thing must be explained by more detailed narrative of the embassy of Jewish Elders. There is another marked agreement in the seeming difference of the two accounts. In Luke's narrative, the second message of the Centurion embodies two different expressions, which our Authorised Version unfortunately renders by the same word. It should read: Trouble not Thyself, for I am not fit (Leviticallly speaking) that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; Leviticallly, or Judaistically speaking, my house is not a fit place for Thy entrance; Wherefore neither did I judge myself worthy (spiritually, morally, religiously) [hxiwsa, Pondus habens, ejusdem ponderis cum aliquo, pretio aequans] to come unto Thee. Now, markedly, in Matthew's presentation of the same event to the Jews, this latter worthiness is omitted, and we only have Luke's first term, fit (ikanoV): I am not fit that thou shouldest come under my roof my house is unfitting Thine entrance. This seems to bear out the reasons previously indicated for the characteristic peculiarities of the two narratives.

But in their grand leading features the two narratives entirely agree. There is earnest supplication for his sick, seemingly dying servant. Again, the Centurion in the fullest sense believes in the power of Jesus to heal, in the same manner as he knows his own commands as an officer would be implicitly obeyed; for, surely, no thoughtful reader would seriously entertain the suggestion, that the military language of the Centurion only meant, that he regarded disease as caused by evil demons or noxious power who obeyed Jesus, as soldiers or servants do their officer or master. Such might have been the underlying Jewish view of the times; but the fact, that in this very thing Jesus contrasted the faith of the Gentile with that of Israel, indicates that the language in question must be taken in its obvious sense. But in his self-acknowledged unfitness lay the real fitness of this good soldier for membership with the true Israel; and his deep-felt unworthiness the real worthiness (the ejusdem ponderis) for the Kingdom and its blessings. It was this utter disclaimer of all claim, outward or inward, which prompted

that absoluteness of trust which deemed all things possible with Jesus, and marked the real faith of the true Israel. Here was one, who was in the state described in the first clauses of the Beatitudes and to whom came the promise of the second clauses; because Christ is the connecting link between the two, and because He consciously was such to the Centurion, and, indeed, the only possible connecting link between them.

And so we mark it, in what must be regarded as the high-point in this history, so far as its teaching to us all, and therefore the reason of its record in the New Testament, is concerned: that participation in the blessedness of the kingdom is not connected with any outward relationship towards it, nor belongs to our inward consciousness in regard to it; but is granted by the King to that faith which in deepest simplicity realises, and holds fast by Him. And yet, although discarding every Jewish claim to them or, it may be, in our days, everything that is merely outwardly Christian these blessings are not outside, still less beyond, what was the hope of the Old Testament, nor in our days the expectancy of the Church, but are literally its fulfilment; the sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. Higher than, and beyond this not even Christ's provision can take us.

But for the fuller understanding of the words of Christ, the Jewish modes of thought, which He used in illustration, required to be briefly explained. It was common belief, that in the day of the Messiah redeemed Israel would be gathered to a great feast, together with the patriarchs and heroes of the Jewish faith. This notion, which was but a coarsely literal application of such prophetic figures as in Is. xxv. 6, had perhaps yet another and deeper meaning. As each weekly Sabbath was to be honoured by a feast, in which the best which the family could procure was to be placed on the board, so would the world's great Sabbath be marked by a feast in which the Great Householder, Israel's King, would entertain His household and Guests. Into the painfully, and, from the notions of the times, grossly realistic description of this feast, it is needless here to enter. One thing, however, was clear: Gentiles could have no part in that feast. In fact, the shame and anger of these foes on seeing the table spread for this Jewish feast was among the points specially noticed as fulfilling the predictions of Ps. xxiii. 5. On this point, then, the words of Jesus in reference to the believing Centurion formed the most marked contrast to Jewish teaching.

In another respect also we mark similar contrariety. When our Lord consigned the unbelieving to outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth he once more used Jewish language, only with opposite application of it. Gehinnom of which the entrance, marked by ever ascending smoke, was in the valley of Hinnom, between two palm trees lay beyond the mountains of darkness. It was a place of darkness, 28 to which in the day of the Lord, the Gentiles would be consigned. On the other hand, the merit of circumcision would in the day of the Messiah deliver Jewish sinners from Gehinnom. It seems a moot question, whether the expression outer darkness may not have been intended to designate besides the darkness outside the lighted house of the Father, and even beyond the darkness of Gehinnom a place of hopeless, endless night. Associated with it is weeping and the gnashing of teeth. In Rabbinic thought the former was connected with sorrow, the latter almost always anger not, as generally supposed, with anguish.

To complete our apprehension of the contrast between the views of the Jews and the teaching of Jesus, we must bear in mind that, as the Gentiles could not possibly share in the feast of the Messiah, so Israel had claim and title to it. To use Rabbinic terms, the former were children of Gehinnom but Israel children of the Kingdom or, in strictly Rabbinic language, royal children children of God of heaven children of the upper chamber (the Aliyah) and of the world to come. In fact, in their view, God had first sat down on His throne as King, when the hymn of deliverance (Ex. xv. 1) was raised by Israel the people which took upon itself that yoke of the Law which all other nations of the world had rejected.

Never, surely, could the Judaism of His hearers have received more rude shock than by this inversion of all their cherished beliefs. There was a feast of Messianic fellowship, a recognition on the part of the King of all His faithful subjects, a joyous festive gathering with the fathers of the faith. But this fellowship was not of outward, but of spiritual kinship. There were children of the Kingdom and there

was an outer darkness with its anguish and despair. But this childship was of the Kingdom, such as He had opened it to all believers; and that outer darkness theirs, who had only outward claims to present. And so this history of the believing Centurion is at the same time an application of the Sermon on the Mount' in this also aptly following the order of its record and a further carrying out of its teaching. Negatively, it differentiated the Kingdom from --Israel ; while, positively, it placed the hope of --Israel--, and fellowship with its promises, within reach of all faith, whether of Jew or Gentile. He Who taught such new and strange truth could never be called a mere reformer of Judaism. There cannot be reform where all the fundamental principles are different. Surely He was the Son of God, the Messiah of men, Who, in such surrounding, could so speak to Jew and Gentile of God and His Kingdom. And surely also, He, Who could so bring spiritual life to the dead, could have no difficulty by the same word, in the self-same hour to restore life and health to the servant of him, whose faith had inherited the Kingdom. The first grafted tree of heathendom that had so blossomed could not shake off unripe fruit. If the teaching of Christ was new and was true, so must His work have been. And in this lies the highest vindication of this miracle that He is the Miracle.

Chapter 20 The Raising of the Young Man of Nain

The Meeting of Life and Death

(Luke 7:11-17.)

That early spring-tide in Galilee was surely the truest realisation of the picture in the Song of Solomon, when earth clad herself in garments of beauty, and the air was melodious with songs of new life. It seemed as if each day marked a widening circle of deepest sympathy and largest power on the part of Jesus; as if each day also brought fresh surprise, new gladness; opened hitherto unthought-of possibilities, and pointed Israel far beyond the horizon of their narrow expectancy. Yesterday it was the sorrow of the heathen Centurion which woke an echo in the heart of the Supreme Commander of life and death; faith called out, owned, and placed on the high platform of Israel's worthies. Today it is the same sorrow of a Jewish mother, which touches the heart of the Son of Mary, and appeals to where denial is unthinkable. In that Presence grief and death cannot continue. As the defilement of a heathen house could not attach to Him, Whose contact changed the Gentile stranger into a true Israelite, so could the touch of death not render unclean Him, Whose Presence vanquished and changed it into life. Jesus could not enter Nain, and its people pass Him to carry one dead to the burying.

For our present purpose it matters little, whether it was the very day after the healing of the Centurion's servant, or shortly afterwards that Jesus left Capernaum for Nain. Probably it was the morrow of that miracle, and the fact that much people or rather a great multitude followed Him, seems confirmatory of it. The way was long as we reckon, more than twenty-five miles; but, even if it was all taken on foot, there could be no difficulty in reaching Nain ere the evening, when so often funerals took place. Various roads lead to, and from Nain; that which stretches to the Lake of Galilee and up to Capernaum is quite distinctly marked. It is difficult to understand, how most of those who have visited the spot could imagine the place, where Christ met the funeral procession, to have been the rock-hewn tombs to the west of Nain and towards Nazareth. For, from Capernaum the Lord would not have come that way, but approach it from the north-eas by Endor. Hence there can be little doubt, that Canon Tristram correctly identifies the now unfenced burying-ground, about ten minutes walk to the east of Nain, as that whither, on that spring afternoon, they were carrying the widow's son. On the path leading to it the Lord of Life for the first time burst open the gates of death. It is all desolate now. A few houses of mud and stone with low doorways, scattered among heaps of

stones and traces of walls, is all that remains of what even these ruins show to have been once a city, with walls and gates. The rich gardens are no more, the fruit trees cut down, and there is a painful sense of desolation about the place, as if the breath of judgment had swept over it. And yet even so we can understand its ancient name of Nain, the pleasant which the Rabbis regarded as fulfilling that part of the promise to Issachar: he saw the land that it was pleasant. From the elevation on which the city stood we look northwards, across the wide plain, to wooded Tabor, and in the far distance to snow-capped Hermon. On the left (in the west) rise the hills beyond which Nazareth lies embosomed; to the right is Endor; southwards Shunem, and beyond it the Plain of Jezreel. By this path, from Endor, comes Jesus with His disciples and the great following multitude. Here, near by the city gate, on the road that leads eastwards to the old burying-ground, has this procession of the great multitude which accompanied the Prince of Life, met that other great multitude that followed the dead to his burying. Which of the two shall give way to the other? We know what ancient Jewish usage would have demanded. For, of all the duties enjoined, none more strictly enforced by every consideration of humanity and piety, even by the example of God Himself, than that of comforting the mourners and showing respect to the dead by accompanying him to the burying. The popular idea, that the spirit of the dead hovered about the unburied remains, must have given intensity to such feelings.

Putting aside later superstitions, so little has changed in the Jewish rites and observances about the dead, that from Talmudic and even earlier sources, we can form a vivid conception of what had taken place in Nain. The watchful anxiety; the vain use of such means as were known, or within reach of the widow; the deepening care, the passionate longing of the mother to retain her one treasure, her sole earthly hope and stay; then the gradual fading out of the light, the farewell, the terrible burst of sorrow, all these would be common features in any such picture. But here we have, besides, the Jewish thoughts of death and after death; knowledge just sufficient to make afraid, but not to give firm consolation, which would make even the most pious Rabbi uncertain of his future; and then the desolate thoughts connected in the Jewish mind with childlessness. We can realise it all: how Jewish ingenuity and wisdom would resort to remedies real or magical; how the neighbours would come in with reverent step, feeling as if the very Shekhinah were unseen at the head of the pallet in that humble home; how they would whisper sayings about submission, which, when realisation of God's love is wanting, seem only to stir the heart to rebellion against absolute power; and how they would resort to the prayers of those who were deemed pious in Nain.

But all was in vain. And now the well-known blast of the horn has carried tidings, that once more the Angel of Death has done his dire behest. In passionate grief the mother has rent her upper garment. The last sad offices have been rendered to the dead. The body has been laid on the ground; hair and nails have been cut, and the body washed, anointed, and wrapped in the best the widow could procure; for, the ordinance which directed that the dead should be buried in wrappings (Takhrikhin), or as they significantly called it, the provision for the journey (Zevadatha), of the most inexpensive, linen, is of later date than our period. It is impossible to say, whether the later practice already prevailed, of covering the body with metal, glass, or salt, and laying it either upon earth or salt.

And now the mother was left Oneneth (moaning, lamenting) a term which distinguished the mourning before from that after burial. She would sit on the floor, neither eat meat, nor drink wine. What scanty meal she would take, must be without prayer, in the house of a neighbour, or in another room, or at least with her back to the dead. Pious friends would render neighbourly offices, or busy themselves about the near funeral. If it was deemed duty for the poorest Jew, on the death of his wife, to provide at least two flutes and one mourning woman, we may feel sure that the widowed mother had not neglected what, however incongruous or difficult to procure, might be regarded as the last tokens of affection. In all likelihood the custom obtained even then, though in modified form, to have funeral orations at the grave. For, even if charity provided for an unknown wayfarer the simplest funeral, mourning women would be hired to chaunt in weird strains the lament: Alas, the lion! Alas, the hero! or similar words, while great Rabbis were wont to bespeak for themselves a warm funeral oration (Hesped, or Hespeda). For, from the funeral oration a man's fate in the other world might be inferred;

and, indeed, the honour of a sage was in his funeral oration. and in this sense the Talmud answers the question, whether a funeral oration is intended to honour the survivors or the dead.

But in all this painful pageantry there was nothing for the heart of the widow, bereft of her only child. We can follow in spirit the mournful procession, as it started from the desolate home. As it issued, chairs and couches were reversed, and laid low. Outside, the funeral orator, if such was employed, preceded the bier, proclaiming the good deeds of the dead. Immediately before the dead came the women, this being peculiar to Galilee, the Midrash giving this reason of it, that woman had introduced death into the world. The body was not, as afterwards in preference, carried in an ordinary coffin of wood (Aron), if possible, cedarwood on one occasion, at least, made with holes beneath; but laid on a bier, or in an open coffin (Mittah). In former times a distinction had been made in these biers between rich and poor. The former were carried on the so-called Dargash as it were, in state while the poor were conveyed in a receptacle made of wickerwork (Kelibha or Kelikhah), having sometimes at the foot what was termed a horn to which the body was made fast. But this distinction between rich and poor was abolished by Rabbinic ordinance, and both alike, if carried on a bier, were laid in that made of wickerwork. Commonly, though not in later practice, the face of the dead body was uncovered. The body lay with its face turned up, and his hands folded on the breast. We may add, that when a person had died unmarried or childless, it was customary to put into the coffin something distinctive of them, such as pen and ink, or a key. Over the coffins of bride or bridegroom a baldachino was carried. Sometimes the coffin was garlanded with myrtle. In exceptional cases we read of the use of incense, and even of a kind of libation.

We cannot, then, be mistaken in supposing that the body of the widow's son was laid on the bed (Mittah), or in the willow basket already described (Kelibha, from Kelubh). Nor can we doubt that the ends of handles were borne by friends and neighbours, different parties of bearers, all of them unshod, at frequent intervals relieving each other, so that as many as possible might share in the good work. During these pauses there was loud lamentation; but this custom was not observed in the burial of women. Behind the bier walked the relatives, friends, and then the sympathising multitude. For it was deemed like mocking one's Creator not to follow the dead to his last resting-place, and to all such want of reverence Prov. xvii. 5 was applied. If one were absolutely prevented from joining the procession, although for its sake all work, even study, should be interrupted, reverence should at least be shown by rising up before the dead. And so they would go on to what the Hebrews beautifully designated as the house of assembly or meeting the hostelry the place of rest or of freedom the field of weepers the house of eternity or of life.

We can now transport ourselves into that scene. Up from the city close by came this great multitude that followed the dead, with lamentations, wild chaunts of mourning women, accompanied by flutes and the melancholy tinkle of cymbals, perhaps by trumpets, amidst expressions of general sympathy. Along the road from Endor streamed the great multitude which followed the Prince of Life. Here they met: Life and Death. The connecting link between them was the deep sorrow of the widowed mother. He recognised her as she went before the bier, leading him to the grave whom she had brought into life. He recognised her, but she recognised Him not, had not even seen Him. She was still weeping; even after He had hastened a step or two in advance of His followers, quite close to her, she did not heed Him, and was still weeping. But, beholding her the Lord had compassion on her. Those bitter, silent tears which blinded her eyes were strongest language of despair and utmost need, which never in vain appeals to His heart, Who has borne our sorrows. We remember, by way of contrast, the common formula used at funerals in Palestine, Weep with them, all ye who are bitter of heart! It was not so that Jesus spoke to those around, nor to her, but characteristically: Be not weeping. And what He said, that He wrought. He touched the bier perhaps the very wicker basket in which the dead youth lay. He dreaded not the greatest of all defilements that of contact with the dead, which Rabbinism, in its elaboration of the letter of the Law, had surrounded with endless terrors. His was other separation than of the Pharisees, not that of submission to ordinances, but of conquest of what made them necessary.

And as He touched the bier, they who bore it stood still. They could not have anticipated what would follow. But the awe of the coming wonder as it were, the shadow of the opening gates of life, had fallen on them. One word of sovereign command, and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. Not of that world of which he had had brief glimpse. For, as one who suddenly passes from dream-vision to waking, in the abruptness of the transition, loses what he had seen, so he, who from that dazzling brightness was hurried back to the dim light to which his vision had been accustomed. It must have seemed to him, as if he woke from long sleep. Where was he now? who those around him? what this strange assemblage? and Who He, Whose Light and Life seemed to fall upon him? And still was Jesus the link between the mother and the son, who had again found each other. And so, in the truest sense, He gave him to his mother. Can any one doubt that mother and son henceforth owned, loved, and trusted Him as the true Messiah? If there was no moral motive for this miracle, outside Christ's sympathy with intense suffering and the bereavement of death, was there no moral result as the outcome of it? If mother and son had not called upon Him before the miracle, would they not henceforth and forever call upon Him? And if there was, so to speak, inward necessity, that Life Incarnate should conquer death symbolic and typic necessity of it also was not everything here congruous to the central fact in this history? The simplicity and absence of all extravagant details; the Divine calmness and majesty on the part of the Christ, so different from the manner in which legend would have coloured the scene, even from the intense agitation which characterised the conduct of an Elijah, an Elisha, or a Peter, in somewhat similar circumstances; and, lastly, the beautiful harmony where all is in accord, from the first touch of compassion till when, forgetful of the bystanders, heedless of effect He gives the son back to his mother are not all these worthy of the event, and evidential of the truth of the narrative?

But, after all, may we regard this history as real and, if so, what are its lessons? On one point, at least, all serious critics are now agreed. It is impossible to ascribe it to exaggeration, or to explain it on natural grounds. The only alternative is to regard it either as true, or as designedly false. Be it, moreover, remembered, that not only one Gospel, but all, relate some story of raising the dead whether that of this youth, of Jairus daughter, or of Lazarus. They also all relate the Resurrection of the Christ, which really underlies those other miracles. But if this history of the raising of the young man is false, what motive can be suggested for its invention, for motive there must have been for it? Assuredly, it was no part of Jewish expectancy concerning the Messiah, that He would perform such a miracle. And negative criticism has admitted, that the differences between this history and the raising of the dead by Elijah or Elisha are so numerous and great, that these narratives cannot be regarded as suggesting that of the raising of the young man of Nain. We ask again: Whence, then, this history, if it was not true? It is an ingenious historical suggestion rather an admission by negative criticism that so insignificant, and otherwise unknown, a place as Nain would not have been fixed upon as the site of this miracle, if some great event had not occurred there which made lasting impression on the mind of the Church. What was that event, and does not the reading of this record carry conviction of its truth? Legends have not been so written. Once more, the miracle is described as having taken place, not in the seclusion of a chamber, nor before a few interested witnesses, but in sight of the great multitude which had followed Jesus, and of that other great multitude which came from --Cana . In this twofold great multitude was there none, from whom the enemies of Christianity could have wrung contradiction, if the narrative was false? Still further, the history is told with such circumstantiality of details, as to be inconsistent with the theory of a later invention. Lastly, no one will question, that belief in the reality of such raising from the dead was a primal article in the faith of the primitive Church, for which as a fact, not a possibility all were ready to offer up their lives. Nor should we forget that, in one of the earliest apologies addressed to the Roman Emperor, Quadratus appealed to the fact, that, of those who had been healed or raised from the dead by Christ, some were still alive, and all were well known. On the other hand, the only real ground for rejecting this narrative is disbelief in the Miraculous, including, of course, rejection of the Christ as the Miracle of Miracles. But is it not vicious reasoning in a circle, as well as begging the question, to reject the

Miraculous because we discredit the Miraculous? and does not such rejection involve much more of the incredible than faith itself?

And so, with all Christendom, we gladly take it, in simplicity of faith, as a true record by true men all the more, that they who told it knew it to be so incredible, as not only to provoke scorn, but to expose them to the charge of cunningly devising fables. But they who believe, see in this history, how the Divine Conqueror, in His accidental meeting with Death, with mighty arm rolled back the tide, and how through the portals of heaven which He opened stole in upon our world the first beam of the new day. Yet another in some sense lower, in another, practically higher lesson do we learn. For, this meeting of the two processions outside the gate of Nain was accidental, yet not in the conventional sense. Neither the arrival of Jesus at that place and time, nor that of the funeral procession from Nain, nor their meeting, was either designed or else miraculous. Both happened in the natural course of natural events, but their concurrence (sugkuria) was designed, and directly God-caused. In this God-caused, designed concurrence of events, in themselves ordinary and natural, lies the mystery of special Providences, which, to whomsoever they happen, he may and should regard them as miracles and answer to prayer. And this principle extends much farther: to the prayer for, and provision of, daily bread, nay, to mostly all things, so that, to those who have ears to hear, all things around speak in parables of the kingdom of Heaven.

But on those who saw this miracle at Nain fell the fear of the felt Divine Presence, and over their souls swept the hymn of Divine praise: fear, because God had visited His people. And further and wider spread the wave over --Judaea, and beyond it, until it washed, and broke in faint murmur against the prison-walls, within which the Baptist awaited his martyrdom. Was He then the Coming One? and, if so, why did, or how could, those walls keep His messenger within grasp of the tyrant?

Chapter 21 The Woman who was a Sinner

(Luke 7:36-50.)

The precise date and place of the next recorded event in this Galilean journey of the Christ are left undetermined. It can scarcely have occurred in the quiet little town of Nain, indeed, is scarcely congruous with the scene which had been there enacted. And yet it must have followed almost immediately upon it. We infer this, not only from the silence of Matthew, which in this instance might have been due, not to the temporary detention of that Evangelist in Capernaum, while the others had followed Christ to Nain, but to what may be called the sparingness of detail in the Gospel-narratives, each Evangelist relating mostly only one in a group of kindred events. But other indications determine our inference. The embassy of the Baptist's disciples (which will be described in another connection) undoubtedly followed on the raising of the young man of Nain. This embassy would scarcely have come to Jesus in Nain. It probably reached Him on His farther Missionary journey, to which there seems some reference in the passage in the First Gospel which succeeds the account of that embassy. The actual words there recorded can, indeed, scarcely have been spoken at that time. They belong to a later period on that Mission-journey, and mark more fully developed opposition and rejection of the Christ than in those early days. Chronologically, they are in their proper place in Luke's Gospel, where they follow in connection with that Mission of the Seventy, which, in part at least, was prompted by the growing enmity to the Person of Jesus. On the other hand, this Mission of the Seventy, is not recorded by Matthew. Accordingly, he inserts those prophetic denunciations which, according to the plan of his Gospel, could not have been omitted, at the beginning of this Missionary journey, because it marks the beginning of that systematic opposition, the full development of which, as already stated, prompted the Mission of the Seventy. Yet, even so, the impression left upon us by Matt. xi. 20-30 (which follows on the account of the

Baptist's embassy) is, that Jesus was on a journey, and it may well be that those precious words of encouragement and invitation, spoken to the burdened and wearily labouring, formed part, perhaps the substance, of His preaching on that journey. Truly these were good tidings and not only to those borne down by weight of conscious sinfulness or deep sorrow, who wearily toiled towards the light of far-off peace, or those dreamt-of heights where some comprehensive view might be gained of life with its labours and pangs. Good news also, to them who would fain have learned according to their capacity, but whose teachers had weighted the yoke of the Kingdom to a heavy burden, and made the Will of God to them labour, weary and unaccomplishable. But, whether or not spoken at that special time, we cannot fail to recognise their special suitableness to the forgiven sinner in the Pharisee's house, and their inward, even if not outward, connection with her history.

Another point requires notice. It is how, in the unfolding of His Mission to Man, the Christ progressively placed Himself in antagonism to the Jewish religious thought of His time, from out of which He had historically sprung. In this part of His earthly course the antagonism appeared, indeed, so to speak, in a positive rather than negative form, that is, rather in what He affirmed than in what He combated, because the opposition to Him was not yet fully developed; whereas in the second part of His course it was, for a similar reason, rather negative than positive. From the first, this antagonism was there in what He taught and did; and it appeared with increasing distinctness in proportion as He taught. We find it in the whole spirit and bearing of what he did and said in the house at Capernaum, in the Synagogues, with the Gentile Centurion, at the gate of Nain, and especially here, in the history of the much forgiven woman who had much sinned. A Jewish Rabbi could not have so acted and spoken; he would not even have understood Jesus; nay, a Rabbi, however gentle and pitiful, would in word and deed have taken precisely the opposite direction from that of the Christ.

As Gregory expresses it, this is perhaps a history more fit to be wept over than commented upon. For comments seem so often to interpose between the simple force of a narrative and our hearts, and few events in the Gospel history have been so blunted and turned aside as this history, through verbal controversies and dogmatic wrangling.

The first impression on our minds is, that the history itself is but a fragment. We must try to learn from its structure, where and how it was broken off. We understand the infinite delicacy that left her unnamed, the record of whose much forgiveness and great love had to be joined to that of her much sin. And we mark, in contrast, the coarse clumsiness which, without any reason for the assertion, to meet the cravings of morbid curiosity, or for saint-worship, has associated her history with the name of Mary Magdalene. Another, and perhaps even more painful, mistake is the attempt of certain critics to identify this history with the much later anointing of Christ at Bethany, and to determine which of the two is the simpler, and which the more ornate which the truer of the accounts, and whence, or why each case there was a Simon' perhaps the commonest of Jewish names; a woman who anointed; and that Christ, and those who were present, spoke and acted in accordance with other passages in the Gospel history, that is, true to their respective histories. But, such twofold anointing the first, at the beginning of His works of mercy, of the Feet by a forgiven, loving sinner on whom the Sun had just risen; the second, of His Head, by a loving disciple, when the full-orbed Sun was setting in blood, at the close of His Ministry is, as in the twofold purgation of the Temple at the beginning and close of His Work, only like the completing of the circle of His Life.

The invitation of Simon the Pharisee to his table does not necessarily indicate, that he had been impressed by the teaching of Jesus, any more than the supposed application to his case of what is called the parable of the much and the little forgiven debtor implies, that he had received from the Saviour spiritual benefit, great or small. If Jesus had taught in the city and, as always, irresistibly drawn to Him the multitude, it would be only in accordance with the manners of the time if the leading Pharisee invited the distinguished Teacher to his table. As such he undoubtedly treated Him. The question in Simon's mind was, whether He was more than Teacher' even Prophet; and that such question rose within him indicates, not only that Christ openly claimed a position different from that of Rabbi, and that His followers regarded Him at least as a prophet, but also, within the breast of Simon,

a struggle in which strong Jewish prejudice was bearing down the mighty impression of Christ's Presence.

They were all sitting, or rather lying the Mishnah sometimes also calls it sitting down and leaning' around the table, the body resting on the couch, the feet turned away from the table in the direction of the wall, while the left elbow rested on the table. And now, from the open courtyard, up the verandah-step, perhaps through an antechamber, and by the open door, passed the figure of a woman into the festive reception-room and dining-hall the Teraglin (triclinium) of the Rabbis. How did she obtain access? Had she mingled with the servants, or was access free to all or had she, perhaps, known the house and its owner? It little matters as little as whether she had been or was up to that day, a sinner in the terrible acceptance of the term. But we must bear in mind the greatness of Jewish prejudice against any conversation with woman, however lofty her character, fully to realise the absolute incongruity on the part of such a woman in seeking access to the Rabbi, Whom so many regarded as the God-sent Prophet.

But this, also, is evidential, that here we are far beyond the Jewish standpoint. To this woman it was not incongruous, because to her Jesus had, indeed, been the Prophet sent from God. We have said before that this story is a fragment; and here, also, as in the invitation of Simon to Jesus, we have evidence of it. She had, no doubt, heard His words that day. What He had said would be, in substance, if not in words: Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. . . . Ye shall find rest unto your souls. . . . This was to her the Prophet sent from God with the good news that opened even to her the Kingdom of Heaven, and laid its yoke upon her, not bearing her down to very hell, but easy of wear and light of burden. She knew that it was all as He said, in regard to the heavy load of her past; and, as she listened to those Words, and looked on that Presence, she learned to believe that it was all as He had promised to the heavy burdened. And she had watched, and followed Him afar off to the Pharisee's house. Or, perhaps, if it be thought that she had not that day heard for herself, still, the sound of that message must have reached her, and wakened the echoes of her heart. And still it was: Come to Me; learn of Me; I will give rest. What mattered all else to her in the hunger of her soul, which had just tasted of that Heavenly Bread?

The shadow of her form must have fallen on all who sat at meal. But none spake; nor did she heed any but One. Like heaven's own music, as Angels songs that guide the wanderer home, it still sounded in her ears. There are times when we forget all else in one absorbing thought; when men's opinions nay, our own feelings of shame are effaced by that one Presence; when the Come to Me; learn of Me; I will give you rest are the all in all to us. Then it is, that the fountains of the Great Deep within are broken open by the wonder-working rod, with which God's Messenger to us the better Moses has struck our hearts. She had come that day to learn and to find rest. What mattered it to her who was there, or what they thought? There was only One Whose Presence she dared not encounter not from fear of Him, but from knowledge of herself. It was He to Whom she had come. And so she stood behind at His Feet. She had brought with her an alabastron (phial, or flask, commonly of alabaster) of perfume. 18 It is a coarse suggestion, that this had originally been bought for a far different purpose. We know that perfumes were much sought after, and very largely in use. Some, such as true balsam, were worth double their weight in silver; others, like the spikenard (whether as juice or unguent, along with other ingredients), though not equally costly, were also precious. We have evidence that perfumed oils notably oil of rose, and of the iris plant, but chiefly the mixture known in antiquity as foliatum, were largely manufactured and used in Palestine. A flask with this perfume was worn by women round the neck, and hung down below the breast (the Tselochith shel Palyeton). So common was its use as to be allowed even on the Sabbath. This flask (possibly the Chumarta de Philon of Gitt. 69 b) not always of glass, but of silver or gold, probably often also of alabaster containing palyeton (evidently, the foliatum of Pliny) was used both to sweeten the breath and perfume the person. Hence it seems at least not unlikely, that the alabastron which she brought, who loved so much, was none other than the flask of foliatum so common among Jewish woman.

As she stood behind Him at His Feet, reverently bending, a shower of tears, like sudden, quick summer-rain, that refreshes air and earth, bedewed His Feet. As if surprised, or else afraid to awaken His attention, or defile Him by her tears, she quickly wiped them away with the long tresses of her hair that had fallen down and touched Him, as she bent over His Feet. Nay, not to wash them in such impure waters had she come, but to show such loving gratefulness and reverence as in her poverty she could, and in her humility she might offer. And, now that her faith had grown bold in His Presence, she is continuing to kiss those Feet which had brought to her the good tidings of peace and to anoint them out of the alabastron round her neck. And still she spake not, nor yet He. For, as on her part silence seemed most fitting utterance, so on His, that He suffered it in silence was best and most fitting answer to her.

Another there was whose thoughts, far other than hers or the Christ's, were also unuttered. A more painful contrast than that of the Pharisee in this scene, can scarcely be imagined. We do not insist that the designation this Man given to Christ in his spoken thoughts, or the manner in which afterwards he replied to the Saviour's question by a supercilious I suppose or presume necessarily imply contempt. But they certainly indicate the mood of his spirit. One thing, at least, seems now clear to this Pharisee: If this Man this strange, wandering, popular idol, with His strange, novel ways and words, Whom in politeness he must call Teacher Rabbi, were a Prophet, He would have known who the woman was, and, if He had known who she was, then would He never have allowed such approach. So do we, also, often argue as to what He would do, if He knew. But He does know; and it is just because He knoweth that He doeth what, from our lower standpoint, we cannot understand. Had He been a Rabbi, He would certainly, and had he been merely a Prophet, He would probably, have repelled such approach. The former, if not from self-righteousness, yet from ignorance of sin and forgiveness; the latter, because such homage was more than man's due. But, He was more than a prophet the Saviour of sinners; and so she might quietly weep over His Feet, and then quickly wipe away the dew of the better morning and then continue to Kiss His Feet and to anoint them. And yet Prophet He also was, and in far fuller sense than Simon could have imagined. For, He had read Simon's unspoken thoughts. Presently He would show it to him; yet not, as we might, by open reproof, that would have put him to shame before his guests, but with infinite delicacy towards His host, and still in manner that he could not mistake. What follows is not, as generally supposed, a parable but an illustration. Accordingly, it must in no way be pressed. With this explanation vanish all the supposed difficulties about the Pharisees being little forgiven and hence loving little. To convince Simon of the error of his conclusion, that, if the life of that woman had been known, the prophet must have forbidden her touch of love, Jesus entered into the Pharisee's own modes of reasoning. Of two debtors, one of whom owned ten times as much as the other, who would best love the creditor who had freely forgiven them? Though to both the debt might have been equally impossible of discharge, and both might love equally, yet a Rabbi would, according to his Jewish notions, say, that he would love most to whom most had been forgiven. If this was the undoubted outcome of Jewish theology the so much for so much let it be applied to the present case. If there were much benefit, there would be much love; if little benefit, little love. And conversely, in such case much love would argue much benefit; little love, small benefit. Let him then apply the reasoning by marking this woman, and contrasting her conduct with his own. To wash the feet of a guest, to give him the kiss of welcome, and especially to anoint him, were not, indeed, necessary attentions at a feast. All the more did they indicate special care, affection, and respect. None of these tokens of deep regard had marked the merely polite reception of Him by the Pharisee. But, in a twofold climax of which the intensity can only be indicated, the Saviour now proceeds to show, how different it had been with her, to whom, for the first time, He now turned! On Simon's own reasoning, then, he must have received but little, she much benefit. Or, to apply the former illustration, and now to reality: Forgiven have been her sins, the many not in ignorance, but with knowledge of their being many. This, by Simon's former admission, would explain and account for her much love, as the effect of much forgiveness. On the other hand though in delicacy the Lord does not actually express it this other inference would also hold true, that

Simon's little love showed that little is being forgiven.

What has been explained will dispose of another controversy which, with little judgment and less taste, has been connected with this marvellous history. It must not be made a question as between Romanist and Protestant, nor as between rival dogmatists, whether love had any meritorious part in her forgiveness, or whether, as afterwards stated, her faith had saved her. Undoubtedly, her faith had saved her. What she had heard from His lips, what she knew of Him, she had believed. She had believed in the good tidings of peace which He had brought, in the love of God, and His Fatherhood of pity to the most sunken and needy; in Christ, as the Messenger of Reconciliation and Peace with God; in the Kingdom of Heaven which He had so suddenly and unexpectedly opened to her, from out of whose unfolded golden gates Heaven's light had fallen upon her, Heaven's voices had come to her. She had believed it all: the Father, the Son Revealer, the Holy Ghost Revealing. And it had saved her. When she came to that feast, and stood behind with humbled, loving gratefulness and reverence of heart-service, she was already saved. She needed not to be forgiven, she had been forgiven. And it was because she was forgiven that she bedewed His Feet with the summer-shower of her heart, and, quickly wiping away the flood with her tresses, continued kissing and anointing them. All this was the impulse of her heart, who, having come in heart, still came to Him, and learned of Him, and found rest to her soul. In that early springtide of her new-born life, it seemed that, as on Aaron's rod, leaf, bud, and flower were all together in tangled confusion of rich forthbursting. She had not yet reached order and clearness; perhaps, in the fullness of her feelings, knew not how great were her blessings, and felt not yet that conscious rest which grows out of faith in the forgiveness which it obtains. And this was now the final gift of Jesus to her. As formerly for the first time He had turned so now for the first time He spoke to her and once more with tenderest delicacy. Thy sins have been forgiven not, are forgiven, and not now the many. Nor does He now heed the murmuring thoughts of those around, who cannot understand Who this is that forgiveth sins also. But to her, and truly, though not literally, to them also, and to us, He said in explanation and application of it all: Thy faith has saved thee: go into peace. Our logical dogmatics would have had it: go in peace; more truly He, into peace. And so she, the first who had come to Him for spiritual healing, the first of an unnumbered host, went out into the better light, into peace of heart, peace of faith, peace of rest, and into the eternal peace of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of the Heaven of the kingdom hereafter and for ever.

Chapter 22 The Ministry of Love, the Blasphemy of Hatred

The Mistakes of Earthly Affection The Return to Capernaum Healing of the Demonised Dumb
Pharisaic Charge against Christ The Visit of Christ's Mother and Brethren

(Luke 8:1-3; Matthew 9:32-35; Mark 3:22, &c.; Matthew 12:46-50 and parallels.)

However interesting and important to follow the steps of our Lord on His journey through Galilee, and to group in their order the notices of it in the Gospels, the task seems almost hopeless. In truth, since none of the Evangelists attempted should we not say, ventured to write a Life of the Christ, any strictly historical arrangement lay outside their purpose. Their point of view was that of the internal, rather than the external development of this history. And so events, kindred in purpose, discourses bearing on the same subject, or parables pointing to the same stretch of truth, were grouped together; or, as in the present instance, the unfolding teaching of Christ and the growing opposition of His enemies exhibited by joining together notices which, perhaps, belong to different periods. And the lesson to us is, that, just as the Old Testament gives neither the national history of Israel, nor the biography of its heroes, but a history of the Kingdom of God in its progressive development, so the Gospels present not a Life of Christ but the history of the Kingdom of God in its progressive manifestation.

Yet, although there are difficulties connected with details, we can trace in outline the general succession of events. We conclude, that Christ was now returning to Capernaum from that Missionary journey of which Nain had been the southernmost point. On this journey He was attended, not only by the Twelve, but by loving grateful women, who ministered to Him of their substance. Among them three are specially named. Mary, called Magdalene had received from Him special benefit of healing to body and soul. Her designation as Magdalene was probably derived from her native city, Magdala, just as several Rabbis are spoken of in the Talmud as Magdalene (Magdelaah, or Magdelaya). Magdala, which was a Sabbath-day's journey from Tiberias, was celebrated for its dyeworks, and its manufactories of fine woollen textures, of which eighty are mentioned. Indeed, all that district seems to have been engaged in this industry. It was also reputed for its traffic in turtle doves and pigeons for purifications tradition, with its usual exaggeration of numbers, mentioning three hundred such shops. Accordingly, its wealth was very great, and it is named among the three cities whose contributions were so large as to be sent in a wagon to Jerusalem. But its moral corruption was also great, and to this the Rabbis attributed its final destruction. Magdala had a Synagogue. Its name was probably derived from a strong tower which defended its approaches, or served for outlook. This suggestion is supported by the circumstance, that what seems to have formed part, or a suburb of Magdala, bore the names of Fish-tower and Tower of the Dyers. One at least, if not both these towers, would be near the landing-place, by the Lake of Galilee, and overlook its waters. The necessity for such places of outlook and defence, making the town a Magdala, would be increased by the proximity of the magnificent plain of Gennesaret, of which Josephus speaks in such rapturous terms. Moreover, only twenty minutes to the north of Magdala descended the so-called Valley of Doves (the Wady Hamâm), through which passed the ancient caravan-road that led over Nazareth to Damascus. The name valley of doves illustrates the substantial accuracy of the Rabbinic descriptions of ancient Magdala. Modern travelers (such as Dean Stanley, Professor Robinson, Farrar, and others) have noticed the strange designation Valley of Doves without being able to suggest the explanation of it, which the knowledge of its traffic in doves for purposes of purification at once supplies. Of the many towns and villages that dotted the shores of the Lake of Galilee, all have passed away except Magdala, which is still represented by the collection of mud hovels that bears the name of Mejdal. The ancient watchtower which gave the place its name is still there, probably standing on the same site as that which looked down on Jesus and the Magdalene. To this day Magdala is celebrated for its springs and rivulets, which render it specially suitable for dyeworks; while the shellfish with which these waters and the Lake are said to abound, might supply some of the dye.

Such details may help us more clearly to realise the home, and with it, perhaps, also the upbringing and circumstances of her who not only ministered to Jesus in His Life, but, with eager avarice of love, watched afar off His dying moments, and then sat over against the new tomb of Joseph in which His Body was laid. And the terrible time which followed she spent with her like-minded friends, who in Galilee had ministered to Christ, in preparing those spices and ointments which the Risen Saviour would never require. For, on that Easter-morning the empty tomb of Jesus was only guarded by Angel-messengers, who announced to the Magdalene and Joanna, as well as the other women, the gladsome tidings that His foretold Resurrection had become a reality. But however difficult the circumstances may have been, in which the Magdalene came to profess her faith in Jesus, those of Joanna (the Hebrew Yochani) must have been even more trying. She was the wife of Chuza, Herod's Steward possibly, though not likely, the Court-official whose son Jesus had healed by the word spoken in Cana. The absence of any reference to the event seems rather opposed to this supposition. Indeed, it seems doubtful, whether Chuza was a Jewish name. In Jewish writings the designation seems rather used as a by-name (little pitcher) for a small, insignificant person, than as a proper name. Only one other of those who ministered to Jesus is mentioned by name. It is Susanna, the lily. The names of the other loving women are not written on the page of earth's history, but only on that of the Lamb's Book of Life. And they ministered to Him of their substance. So early did eternal

riches appear in the grab of poverty; so soon did love to Christ find its treasure in consecrating it to His Ministry. And ever since has this been the law of His Kingdom, to our great humiliation and yet greater exaltation in fellowship with Him.

It was on this return-journey to Capernaum, probably not far from the latter place, that the two blind men had their sight restored. It was then, also, that the healing of the demonised dumb took place, which is recorded in Matt. ix. 32-35, and alluded to in Mark iii. 22-30. This narrative must, of course, not be confounded with the somewhat similar event told in Matt. xii. 22-32, and in Luke xi. 14-26. The latter occurred at a much later period in our Lord's life, when, as the whole context shows, the opposition of the Pharisaic party had assumed much larger proportions, and the language of Jesus was more fully denunciatory of the character and guilt of His enemies. That charge of the Pharisees, therefore, that Jesus cast out the demons through the Prince of the demons, as well as His reply to it, will best be considered when it shall appear in its fullest development. This all the more, that we believe at least the greater part of our Lord's answer to their blasphemous accusation, as given in Mark's Gospel, to have been spoken at that later period.

It was on this return-journey to Capernaum from the uttermost borders of Galilee, when for the first time He was not only followed by His twelve Apostles, but attended by the loving service of those who owed their all to His Ministry, that the demonized dumb was restored by the casting out of the demon. Even these circumstances show that a new stage in the Messianic course had begun. It is characterised by fuller unfolding of Christ's teaching and working, and *pari passu*, by more fully developed opposition of the Pharisaic party. For the two went together, nor can they be distinguished as cause or effect. That new stage, as repeatedly noted, had opened on His return from the Unknown Feast in Jerusalem, whence He seems to have been followed by the Pharisaic party. We have marked it so early as the call of the four disciples by the Lake of Galilee. But it first actively appeared at the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum, when, for the first time, we noticed the presence and murmuring of the Scribes, and, for the first time also, the distinct declaration about the forgiveness of sins on the part of Jesus. The same twofold element appeared in the call of the publican Matthew, and the cavil of the Pharisees at Christ's subsequent eating and drinking with sinners. It was in further development of this separation from the old and now hostile element, that the twelve Apostles were next appointed, and that distinctive teaching of Jesus addressed to the people in the Sermon on the Mount which was alike a vindication and an appeal. On the journey through Galilee, which now followed, the hostile party does not seem to have actually attended Jesus; but their growing, and now outspoken opposition is heard in the discourse of Christ about John the Baptist after the dismissal of his disciples, while its influence appears in the unspoken thoughts of Simon the Pharisee.

But even before these two events, that had happened which would induce the Pharisaic party to increased measures against Jesus. It has already been suggested, that the party, as such, did not attend Jesus on His Galilean journey. But we are emphatically told, that tidings of the raising of the dead at Nain had gone forth into Judaea. No doubt they reached the leaders at Jerusalem. There seems just sufficient time between this and the healing of the demonised dumb on the return-journey to Capernaum, to account for the presence there of those Pharisees, who are expressly described by Mark as the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem.

Other circumstances, also, are thus explained. Whatever view the leaders at Jerusalem may have taken of the raising at Nain, it could no longer be denied that miracles were wrought by Jesus. At least, what to us seem miracles, yet not to them, since, as we have seen, miraculous cures and the expelling of demons lay within the sphere of their extraordinary ordinary' were not miracles in our sense, since they were, or professed to be, done by their own children. The mere fact, therefore, of such cures, would present no difficulty to them. To us a single well-ascertained miracle would form irrefragable evidence of the claims of Christ; to them it would not. They could believe in the miracles and yet not in the Christ. To them the question would not be, as to us, whether they were miracles but, By what power, or in what Name, He did these deeds? From our standpoint, their opposition to the Christ would in view of His Miracles seem not only wicked, but rationally inexplicable. But ours

was not their point of view. And here, again, we perceive that it was enmity of the Person and Teaching of Jesus which led to the denial of His claims. The inquiry: By what Power Jesus did these works? they met by the assertion, that it was through that of Satan, or the Chief of the Demons. They regarded Jesus, as not only temporarily, but permanently, possessed by a demon, that is, as the constant vehicle of Satanic influence. And this demon was, according to them, none other than Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Thus, in their view, it was really Satan who acted in and through Him; and Jesus, instead of being recognised as the Son of God, was regarded as an incarnation of Satan; instead of being owned as the Messiah, was denounced and treated as the representative of the Kingdom of Darkness. All this, because the Kingdom which He came to open, and which He preached, was precisely the opposite of what they regarded as the Kingdom of God. Thus it was the essential contrariety of Rabbinism to the Gospel of the Christ that lay at the foundation of their conduct towards the Person of Christ. We venture to assert, that this accounts for the whole after-history up to the Cross.

Thus viewed, the history of Pharisaic opposition appears not only consistent, but is, so to speak, morally accounted for. Their guilt lay in treating that as Satanic agency which was of the Holy Ghost; and this, because they were of their father the Devil, and knew not, nor understood, nor yet loved the Light, their deeds being evil. They were not children of the light, but of that darkness which comprehended Him not Who was the Light. And now we can also understand the growth of active opposition to Christ. Once arrived at the conclusion, that the miracles which Christ did were due to the power of Satan, and that He was the representative of the Evil One, their course was rationally and morally chosen. To regard every fresh manifestation of Christ's Power as only a fuller development of the power of Satan, and to oppose it with increasing determination and hostility, even to the Cross: such was henceforth the natural progress of this history. On the other hand, such a course once fully settled upon, there would, and could, be no further reasoning with, or against it on the part of Jesus. Henceforth His Discourses and attitude to such Judaism must be chiefly denunciatory, while still seeking as, from the inward necessity of His Nature and the outward necessity of His Mission, He must to save the elect remnant from this untoward generation and to lay broad and wide the foundations of the future Church. But the old hostile Judaism must henceforth be left to the judgment of condemnation, except in those tears of Divine pity which the Jew-King and Jewish Messiah wept over the Jerusalem that knew not the day of its visitation.

But all this, when the now beginning movement shall have reached its full proportions. For the present, we mark only its first appearance. The charge of Satanic agency was, indeed, not quite new. It had been suggested, that John the Baptist had been under demoniacal influence, and this cunning pretext for resistance to his message had been eminently successful with the people. The same charge, only in much fuller form, was not raised against Jesus. As the multitude marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel the Pharisees, without denying the facts, had this explanation of them, to be presently developed to all its terrible consequences: that, both as regarded the casting out of the demon from the dumb man and all similar works, Jesus wrought it through the Ruler of the Demons. And so the edge of this manifestation of the Christ was blunted and broken. But their besetment of the Christ did not cease. It is to this that we attribute the visit of the mother and brethren of Jesus, which is recorded in the three Synoptic Gospels. Even this circumstance shows its decisive importance. It forms a parallel to the former attempts of the Pharisees to influence the disciples of Jesus, and then to stir up the hostility of the disciples of John, both of which are recorded by the three Evangelists. It also brought to light another distinctive characteristic of the Mission of Jesus. We place this visit of the mother and brethren of Jesus immediately after His return to Capernaum, and we attribute it to Pharisaic opposition, which either filled those relatives of Jesus with fear for His safety, or made them sincerely concerned about His proceedings. Only if it meant some kind of interference with His Mission, whether prompted by fear or affection, would Jesus have so disowned their relationship.

But it meant more than this. As always, the positive went side by side with the negative. Without going

so far, as with some of the Fathers, to see pride or ostentation in this, that the Virgin Mother summoned Jesus to her outside the house, since the opposite might as well have been her motive, we cannot but regard the words of Christ as the sternest prophetic rebuke of all Mariolatry, prayer for the Virgin's intercession, and, still more, of the strange doctrines about her freedom from actual and original sin, up to their prurient sequence in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. On the other hand, we also remember the deep reverence among the Jews for parents, which found even exaggerated expression in the Talmud. And we feel that, of all in Israel, He, Who was their King, could not have spoken nor done what might even seem disrespectful to a mother. There must have been higher meaning in His words. That meaning would be better understood after His Resurrection. But even before that it was needful, in presence of interference or hindrance by earthly relationships, even the nearest and tenderest, and perhaps all the more in their case, to point to the higher and stronger spiritual relationship. And beyond this, to still higher truth. For, had He not entered into earthly kinship solely for the sake of the higher spiritual relationship which He was about to found; and was it not, then, in the most literal sense, that not those in nearest earthly relationship, but they who sat about Him, nay, whoever shall do the will of God were really in closest kinship with Him? Thus, it was not that Christ set lightly by His Mother, but that He confounded not the means with the end, nor yet surrendered the spirit for the letter of the Law of Love, when, refusing to be arrested or turned aside from His Mission, even for a moment, He elected to do the Will of His Father rather than neglect it by attending to the wishes of the Virgin Mother. As Bengel aptly puts it: He contemns not the Mother, but He places the Father first. 48 And this is ever the right relationship in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Chapter 23 New Teaching in Parables

The Parables to the People by the Lake of Galilee, and those to the Disciples in Capernaum

(Matt. 13:1-52; Mark 4:1-34; Luke 8:4-18.)

We are once more with Jesus and His disciples by the Lake of Galilee. We love to think that it was in the early morning, when the light laid its golden shadows on the still waters, and the fresh air, untainted by man, was fragrant of earth's morning sacrifice, when no voice of human discord marred the restfulness of holy silence, nor broke the Psalm of Nature's praise. It was a spring morning too, and of such spring-time as only the East, and chiefly the Galilean Lake, knows nor of mingled sunshine and showers, of warmth and storm, clouds and brightness, when life seems to return slowly and feebly to the palsied limbs of our northern climes, but when at the warm touch it bounds and throbs with the vigour of youth. The imagery of the Sermon on the Mount indicates that winter's rain and storms were just past. Under that sky Nature seems to meet the coming of spring by arraying herself in a garb more glorious than Solomon's royal pomp. Almost suddenly the blood-red anemones, the gay tulips, the spotless narcissus, and the golden ranunculus deck with wondrous richness the grass of the fields alas! so soon to wither while all trees put forth their fragrant promise of fruit. As the imagery employed in the Sermon on the Mount confirmed the inference, otherwise derived, that it was spoken during the brief period after the winter rains, when the lilies decked the fresh grass, so the scene depicted in the Parables spoken by the Lake of Galilee indicates a more advanced season, when the fields gave first promise of a harvest to be gathered in due time. And as we know that the barley-harvest commenced with the Passover, we cannot be mistaken in supposing that the scene is laid a few weeks before that Feast.

Other evidence of this is not wanting. From the opening verses we infer, that Jesus had gone forth from the house with His disciples only, and that, as He sat by the seaside, the gathering multitude had

obliged Him to enter a ship, whence He spake unto them many things in Parables. That this parabolic teaching did not follow, far less, was caused by, the fully developed enmity of the Pharisees, will appear more clearly in the sequel. Meantime it should be noticed, that the first series of Parables (those spoken by the Lake of Galilee) bear no distinct reference to it. In this respect we mark an ascending scale in the three series of Parables, spoken respectively at three different periods in the History of Christ, and with reference to three different stages of Pharisaic opposition and popular feeling. The first series is that, when Pharisaic opposition had just devised the explanation that His works were of demoniac agency, and when misled affection would have converted the ties of earthly relationship into bonds to hold the Christ. To this there was only one reply, when the Christ stretched out His Hand over those who had learned, by following Him, to do the Will of His Heavenly Father, and so become His nearest of kin. This was the real answer to the attempt of His mother and brethren; that to the Pharisaic charge of Satanic agency. And it was in this connection that, first to the multitude, then to His disciples, the first series of Parables was spoken, which exhibits the elementary truths concerning the planting of the Kingdom of God, its development, reality, value, and final vindication.

In the second series of Parables we mark a different stage. The fifteen Parables of which it consists were spoken after the Transfiguration, on the descent into the Valley of Humiliation. They also concern the Kingdom of God, but, although the prevailing characteristic is still parenetic, or, rather, Evangelic, they have a controversial aspect also, as against some vital, active opposition to the Kingdom, chiefly on the part of the Pharisees. Accordingly, they appear among the Discourses of Christ, and are connected with the climax of Pharisaic opposition as presented in the charge, in its most fully developed form, that Jesus was, so to speak, the Incarnation of Satan, the constant medium and vehicle of his activity. This was the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. All the Parables spoken at that period bear more or less direct reference to it, though, as already stated, as yet in positive rather than negative form, the Evangelic element in them being primary, and the judicial only secondary.

This order is reversed in the third series, consisting of eight Parables. Here the controversial has not only the ascendancy over the Evangelic element, but the tone has become judicial, and the Evangelic element appears chiefly in the form of certain predictions connected with the coming end. The Kingdom of God is presented in its final stage of ingathering, separation, reward and loss, as, indeed, we might expect in the teaching of the Lord immediately before His final rejection by Israel and betrayal into the hands of the Gentiles.

This internal connection between the Parables and the History of Christ best explains their meaning. Their artificial grouping (as by mostly all modern critics) is too ingenious to be true. One thing, however, is common to all the Parables, and forms a point of connection between them. They are all occasioned by some unreceptiveness on the part of the hearers, and that, even when the hearers are professing disciples. This seems indicated in the reason assigned by Christ to the disciples for His use of parabolic teaching: that unto them it was given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but unto them it was that are without, all these things are done in parables. And this may lead up to such general remarks on the Parables as are necessary for their understanding.

Little information is to be gained from discussing the etymology of the word Parable. The verb from which it is derived means to project; and the term itself, the placing of one thing by the side of another. Perhaps no other mode of teaching was so common among the Jews as that by Parables. Only in their case, they were almost entirely illustrations of what had been said or taught; 18 while, in the case of Christ, they served as the foundation for His teaching. In the one case, the light of earth was cast heavenwards, in the other, that of heaven earthwards; in the one case, it was intended to make spiritual teaching appear Jewish and national, in the other to convey spiritual teaching in a form adapted to the standpoint of the hearers. This distinction will be found to hold true, even in instances where there seems the closest parallelism between a Rabbinic and an Evangelic Parable. On further examination, the difference between them will appear not merely one of degree, but of kind, or rather

of standpoint. This may be illustrated by the Parable of the woman who made anxious search for her lost coin, which there is an almost literal Jewish parallel. But, whereas in the Jewish Parable the moral is, that a man ought to take much greater pains in the study of the Torah than in the search for coin, since the former procures an eternal reward, while the coin would, if found, at most only procure temporary enjoyment, the Parable of Christ is intended to set forth, not the merit of study or of works, but the compassion of the Saviour in seeking the lost, and the joy of Heaven in his recovery. It need scarcely be said, that comparison between such Parables, as regards their spirit, is scarcely possible, except by way of contrast.

But, to return. In Jewish writings a Parable (Mimshal, Mashal, Mathla) is introduced by some such formula as this: I will tell thee a parable (למה כי למדתי לך מהו הדבר הזה? To what is the thing like? To one &c. Often it begins more briefly, thus: A Parable. To what is the thing like? or else, simply: To what is the thing like? Sometimes even this is omitted and the Parable is indicated by the preposition to at the beginning of the illustrative story. Jewish writers extol Parables, as placing the meaning of the Law within range of the comprehension of all men. The wise King had introduced this method, the usefulness of which is illustrated by the Parable of a great palace which had many doors, so that people lost their way in it, till one came who fastened a ball of thread at the chief entrance, when all could readily find their way in and out. Even this will illustrate what has been said of the difference between Rabbinic Parables and those employed by our Lord.

The general distinction between a Parable and a Proverb, Fable and Allegory, cannot here be discussed at length. It will sufficiently appear from the character and the characteristics of the Parables of our Lord. That designation is, indeed, sometimes applied to what are not Parables, in the strictest sense; while it is wanting where we might have expected it. Thus, in the Synoptic Gospels illustrations, and even proverbial sayings, such as Physician, heal thyself or that about the blind leading the blind, are designated Parables. Again, the term Parable although used in our Authorised Version, does not occur in the original of John's Gospel; and this, although not a few illustrations used in that Gospel might, on superficial examination, appear to be Parables. The term must, therefore, be here restricted to special conditions. The first of these is, that all Parables bear reference to well-known scenes, such as those of daily life; or to events, either real, or such as every one would expect in given circumstances, or as would be in accordance with prevailing notions. Such pictures, familiar to the popular mind, are in the Parable connected with corresponding spiritual realities. Yet, here also, there is that which distinguishes the Parable from the mere illustration. The latter conveys no more than perhaps not so much as that which was to be illustrated; while the Parable conveys this and a great deal beyond it to those, who can follow up its shadows to the light by which they have been cast. In truth, Parables are the outlined shadows large, perhaps, and dim as the light of heavenly things falls on well-known scenes, which correspond to, and have their higher counterpart in spiritual realities. For, earth and heaven are twin-parts of His works. And, as the same law, so the same order, prevails in them; and they form a grand unity in their relation to the Living God Who reigneth. And, just as there is ultimately but one Law, one Force, one Life, which, variously working, effects and affects all the Phenomenal in the material universe, however diverse it may seem, so is there but one Law and Life as regards the intellectual, moral, and the spiritual. One Law, Force, and Life, binding the earthly and the heavenly into a Grand Unity the outcome of the Divine Unity, of which it is the manifestation. Thus things in earth and heaven are kindred, and the one may become to us Parables of the other. And so, if the place of our resting be --Bethel--, they become Jacob's ladder, by which those from heaven come down to earth, and those from earth ascend to heaven.

Another characteristic of the Parables, in the stricter sense, is that in them the whole picture or narrative is used in illustration of some heavenly teaching, and not merely one feature or phase of it, as in some of the parabolic illustrations and proverbs of the Synoptists, or the parabolic narratives of the Fourth Gospel. Thus, in the parabolic illustrations about the new piece of cloth on the old garment, about the blind leading the blind, about the forth-putting of leaves on the fig-tree; or in the

parabolic proverb, Physician, heal thyself; or in such parabolic narratives of John, as about the Good Shepherd, or the Vine, in each case, only one part is selected as parabolic. On the other hand, even in the shortest Parables, such as those of the seed growing secretly, the leaven in the meal, 36 and the pearl of great price, the picture is complete, and has not only in one feature, but in its whole bearing, a counterpart in spiritual realities. But, as shown in the Parable of the seed growing secretly, 38 it is not necessary that the Parable should always contain some narrative, provided that not only one feature, but the whole thing related, have its spiritual application.

In view of what has been explained, the arrangement of the Parables into symbolical and typical can only apply to their form, not their substance. In the first of these classes a scene from nature or from life serves as basis for exhibiting the corresponding spiritual reality. In the latter, what is related serves as type (τύπος), not in the ordinary sense of that term, but in that not unfrequent in Scripture: as example whether for imitation, or in warning. In the typical Parables the illustration lies, so to speak, on the outside; in the symbolical, within the narrative or scene. The former are to be applied; the latter must be explained.

It is here that the characteristic difference between the various classes of hearers lay. All the Parables, indeed, implied some background of opposition, or else of unreceptiveness. In the record of this first series of them, the fact that Jesus spake to the people in Parables, and only in Parables, is strongly marked. It appears, therefore, to have been the first time that this mode of popular teaching was adopted by him. Accordingly, the disciples not only expressed their astonishment, but inquired the reason of this novel method. The answer of the Lord makes a distinction between those to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, and those to whom all things were done in Parables. But, evidently, this method of teaching could not have been adopted for the people, in contradistinction to the disciples, and as a judicial measure, since even in the first series of Parables three were addressed to the disciples, after the people had been dismissed. On the other hand, in answer to the disciples, the Lord specially marks this as the difference between the teaching vouchsafed to them and the Parables spoken to the people, that the designed effect of the latter was judicial: to complete that hardening which, in its commencement, had been caused by their voluntary rejection of what they had heard. But, as not only the people, but the disciples also, were taught by Parables, the hardening effect must not be ascribed to the parabolic mode of teaching, now for the first time adopted by Christ. Nor is it a sufficient answer to the question, by what this darkening effect, and hence hardening influence, of the Parable on the people was caused, that the first series, addressed to the multitude, consisted of a cumulation of Parables, without any hint as to their meaning or interpretation. For, irrespective of other considerations, these Parables were at least as easily understood as those spoken immediately afterwards to the disciples, on which, similarly, no comment was given by Jesus. On the other hand, to us at least, it seems clear, that the ground of the different effect of the Parables on the unbelieving multitude and on the believing disciples was not objective, or caused by the substance or form of these Parables, but subjective, being caused by the different standpoint of the two classes of hearers toward the Kingdom of God.

This explanation removes what otherwise would be a serious difficulty. For, it seems impossible to believe, that Jesus had adopted a special mode of teaching for the purpose of concealing the truth, which might have saved those who heard Him. His words, indeed, indicate that such was the effect of the Parables. But they also indicate, with at least equal clearness, that the cause of this hardening lay, not in the parabolic method of teaching, but in the state of spiritual insensibility at which, by their own guilt, they had previously arrived. Through this, what might, and, in other circumstances, would, have conveyed spiritual instruction, necessarily became that which still further and fatally darkened and dulled their minds and hearts. Thus, their own hardening merged into the judgment of hardening. We are now in some measure able to understand, why Christ now for the first time adopted parabolic teaching. Its reason lay in the altered circumstances of the case. All his former teaching had been plain, although initial. In it He had set forth by Word, and exhibited by fact (in miracles), that Kingdom of God which He had come to open to all believers. The hearers had now ranged themselves into two

parties. Those who, whether temporarily or permanently (as the result would show), had admitted these premisses, so far as they understood them, were His professing disciples. On the other hand, the Pharisaic party had now devised a consistent theory, according to which the acts, and hence also the teaching, of Jesus, were of Satanic origin. Christ must still preach the Kingdom; for that purpose had he come into the world. Only, the presentation of that Kingdom must now be for decision. It must separate the two classes, leading the one to clearer understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of what not only seems, but to our limited thinking really is, mysterious; while the other class of hearers would now regard these mysteries as wholly unintelligible, incredible, and to be rejected. And the ground of this lay in the respective positions of these two classes towards the Kingdom. 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. And the mysterious manner in which they were presented in Parables was alike suited to, and corresponded with, the character of these mysteries of the Kingdom now set forth, not for initial instruction, but for final decision. As the light from heaven falls on earthly objects, the shadows are cast. But our perception of them, and its mode, depend on the position which we occupy relatively to that Light.

And so it was not only best, but most merciful, that these mysteries of substance should now, also, be presented as mysteries of form in Parables. Here each would see according to his standpoint towards the Kingdom. And this was in turn determined by previous acceptance or rejection of that truth, which had formerly been set forth in a plain form in the teaching and acting of the Christ. Thus, while to the opened eyes and hearing ears of the one class would be disclosed that, which prophets and righteous men of old had desired but not attained, to them who had voluntarily cast aside what they had, would only come, in their seeing and hearing, the final judgment of hardening. So would it be to each according to his standpoint. To the one would come the grace of final revelation, to the other the final judgment which, in the first place, had been of their own choice, but which, as they voluntarily occupied their position relatively to Christ, had grown into the fulfilment of the terrible prediction of Esaias concerning the final hardening of Israel.

Thus much in general explanation. The record of the first series of Parables contains three separate accounts: that of the Parables spoken to the people; that of the reason for the use of parabolic teaching, and the explanation of the first Parables (both addressed to the disciples); and, finally, another series of Parables spoken to the disciples. To each of these we must briefly address ourselves.

On that bright spring morning, when Jesus spoke from the ship to the multitude that crowded the shore, He addressed to them these four Parables: concerning Him Who sowed, concerning the Wheat and the Tares, concerning the Mustard-Seed, and concerning the Leaven. The first, or perhaps the two first of these, must be supplemented by what may be designated as a fifth Parable, that of the Seed growing unobservedly. This is the only Parable of which Mark alone has preserved the record. All these Parables refer, as is expressly stated, to the Kingdom of God; that is, not to any special phase or characteristic of it, but to the Kingdom itself, or, in other words, to its history. They are all such as befit an open-air address at that season of the year, in that locality, and to those hearers. And yet there is such gradation and development in them as might well point upwards and onwards.

The first Parable is that of Him Who sowed. We can almost picture to ourselves the Saviour seated in the prow of the boat, as He points His hearers to the rich plain over against Him, where the young corn, still in the first green of its growing, is giving promise of harvest. Like this is the Kingdom of Heaven which He has come to proclaim. Like what? Not yet like that harvest, which is still in the future, but like that field over there. The Sower has gone forth to sow the Good Seed. If we bear in mind a mode of sowing peculiar (if we are not mistaken) to those times, the Parable gains in vividness. According to Jewish authorities there was twofold sowing, as the seed was either cast by the hand (dy tlwpm) or by means of cattle (Myrww#@ \$ tlwpm). In the latter case, a sack with holes was filled with corn and laid on the back of the animal, so that, as it moved onwards, the seed was thickly scattered. Thus it might well be, that it would fall indiscriminately on beaten roadway, on stony

places but thinly covered with soil, or where the thorns had not been cleared away, or undergrowth from the thorn-hedge crept into the field, as well as on good ground. The result in each case need not here be repeated. But what meaning would all this convey to the Jewish hearers of Jesus? How could this sowing and growing be like the Kingdom of God? Certainly not in the sense in which they expected it. To them it was only a rich harvest, when all Israel would bear plenteous fruit. Again, what was the Seed, and who the Sower? or what could be meant by the various kinds of soil and their unproductiveness?

To us, as explained by the Lord, all this seems plain. But to them there could be no possibility of understanding, but much occasion for misunderstanding it, unless, indeed, they stood in right relationship to the Kingdom of God. The initial condition requisite was to believe that Jesus was the Divine Sower, and His Word the Seed of the Kingdom: no other Sower than He, no other Seed of the Kingdom than His Word. If this were admitted, they had at least the right premisses for understanding this mystery of the Kingdom. According to Jewish view the Messiah was to appear in outward pomp, and by display of power to establish the Kingdom. But this was the very idea of the Kingdom, with which Satan had tempted Jesus at the outset of His Ministry. In opposition to it was this mystery of the Kingdom according to which it consisted in reception of the Seed of the Word. That reception would depend on the nature of the soil, that is, on the mind and heart of the hearers. The Kingdom of God was within: it came neither by a display of power, nor even by this, that Israel, or else the Gospel-hearers, were the field on which the Seed of the Kingdom was sown. He had brought the Kingdom: the Sower had gone forth to sow. This was of free grace the Gospel. But the seed might fall on the roadside, and so perish without even springing up. Or it might fall on rocky soil, and so spring up rapidly, but wither before it showed promise of fruit. Or it might fall where thorns grew along with, and more rapidly than, it. And so it would, indeed, show promise of fruit; the corn might appear in the ear; but that fruit would not come to ripeness (bring no fruit to perfection), because the thorns growing more rapidly would choke the corn. Lastly, to this threefold faultiness of soil, through which the seed did not spring up at all, or merely sprung up, or just reached the promise, but not the perfection of fruit, corresponded a threefold degree of fruit-bearing in the soil, according to which it brought forth thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or an hundredfold, in the varying measure of its capacity.

If even the disciples failed to comprehend the whole bearing of this Mystery of the Kingdom we can believe how utterly strange and un-Jewish such a Parable of the Messianic Kingdom must have sounded to them, who had been influenced by the Pharisaic representations of the Person and Teaching of Christ. And yet the while these very hearers were, unconsciously to themselves, fulfilling what Jesus was speaking to them in the Parable!

Whether or not the Parable recorded by Mark alone, concerning the Seed growing unobservedly, was spoken afterwards in private to the disciples, or, as seems more likely, at the first, and to the people by the seashore, this appears the fittest place for inserting it. If the first Parable, concerning the Sower and the Field of Sowing, would prove to all who were outside the pale of discipleship a mystery while to those within it would unfold knowledge of the very mysteries of the Kingdom, this would even more fully be the case in regard to this second or supplementary Parable. In it we are only viewing that portion of the field, which the former Parable had described as good soil. So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man had cast the seed on the earth, and slept and rose, night and day, and the seed sprang up and grew: how, he knows not himself. Automatus [self-acting] the earth beareth fruit: first blade, then ear, then full wheat in the ear! But when the fruit presents itself, immediately he sendeth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come. The meaning of all this seems plain. As the Sower, after the seed has been cast into the ground, can do no more; he goes to sleep at night, and rises by day, the seed the meanwhile growing, the Sower knows not how, and as his activity ceases till the time that the fruit is ripe, when immediately he thrusts in the sickle so is the Kingdom of God. The seed is sown; but its growth goes on, dependent on the law inherent in seed and soil, dependent also on Heaven's blessing of sunshine and showers, till the moment of ripeness, when the harvest time is come. We can only go about our daily work, or lie down to rest, as day and night alternate; we

see, but know not the how of the growth of the seed. Yet, assuredly it will ripen, and when that moment has arrived, immediately the sickle is thrust in, for the harvest is come. And so also with the Sower. His outward activity on earth was in the sowing, and it will be in the harvesting. What lies between them is of that other Dispensation of the Spirit, till He again send forth His reapers into His field. But all this must have been to those without a great mystery, in no wise compatible with Jewish notions; while to them within it proved a yet greater, and very needful unfolding of the mysteries of the Kingdom, with very wide application of them.

The mystery is made still further mysterious, or else it is still further unfolded, in the next Parable concerning the Tares sown among the Wheat. According to the common view, these Tares represent what is botanically known as the bearded Darnel (*Lolium temulentum*), a poisonous rye-grass, very common in the East, entirely like wheat until the ear appears or else (according to some), the creeping wheat or couch-grass (*Triticum repens*), of which the roots creep underground and become intertwined with those of the wheat. But the Parable gains in meaning if we bear in mind that, according to ancient Jewish (and, indeed, modern Eastern) ideas, the Tares were not of different seed, but only a degenerate kind of wheat. Whether in legend or symbol, Rabbinism has it that even the ground had been guilty of fornication before the judgment of the Flood, so that when wheat was sown tares sprang up. The Jewish hearers of Jesus would, therefore, think of these tares as degenerate kind of wheat, originally sprung at the time of the Flood, through the corruptness of the earth, but now, alas! so common in their fields; wholly undistinguishable from the wheat, till the fruit appeared: noxious, poisonous, and requiring to be separated from the wheat, if the latter was not to become useless.

With these thoughts in mind, let us now try to realise the scene pictured. Once more we see the field on which the corn is growing we know not how. The sowing time is past. The Kingdom of Heaven is become like to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But in the time that men sleep came his enemy and over-sowed tares in (upon) the midst of the wheat, and went away. Thus far the picture is true to nature, since such deeds of enmity were, and still are, common in the East. And so matters would go on unobserved, since, whatever kind of tares may be meant, it would, from their likeness, be for some time impossible to distinguish them from the wheat. But when the herbage grew and made fruit, then appeared (became manifest) also the tares. What follows is equally true to fact, since, according to the testimony of travellers, most strenuous efforts are always made in the East to weed out the tares. Similarly, in the parable, the servants of the householder are introduced as inquiring whence these tares had come; and on the reply: A hostile person has done this they further ask: Wilt thou then that we go (straightway) and gather them together? The absence of any reference to the rooting up or burning the tares, is intended to indicate, that the only object which the servants had in view was to keep the wheat pure and unmixed for the harvest. But this their final object would have been frustrated by the procedure, which their inconsiderate zeal suggested. It would, indeed, have been quite possible to distinguish the tares from the wheat and the Parable proceeds on this very assumption for, by their fruit they would be known. But in the present instance separation would have been impossible, without, at the same time, uprooting some of the wheat. For, the tares had been sown right into the midst, and not merely by the side, of the wheat; and their roots and blades must have become intertwined. And so they must grow together to the harvest. Then such danger would no longer exist, for the period of growing was past, and the wheat had to be gathered into the barn. Then would be the right time to bid the reapers first gather the tares into bundles for burning, that afterwards the wheat, pure and unmixed, might be stored in the garner.

True to life as the picture is, yet the Parable was, of all others, perhaps the most un-Jewish, and therefore mysterious and unintelligible. Hence the disciples specially asked explanation of this only, which from its main subject they rightly designated as the Parable of the Tares. Yet this was also perhaps the most important for them to understand. For already the Kingdom of Heaven is become like this, although the appearance of fruit has not yet made it manifest, that tares have been sown right into the midst of the wheat. But they would soon have to learn it in bitter experience and as a

grievous temptation, and not only as regarded the impressionable, fickle multitude, nor even the narrower circle of professing followers of Jesus, but that, alas! in their very midst there was a traitor. And they would have to learn it more and more in the time to come, as we have to learn it to all ages, till the Age- or AEon-completion. Most needful, yet most mysterious also, is this other lesson, as the experience of the Church has shown, since almost every period of her history has witnessed, not only the recurrence of the proposal to make the wheat unmixed, while growing, by gathering out the tares, but actual attempts towards it. All such have proved failures, because the field is the wide world not a narrow sect; because the tares have been sown into the midst of the wheat, and by the enemy; and because, if such gathering were to take place, the roots and blades of tares and wheat would be found so intertwined, that harm would come to the wheat. But why try to gather the tares together, unless from undiscerning zeal? Or what have we, who are only the owner's servants, to do with it, since we are not bidden of Him? The AEon-completion will witness the harvest, when the separation of tares and wheat may not only be accomplished with safety, but shall become necessary. For the wheat must be garnered in the heavenly storehouse, and the tares bound in bundles to be burned. Then the harvesters shall be the Angels of Christ, the gathered tares all the stumbling-blocks and those who do the lawlessness and their burning the casting of them into the oven of the fire. More mysterious still, and, if possible, even more needful, was the instruction that the Enemy who sowed the tares was the Devil. To the Jews, nay, to us all, it may seem a mystery, that in the Messianic Kingdom of Heaven there should be a mixture of tares with the wheat, the more mysterious, that the Baptist had predicted that the coming Messiah would thoroughly purge His floor. But to those who were capable of receiving it, it would be explained by the fact that the Devil was the Enemy of Christ, and of His Kingdom, and that he had sowed those tares. This would, at the same time, be the most effective answer to the Pharisaic charge, that Jesus was the Incarnation of Satan, and the vehicle of his influence. And once instructed in this, they would have further to learn the lessons of faith and patience, connected with the fact that the good seed of the Kingdom grew in the field of the world, and hence that, by the very conditions of its existence, separation by the hand of man was impossible so long as the wheat was still growing. Yet that separation would surely be made in the great harvest, to certain, terrible loss of the children of the wicked one, and to the sun-like forthshining in glory of the righteous in the Kingdom prepared by their Father. The first Parables were intended to present the mysteries of the Kingdom as illustrated by the sowing, growing, and intermixture of the Seed. The concluding two Parables set forth another equally mysterious characteristic of the Kingdom: that of its development and power, as contrasted with its small and weak beginnings. In the Parable of the Mustard-seed this is shown as regards the relation of the Kingdom to the outer world; in that of the Leaven, in reference to the world within us. The one exhibits the extensiveness, the other the intensiveness, of its power; in both cases at first hidden, almost imperceptible, and seemingly wholly inadequate to the final result. Once more we say it, that such Parables must have been utterly unintelligible to all who did not see in the humble, despised, Nazarene, and in His teaching, the Kingdom. But to those whose eyes, ears and hearts had been opened, they would carry most needed instruction and most precious comfort and assurance. Accordingly, we do not find that the disciples either asked or received an interpretation of these Parables.

A few remarks will set the special meaning of these Parables more clearly before us. Here also the illustrations used may have been at hand. Close by the fields, covered with the fresh green or growing corn, to which Jesus had pointed, may have been the garden with its growing herbs, bushes and plants, and the home of the householder, whose wife may at that moment have been in sight, busy preparing the weekly provision of bread. At any rate, it is necessary to keep in mind the homeliness of these illustrations. The very idea of Parables implies, not strict scientific accuracy, but popular pictorialness. It is characteristic of them to present vivid sketches that appeal to the popular mind, and exhibit such analogies of higher truths as can be readily perceived by all. Those addressed were not to weigh every detail, either logically or scientifically, but at once to recognise the aptness of

the illustration as presented to the popular mind. Thus, as regards the first of these two Parables, the seed of the mustard-plant passed in popular parlance as the smallest of seeds. In fact, the expression, small as a mustard-seed had become proverbial, and was used, not only by our Lord, but frequently by the Rabbis, to indicate the smallest amount, such as the least drop of blood, 78 the least defilement, or the smallest remnant of sun-glow in the sky. But when it is grown, it is greater than the garden-herbs. Indeed, it looks no longer like a large garden-herb or shrub, but becomes or rather, appears like, a tree' as Luke puts it, a great tree of course, not in comparison with other trees, but with garden-shrubs. Such growth of the mustard seed was also a fact well known at the time, and, indeed, still observed in the East.

This is the first and main point in the Parable. The other, concerning the birds which are attracted to its branches and lodge' literally, make tents there, or else under the shadow of it, is subsidiary. Pictorial, of course, this trait would be, and we can the more readily understand that birds would be attracted to the branches or the shadow of the mustard-plant, when we know that mustard was in Palestine mixed with, or used as food for pigeons, and presumably would be sought by other birds. And the general meaning would the more easily be apprehended, that a tree, whose wide-spreading branches afforded lodgment to the birds of heaven, was a familiar Old Testament figure for a mighty kingdom that gave shelter to the nations. Indeed, it is specifically used as an illustration of the Messianic Kingdom. Thus the Parable would point to this, so full of mystery to the Jews, so explanatory of the mystery to the disciples: that the Kingdom of Heaven, planted in the field of the world as the smallest seed, in the most humble and unpromising manner, would grow till it far outstripped all other similar plants, and gave shelter to all nations under heaven.

To this extensive power of the Kingdom corresponded its intensive character, whether in the world at large or in the individual. This formed the subject of the last of the Parables addressed at this time to the people that of the Leaven. We need not here resort to ingenious methods of explaining the three measures or Seahs, of meal in which the leaven was hid. Three Seahs were an Ephah, 88 of which the exact capacity differed in various districts. According to the so-called wilderness or original Biblical, measurement, it was supposed to be a space holding 432 eggs, while the Jerusalem ephah was one-fifth, and the Sepphoris (or Galilean) ephah two-fifths, or, according to another authority, one-half larger. To mix three measures of meal was common in Biblical, as well as in later times. Nothing further was therefore conveyed than the common process of ordinary, everyday life. And in this, indeed, lies the very point of the Parable, that the Kingdom of God, when received within, would seem like leaven hid, but would gradually pervade, assimilate, and transform the whole of our common life.

With this most un-Jewish, and, to the unbelieving multitude, most mysterious characterisation of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Saviour dismissed the people. Enough had been said to them and for them, if they had but ears to hear. And now He was again alone with the disciples in the house at Capernaum, to which they had returned. Many new and deeper thoughts of the Kingdom had come to them. But why had He so spoken to the multitude, in a manner so different, as regarded not only the form, but even the substance of His teaching? And did they quite understand its solemn meaning themselves? More especially, who was the enemy whose activity would threaten the safety of the harvest? Of that harvest they had already heard on the way through Samaria. And what were those tares which were to continue in their very midst till the judicial separation of the end? To these questions Jesus now made answer. His statement of the reason for adopting in the present instance the parabolic mode of teaching would, at the same time, give them farther insight into those very mysteries of the Kingdom which it had been the object of these Parables to set forth. 94 His unsolicited explanation of the details of the first Parable would call attention to points that might readily have escaped their notice, but which, for warning and instruction, it most behooved them to keep in view.

The understanding of the first Parable seems to have shown them, how much hidden meaning this teaching conveyed, and to have stimulated their desire for comprehending what the presence and

machinations of the hostile Pharisees might, in some measure, lead them to perceive in dim outline. Yet it was not to the Pharisees that the Lord referred. The Enemy was the Devil; the field, the world; the good seed, the children of the Kingdom; the tares, the children of the Wicked One. And most markedly did the Lord, in this instance, not explain the Parable, as the first one, in its details, but only indicate, so to speak, the stepping-stones for its understanding. This, not only to train the disciples, but because unlike the first Parable that of the Tares would only in the future and increasingly unfold its meaning.

But even this was not all. The disciples had now knowledge concerning the mysteries of the Kingdom. But that Kingdom was not matter of the understanding only, but of personal apprehension. This implied discovery of its value, personal acquisition of it, and surrender of all to its possession. And this mystery of the Kingdom was next conveyed to the disciples in those Parables specially addressed to, and suited only for, them.

Kindred, or rather closely connected, as are the two Parables of the Treasure hid in the Field and of the Pearl of Great Price now spoken to the disciples their differences are sufficiently marked. In the first, one who must probably be regarded as intending to buy a, if not this, field, discovers a treasure hidden there, and in his joy parts with all else to become owner of the field and of the hidden treasure which he had so unexpectedly found. Some difficulty has been expressed in regard to the morality of such a transaction. In reply it may be observed, that it was, at least, in entire accordance with Jewish law. If a man had found a treasure in loose coins among the corn, it would certainly be his, if he bought the corn. If he had found it on the ground, or in the soil, it would equally certainly belong to him, if he could claim ownership of the soil, and even if the field were not his own, unless others could prove their right to it. The law went so far as to adjudge to the purchaser of fruits anything found among these fruits. This will suffice to vindicate a question of detail, which, in any case, should not be too closely pressed in a parabolic history.

But to resume our analysis. In the second Parable we have a wise merchantman who travels in search of pearls, and when he finds one which in value exceeds all else, he returns and sells all that he has, in order to buy this unique gem. The supreme value of the Kingdom, the consequent desire to appropriate it, and the necessity of parting with all else for this purpose, are the points common to this and the previous Parable. But in the one case, it is marked that this treasure is hid from common view in the field, and the finder makes unexpected discovery of it, which fills him with joy. In the other case, the merchantman is, indeed, in search of pearls, but he has the wisdom to discover the transcendent value of this one gem, and the yet greater wisdom to give up all further search and to acquire it at the surrender of everything else. Thus, two different aspects of the Kingdom, and two different conditions on the part of those who, for its sake, equally part with all, are here set before the disciples.

Nor was the closing Parable of the Draw-net less needful. Assuredly it became, and would more and more become, them to know, that mere discipleship mere inclusion in the Gospel-net was not sufficient. That net let down into the sea of this world would include much which, when the net was at last drawn to shore, would prove worthless or even hurtful. To be a disciple, then, was not enough. Even here there would be separation. Not only the tares, which the Enemy had designedly sown into the midst of the wheat, but even much that the Gospel-net, cast into the sea, had inclosed, would, when brought to land, prove fit only to be cast away, into the oven of the fire where there is the wailing and the gnashing of teeth.

So ended that spring-day of first teaching in Parables, to the people by the Lake, and in the house at Capernaum to the disciples. Dim, shadowy outlines, growing larger and more faint in their tracings to the people; shadowy outlines, growing brighter and clearer to all who were disciples. Most wondrous instruction to all, and in all aspects of it; which even negative critics admit to have really formed part of Christ's own original teaching. But if this be the case, we have two questions of decisive character to ask. Undoubtedly, these Parables were un-Jewish. This appears, not only from a comparison with the Jewish views of the Kingdom, but from the fact that their meaning was unintelligible to the hearers of Jesus, and from this, that, rich as Jewish teaching is in Parables, none in the least parallel to them

can be adduced. Our first question, therefore, is: Whence this un-Jewish and anti-Jewish teaching concerning the Kingdom on the part of Jesus of Nazareth?

Our second question goes still farther. For, if Jesus was not a Prophet and, if a Prophet, then also the Son of God yet no more strangely unexpected prophecy, minutely true in all its details, could be conceived, than that concerning His Kingdom which His parabolic description of it conveyed. Has not History, in the strange, unexpected fulfilling of that which no human ingenuity at the time could have forecast, and no pen have described with more minute accuracy of detail, proved Him to be more than a mere man One sent from God, the Divine King of the Divine Kingdom, in all the vicissitudes which such a Divine Kingdom must experience when set up upon earth?

Chapter 24 Jesus stills the Storm on the Lake of Galilee

(Matthew 8:18,23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.)

It was the evening of that day of new teaching, and once more great multitudes were gathering to Him. What more, or, indeed, what else, could He have said to those to whom He had all that morning spoken in Parables, which hearing they had not heard nor understood? It was this, rather than weariness after a long day's working, which led to the resolve to pass to the other side. To merely physical weariness Jesus never subordinated his work. If, therefore, such had been the motive, the proposal to withdraw for rest would have come from the disciples, while here the Lord Himself gave command to pass to the other side. In truth, after that day's teaching it was better, alike for these multitudes and for His disciples that He should withdraw. And so they took Him even as He was' that is, probably without refreshment of food, or even preparation of it for the journey. This indicates how readily, nay, eagerly, the disciples obeyed the behest.

Whether in their haste they heeded not the signs of the coming storm; whether they had the secret feeling, that ship and sea which bore such burden were safe from tempest; or, whether it was one of those storms which so often rise suddenly, and sweep with such fury over the Lake of Galilee, must remain undetermined. He was in the ship whether that of the sons of Jonas, or of Zebedee the well-known boat, which was always ready for His service, whether as pulpit, resting-place, or means of journeying. But the departure had not been so rapid as to pass unobserved; and the ship was attended by other boats, which bore those that would fain follow Him. In the stern of the ship, on the low bench where the steersman sometimes takes rest, was pillowed the Head of Jesus. Weariness, faintness, hunger, exhaustion, asserted their mastery over His true humanity. He, Whom earliest Apostolic testimony proclaimed to have been in the form of God slept. Even this evidences the truth of the whole narrative. If Apostolic tradition had devised this narrative to exhibit His Divine Power, why represent Him as faint and asleep in the ship; and, if it would portray Him as deeply sleeping for very weariness, how could it ascribe to Him the power of stilling the storm by His rebuke? Each of these by themselves, but not the two in their combination, would be as legends are written. Their coincidence is due to the incidence of truth. Indeed, it is characteristic of the History of the Christ, and all the more evidential that it is so evidently undesigned in the structure of the narrative, that every deepest manifestation of His Humanity is immediately attended by highest display of His Divinity, and each special display of His Divine Power followed by some marks of His true Humanity. Assuredly, no narrative could be more consistent with the fundamental assumption that He is the God-Man. Thus viewed, the picture is unspeakably sublime. Jesus is asleep, for very weariness and hunger, in the stern of the ship, His head on that low wooden bench, while the heavens darken, the wild wind swoops down those mountain-gorges, howling with hungry rage over the trembling sea; the waves rise and toss, and lash and break over the ship, and beat into it, and the white foam washes at His feet His Humanity here appears as true as when He lay cradled in the manger; His Divinity, as when

the sages from the East laid their offerings at His Feet. But the danger is increasing so that the ship was now filling. They who watched it, might be tempted to regard the peaceful rest of Jesus, not as indicative of Divine Majesty as it were, sublime consciousness of absolute safety because they did not fully realise Who He was. In that case it would, therefore, rather mean absolute weakness in not being able, even at such a time, to overcome the demands of our lower nature; real indifference, also, to their fate not from want of sympathy, but of power. In short, it might lead up to the inference that the Christ was a no-Christ, and the Kingdom of which he had spoken in Parables, not His, in the sense of being identified with His Person.

In all this we perceive already, in part, the internal connection between the teaching of that day and the miracle of that evening. Both were quite novel: the teaching by Parables, and then the help in a Parable. Both were founded on the Old Testament: the teaching on its predictions, the miracle on its proclamations of the special Divine Manifestations in the sea; and both show that everything depended on the view taken of the Person of the Christ. Further teaching comes to us from the details of the narrative which follows. It has been asked, with which of the words recorded by the Synoptists the disciples had wakened the Lord: with those of entreaty to save them, or with those of impatience, perhaps uttered by Peter himself? But why may not both accounts represent what had passed? Similarly, it has been asked, which came first the Lord's rebuke of the disciples, and after it that of the wind and sea, or the converse? But, may it not be that each recorded that first which had most impressed itself on his mind? Matthew, who had been in the ship that night, the needful rebuke to the disciples; Mark and Luke, who had heard it from others, the help first, and then the rebuke? Yet it is not easy to understand what the disciples had really expected, when they wakened the Christ with their Lord, save us we perish! Certainly, not that which actually happened, since not only wonder, but fear, came over them as they witnessed it. Probably theirs would be a vague, undefined belief in the unlimited possibility of all in connection with the Christ. A belief this, which seems to us quite natural as we think of the gradually emerging, but still partially cloud-capped height of His Divinity, of which, as yet, only the dim outlines were visible to them. A belief this, which also accounts for the co-existing, not of disbelief, nor even of unbelief, but of inability of apprehension, which, as we have seen, characterised the bearing of the Virgin Mother. And it equally characterised that of the disciples up to the Resurrection-morning, bringing them to the empty tomb, and filling them with unbelieving wonder that the tomb was empty. Thus, we have come to that stage in the History of the Christ when, in opposition to the now formulated charge of His enemies as to His Person, neither His Teaching nor His Working could be fully understood, except so far as his Personality was understood that He was of God and Very God. And so we are gradually reaching on towards the expediency and the need of the coming of the Holy Ghost to reveal that mystery of His Person. Similarly, the two great stages in the history of the Church's learning were: the first to come to knowledge of what He was, by experience of what He did; the second to come to experience of what He did and does, by knowledge of what He is. The former, which corresponds, in the Old Testament, to the patriarchal age, is that of the period when Jesus was on earth; the second, which answers to the history of --Israel--, is that of the period after His Ascension into Heaven and the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

When He was awakened by the voice of His disciples, He rebuked the wind and the sea as Jehovah had of old just as He had rebuked the fever, and the paroxysm of the demonised. For, all are His creatures, even when lashed to frenzy of the hostile power. And the sea He commanded as if it were a sentient being: Be silent! Be silenced! And immediately the wind was bound, the panting waves throbbed into stillness, and a great calm of rest fell upon the Lake'. For, when Christ sleepeth, there is storm; when He waketh, great peace. But over these men who had first wakened Him with their cry, now crept wonderment, awe, and fear. No longer, as at His first wonder-working in Capernaum, was it: What is this? 16 but Who, then, is this? And so the grand question, which the enmity of the Pharisees had raised, and which, in part, had been answered in the Parables of teaching, was still more fully and practically met in what, not only to the disciples, but to all time, was a Parable of help. And Jesus also did wonder, but at that which alone could call forth His wonder the unreachings of

their faith: where was it? and how was it, they had no faith?

Thus far the history, related, often almost in the same words, by the three Evangelists. On all sides the narrative is admitted to form part of the primitive Evangelic tradition. But if so, then, even on the showing of our opponents, it must have had some foundation in an event surpassing the ordinary facts in the history of Jesus. Accordingly, of all negative critics, at most only two venture to dismiss it as unfounded on fact. But such a bold assumption would rather increase than diminish the difficulty. For, if legend it be, its invention and insertion into the primitive record must have had some historical reason. Such, however, it is absolutely impossible here to trace. The Old Testament contains no analogous history which it might have been wished to imitate; Jewish Messianic expectancy afforded no basis for it; and there is absolutely no Rabbinic parallel which could be placed by its side. Similar objections apply to the suggestion of exaggeration of some real event (Keim). For, the essence of the narrative lies in its details, of which the origin and the universal acceptance in the primitive belief of the Church have to be accounted for. Nor is the task of those negative critics more easy, who, admitting the foundation in fact for this narrative, have suggested various theories to account for its miraculous details. Most of these explanations are so unnatural, as only to point the contrast between the ingenuity of the nineteenth century and the simple, vivid language of the original narrative. For it seems equally impossible to regard it as based either on a misunderstanding of the words of Jesus during a storm (Paulus), or on the calm faith of Jesus when even the helmsman despaired of safety (Schenkel), or to represent it as only in some way a symbol of analogous mental phenomena (Ammon, Schleiermacher, Hase, Weiszäcker, and others). The very variety of explanations proposed, of which not one agrees with the others, shows, that none of them has proved satisfactory to any but their own inventors. And of all it may be said, that they have no foundation whatever in the narrative itself. Thus the only alternative left is either wholly to reject, or wholly to accept, the narrative.

If our judgment is to be determined by the ordinary rules of historical criticism, we cannot long be in doubt which of these propositions is true. Here is a narrative, which has the consensus of the three Evangelists; which admittedly formed part of the original Evangelic tradition; for the invention of which no specific motive can possibly be assigned; and which is told with a simplicity of language and a pictorial vividness of detail that carry their own evidence. Other corroborative points, such as the unlikeliness of the invention of such a situation for the Christ, or of such bearing of the disciples, have been previously indicated. Absolute historical demonstration of the event is, of course, in the nature of things impossible. But, besides the congruousness to the Parabolic teaching which had preceded this Parabolic miracle, and the accord of the Saviour's rebuke with His mode of silencing the hostile elements on other occasions, some further considerations in evidence may be offered to the thoughtful reader.

For, first, in this dominion over the sea we recognise, not only the fullest refutation of the Pharisaic misrepresentation of the Person of Christ, but the realisation in the Ideal Man of the ideal of man as heaven-destined, and the initial fulfilment of the promise which this destination implied. Creation has, indeed, been made subject to vanity; but this evil which implies not merely decay but rebellion, was directly due to the Fall of man, and will be removed at the final manifestation of the sons of God. And here Paul so far stands on the same ground as Jewish theology, which also teaches that although all things were created in their perfectness, yet when the first Adam sinned, they were corrupted. Christ's dominion over the sea was, therefore, only the Second and Unfallen Adam's real dominion over creation, and the pledge of its restoration, and of our dominion in the future. And this seems also to throw fresh light on Christ's rebuke, whether of storm, disease, or demoniac possession. Thus there is a grand consistency in this narrative, as regards the Scriptural presentation of the Christ. Again, the narrative expresses very markedly, that the interposition of Christ, alike in itself, and in the manner of it, was wholly unexpected by, indeed, contrary to the expectation of, the disciples. This also holds true in regard to other of the great manifestations of Christ, up to His Resurrection from the dead. This, of course, proves that the narrative was not founded on existing Jewish ideas. But there is more than this. The gratuitous introduction of traits which, so far from glorifying, would rather detract

from a legendary Christ, while at the same time they seriously reflect on the disciples, presumably the inventors of the legend, appears to us wholly inconsistent with the assumption that the narrative is spurious.

Nor ought we to overlook another circumstance. While we regard the narrative as that of an historical occurrence indeed, because we do so we cannot fail to perceive its permanent symbolic and typical bearing. It were, indeed, impossible to describe either the history of the --Church of --Christ--, or the experience of individual disciples, more accurately, or with wider and deeper capability of application, than in the Parable of this Miracle. And thus it is morally true to all ages; just because it was historically true at the first. And as we enter on this field of contemplation, many views open to us. The true Humanity of the Saviour, by the side of His Divine Power; the sleeping Jesus and the Almighty Word of rebuke and command to the elements, which lay them down obedient at His feet: this sharp-edged contrast resolved into a higher unity how true is it to the fundamental thought of the Gospel history! Then this other contrast of the failure of faith, and then the excitement of the disciples; and of the calm of the sleeping, and then the Majesty of the waking Christ. And, lastly, yet this third contrast of the helplessness and despondency of the disciples and the Divine certitude of conscious Omnipotence.

We perceive only difficulties and the seemingly impossible, as we compare what may be before us with that which we consciously possess. He also makes this outlook: but only to know and show, that with Him there can be no difficulty, since all is His and all may be ours, since He has come for our help and is in the ship. One thing only He wonders at the shortcomings of our faith; and one thing only makes it impossible for Him to help our unbelief.

Chapter 25 At Gerasa

The Healing of the Demonised

(Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39.)

That day of wonders was not yet ended. Most writers have, indeed, suggested, that the healing of the demonised on the other side took place at early dawn of the day following the storm on the Lake. But the distance is so short that, even making allowance for the delay by the tempest, the passage could scarcely have occupied the whole night. This supposition would be further confirmed, if the evening when Jesus embarked was what the Jews were wont to call the first evening that is, the time when the sun was declining in the heaven, but before it had actually set, the latter time being the second evening. For, it seems most unlikely that multitudes would have resorted to Jesus at Capernaum after the second evening or that either the disciples or other boats would have put to sea after nightfall. On the other hand, the scene gains in grandeur has, so to speak, a fitting background if we suppose the Saviour and His disciples to have landed on the other side late in the evening, when perhaps the silvery moon was shedding her pale light on the weird scene, and laying her halo around the shadows cast upon the sea by the steep cliff down which the herd of swine hurried and fell. This would also give time afterwards for the dispersion, not only into the city but into the country of them who had fed the swine. In that case, of course, it would be in the early morning that the Gerasenes afterwards resorted to Jesus and that He again returned to Capernaum . And, lastly this would allow sufficient time for those miracles which took place on that same day in Capernaum after His return thither. Thus, all the circumstances lead us to regard the healing of the demonised at Gerasa as a night-scene, immediately on Christ's arrival from Capernaum , and after the calming of the storm at sea. It gives not only life to the narrative, but greatly illustrates it, that we can with confidence describe the exact place where our Lord and His disciples touched the other shore. The ruins right over against

the plain of Gennesaret, which still bear the name of Kersa or Gersa, must represent the ancient Gerasa. This is the correct reading in Mark's, and probably in Luke's, perhaps also in Matthew's Gospel. The locality entirely meets the requirements of the narrative. About a quarter of an hour to the south of Gersa is a steep bluff, which descends abruptly on a narrow ledge of shore. A terrified herd running down this cliff could not have recovered its foothold, and must inevitably have been hurled into the Lake beneath. Again, the whole country around is burrowed with limestone caverns and rock-chambers for the dead, such as those which were the dwelling of the demonised. Altogether the scene forms a fitting background to the narrative.

From these tombs the demonised, who is specially singled out by Mark and Luke, as well as his less prominent companion, came forth to meet Jesus. Much that is both erroneous and misleading has been written on Jewish Demonology. According to common Jewish superstition, the evil spirits dwelt especially in lonely desolate places, and also among tombs. We must here remember what has previously been explained as to the confusion in the consciousness of the demonised between their own notions and the ideas imposed on them by the demons. It is quite in accordance with the Jewish notions of the demonised, that, according to the more circumstantial account of Luke, he should feel as it were driven into the deserts, and that he was in the tombs, while, according to Mark, he was night and day in the tombs and in the mountains the very order of the words indicating the notion (as in Jewish belief), that it was chiefly at night that evil spirits were wont to haunt burying-places.

In calling attention to this and similar particulars, we repeat, that this must be kept in view as characteristic of the demonised, that they were incapable of separating their own consciousness and ideas from the influence of the demon, their own identity being merged, and to that extent lost, in that of their tormentors. In this respect the demonised state was also kindred to madness. Self-consciousness, or rather what may be termed Individuism, i.e. the consciousness of distinct and independent individuality, and with it the power of self-origination in matters mental and moral (which some might term an aspect of free volition), distinguish the human soul from the mere animal spirit. But in maniacal disease this power is in abeyance, or temporarily lost through physical causes, such as disease of the brain as the medium of communication between the mind and the world of sense; disease of the nervous system, through which ordinarily impressions are conveyed to and from the sensorium; or disease of both brain and nervous system, when previously existing impressions on the brain (in memory, and hence possibly imagination) may be excited without corresponding outward causes. If in such cases the absolute power of self-origination and self-action is lost to the mind, habits of sin and vice (or moral disease) may have an analogous effect as regards moral freedom the power of moral self-origination and action. In the demonised state the two appear combined, the cause being neither disease nor vice, but the presence of a superior power of evil. This loss of individuism, and the subjection of one's identity to that of the demon might, while it lasted, be called temporary possession in so far as the mental and moral condition of the person was for the time not one of freedom and origination, but in the control of the possessing demon.

One practical inference may even now be drawn from this somewhat abstruse discussion. The language and conduct of the demonised, whether seemingly his own, or that of the demons who influenced him, must always be regarded as a mixture of the Jewish-human and the demoniacal. The demonised speaks and acts as a Jew under the control of a demon. Thus, if he chooses solitary places by day, and tombs by night, it is not that demons really preferred such habitations, but that the Jews imagined it, and that the demons, acting on the existing consciousness, would lead him, in accordance with his preconceived notions, to select such places. Here also mental disease offers points of analogy. For, the demonised would speak and act in accordance with his previous (Jewish) demonological ideas. He would not become a new man, but be the old man, only under the influence of the demon, just as in mania a person truly and consistently speaks and acts, although under the false impressions which a diseased brain conveys to him. The fact that in the demonised state a man's identity was not superseded, but controlled, enables us to account for many phenomena without either confounding demonism with mania, or else imputing to our Lord such accommodation

to the notions of the times, as is not only untenable in itself, but forbidden even by the language of the present narrative.

The description of the demonised, coming out of the tombs to meet Jesus as He touched the shore at Gerasa, is vivid in the extreme. His violence, the impossibility of control by others, the absence of self-control, his homicidal, and almost suicidal, frenzy, are all depicted. Evidently, it was the object to set forth the extreme degree of the demonised state. Christ, Who had been charged by the Pharisees with being the embodiment and messenger of Satan, is here face to face with the extreme manifestation of demoniac power and influence. It is once more, then, a Miracle in Parable which is about to take place. The question, which had been raised by the enemies, is about to be brought to the issue of a practical demonstration. We do not deny that the contest and the victory, this miracle, nay, the whole series of miracles of which it forms part, are extraordinary, even in the series of Christ's miracles. Our explanation proceeds on the very ground that such was, and must have been, the case. The teaching by Parables, and the parabolic miracles which follow, form, so to speak, an ascending climax, in contrast to the terrible charge which by-and-by would assume the proportions of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and issue in the betrayal and judicial murder of Jesus. There are critical epochs in the history of the Kingdom of God, when the power of evil, standing out in sharpest contrast, challenges that overwhelming manifestation of the Divine, as such, to bear down and crush that which opposes it. Periods of that kind are characterised by miraculous interposition of power, unique even in Bible-history. Such a period was, under the Old Testament, that of Elijah and Elisha, with its altogether exceptional series of miracles; and, under the New Testament, that after the first formulated charge of the Pharisees against the Christ.

With irresistible power the demonised was drawn to Jesus, as He touched the shore at Gerasa. As always, the first effect of the contact was a fresh paroxysm, but in this peculiar case not physical, but moral. As always also, the demons knew Jesus, and His Presence seemed to constrain their confession of themselves and therefore of Him. As in nature the introduction of a dominant element sometimes reveals the hidden presence of others, which are either attracted or repelled by it, so the Presence of Christ obliged the manifestation, and, in the case of these evil spirits, the self-confession, of the powers of evil. In some measure it is the same still. The introduction of grace brings to light and experience sin hitherto unknown, and the new life brings consciousness of, and provokes contest with, evil within, of which the very existence had previously been unsuspected. In the present instance the immediate effect was homage, which presently manifested itself in language such as might have been expected.

Here also it must be remembered, that both the act of homage, or worship and the words spoken, were not the outcome either of the demonised only, nor yet of the demons only, but a combination of the two: the control of the demons being absolute over the man such as he was. Their language led to his worship; their feelings and fears appeared in his language. It was the self-confession of the demons, when obliged to come into His Presence and do homage, which made the man fall down and, in the well-known Jewish formula, recorded by the three Evangelists, say: What have I to do with Thee or rather, What between me and Thee' what have we in common (Mah li valakh)? Similarly, although it was consciousness of subjection and fear in His Presence, on the part of the demons, which underlay the adjuration not to inflict torment on them, yet the language itself, as the text shows, was that of the demonised, and the form in which their fear expressed itself was that of his thinking. The demons, in their hold on their victim, could not but own their inferiority, and apprehend their defeat and subjection, especially on such an occasion; and the Jew, whose consciousness was under their control not unified, but identified with it exclaimed: I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not.

This strange mixture of the demoniac with the human, or rather, this expression of underlying demoniac thought in the forms and modes of thinking of the Jewish victim, explains the expressed fear of present actual torment, or, as Matthew, who, from the briefness of his account, does not seem to have been an eye witness, expresses it: Thou art come to torment us before the time; and

possibly also for the adjuration by God. For, as immediately on the homage and protestation of the demonised: What between me and Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High God? Christ had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, it may have been, that in so doing He had used the Name of the Most High God; or else the adjuration itself may have been the form in which the Jewish speaker clothed the consciousness of the demons, with which his own was identified. It may be conjectured, that it was partly in order to break this identification, or rather to show the demonised that it was not real, and only the consequence of the control which the demons had over him, that the Lord asked his name. To this the man made answer, still in the dual consciousness, My name is Legion: for we are many. Such might be the subjective motive for Christ's question. Its objective reason may have been to show the power of the demoniac possession in the present instance, thus marking it as an altogether extreme case. The remembrance, that the answer is once more in the forms of Jewish thinking, enables us to avoid the strange notion (whether it express the opinion of some, or the difficulties of others), that the word Legion conveys the idea of six thousand armed and strong warriors of evil. For, it was a common Jewish idea, that, under certain circumstances, a legion of hurtful spirits (of course not in the sense of a Roman legion) were on the watch for men, saying: When shall he fall into the hands of one of these things, and be taken? This identification of the demons with the demonised, in consequence of which he thought with their consciousness, and they spoke not only through him but in his forms of thinking, may also account for the last and most difficult part of this narrative. Their main object and wish was not to be banished from the country and people, or, as Luke puts it again to depart into the abyss. Let us now try to realise the scene. On the very narrow strip of shore, between the steep cliff that rises in the background and the Lake', stand Jesus with His disciples and the demonised. The wish of the demons is not to be sent out of the country not back into the abyss. The one is the cliff overhead, the other the --Lake beneath: so, symbolically, and, to the demonised, really. Up on that cliff a great herd of swine is feeding; up that cliff, therefore, is into the swine; and this also agrees with Jewish thoughts concerning uncleanness. The rendering of our Authorised Version, that, in reply to the demoniac entreaty, forthwith Jesus gave them leave has led to misunderstanding. The distinction here to be made is, though narrow, yet real and important. The verb, which is the same in all the three Gospels, would be better rendered by suffered than by gave them leave. With the latter we associate positive permission. None such was either asked or given. The Lord suffered it that is, He did not actually hinder it. He only said unto them, Go!

What followed belongs to the phenomena of supersensuous influences upon animals, of which many instances are recorded, but the rationale of which it is impossible to explain. How the unclean spirits could enter into the swine, is a question which cannot be entertained till we shall know more of the animal soul than is at present within our range. This, however, we can understand, that under such circumstances a panic would seize the herd, that it would madly rush down the steep on which it could not arrest itself, and so perish in the sea. And this also we can perceive, how the real object of the demons was thus attained; how they did not leave the country, when Christ was entreated to leave it.

The weird scene over which the moon had shed her ghostlike light, was past. The unearthly utterances of the demonised, the wild panic among the herd on the cliff, the mad rush down the steep, the splashing waters as the helpless animals were precipitated into the Lake all this makes up a picture, unsurpassed for vivid, terrible realism. And now sudden silence has fallen on them. From above, the keepers of the herd had seen it all alike what had passed with the demonised, and then the issue in the destruction of the herd. From the first, as they saw the demonised, for fear of whom no man might pass that way running to Jesus, they must have watched with eager interest. In the clear Eastern air not a word that was spoken could have been lost. And now in wild terror they fled, into Gerasa into the country round about, to tell what had happened.

It is morning, and a new morning-sacrifice and morning-Psalm are about to be offered. He that had erst been the possession of foul and evil spirits a very legion of them and deprived of his human

individuality, is now sitting at the feet of Jesus learning of Him, clothed and in his right mind. He has been brought to God, restored to self, to reason, and to human society and all this by Jesus, at Whose Feet he is gratefully, humbly sitting, a disciple. Is He not then the Very Son of God? Viewing this miracle, as a historical fact, viewing it as a Parabolic Miracle, viewing it also as symbolic of what has happened in all ages is He not the Son of the Most High God? And is there not now, on His part, in the morning-light the same calmness and majesty of conscious Almighty Power as on the evening before, when He rebuked the storm and calmed the sea?

One other point as regards the healing of this demonism deserves special consideration. Contrary to what was commonly the case, when the evil spirits came out of the demonised, there was no paroxysm of physical distress. Was it then so, that the more complete and lasting the demoniac possession, the less of purely physical symptoms attended it?

But now from town and country have they come, who had been startled by the tidings which those who fed the swine had brought. We may contrast the scene with that of the shepherds when on Bethlehem's plains the great revelation had come to them, and they had seen the Divine Babe laid in the manger, and had worshipped. Far other were the tidings which these herdsmen brought, and their effect. It is not necessary to suppose, that their request that Jesus would depart out of their coasts was prompted only by the loss of the herd of swine. There could be no doubt in their minds, that One possessing supreme and unlimited power was in their midst. Among men superstitious, and unwilling to submit absolutely to the Kingdom which Christ brought, there could only be one effect of what they had heard, and now witnessed in the person of the healed demonised awe and fear! The Depart from me, for I am a sinful man is the natural expression of a mind conscious of sin when brought into contact with the Divine, Whose supreme and absolute Power is realised as hostile. And this feeling would be greatly increased, in measure as the mind was under the influence of superstitious fears. In such place and circumstances Jesus could not have continued. And, as He entered the ship, the healed demonised humbly, earnestly entreated, that he might go with his Saviour. It would have seemed to him, as if he could not bear to lose his new found happiness; as if there were calm, safety, and happiness only in His Presence; not far from Him, not among those wild mountains and yet wilder men. Why should he be driven from His fellowship, who had so long been an outcast from that of his fellow men, and why again left to himself? So, perhaps, should we have reasoned and spoken; so too often do we reason and speak, as regards ourselves or those we love. Not so He Who appoints alike our discipline and our work. To go back, now healed, to his own, and to publish there, in the city nay, through the whole of the large district of the ten confederate cities, the Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, such was henceforth to be his lifework. In this there would be both safety and happiness.

And all men did marvel. And presently Jesus Himself came back into that Decapolis', where the healed demonised had prepared the way for Him.

Chapter 26 The Healing of the Woman

Christ's Personal Appearance The Raising of Jairus Daughter

(Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56.)

There seems remarkable correspondence between the two miracles which Jesus had wrought on leaving Capernaum and those which He did on His return. In one sense they are complementary to each other. The stilling of the storm and the healing of the demonised were manifestations of the absolute power inherent in Christ; the recovery of the woman and the raising of Jairus daughter, evidence of the absolute efficacy of faith. The unlikeliness of dominion over the storm, and of

command over a legion of demons, answers to that of recovery obtained in such a manner, and of restoration when disease had passed into actual death. Even the circumstances seem to correspond, though at opposite poles; in the one case, the Word spoken to the unconscious element, in the other the touch of the unconscious Christ; in the one case the absolute command of Christ over a world of resisting demons, in the other absolute certainty of faith as against the hostile element, of actual fact. Thus the Divine character of the Saviour appears in the absoluteness of His Omnipotence, and the Divine character of His Mission in the all-powerfulness of faith which it called forth.

On the shore at Capernaum many were gathered on the morning after the storm. It may have been, that the boats which had accompanied Him had returned to friendly shelter, ere the storm had risen to full fury, and had brought anxious tidings of the storm out on the Lake. There they were gathered now in the calm morning, friends eagerly looking out for the well-known boat that bore the Master and His disciples. And as it came in sight, making again for Capernaum, the multitude also would gather in waiting for the return of Him, Whose words and deeds were indeed mysteries, but mysteries of the Kingdom. And quickly, as He again stepped on the well-known shore, was He welcomed, surrounded, soon thronged inconveniently pressed upon, by the crowd, eager, curious, expectant. It seemed as if they had been all waiting for Him and He had been away all too long for their impatience. The tidings rapidly spread, and reached two homes where His help was needed; where, indeed, it alone could now be of possible avail. The two most nearly concerned must have gone to seek that help about the same time, and prompted by the same feelings of expectancy. Both Jairus, the Ruler of the Synagogue, and the woman suffering these many years from disease, had faith. But the weakness of the one arose from excess, and threatened to merge into superstition, while the weakness of the other was due to defect, and threatened to end in despair. In both cases faith had to be called out, tried, purified, and so perfected; in both the thing sought for was, humanely speaking, unattainable, and the means employed seemingly powerless; yet, in both, the outward and inward results required were obtained through the power of Christ, and by the peculiar discipline to which, in His all-wise arranging, faith was subjected.

It sounds almost like a confession of absolute defeat, when negative critics (such as Keim) have to ground their mythical explanation of this history on the supposed symbolical meaning of what they designate as the fictitious name of the Ruler of the Synagogue Jair, he will give light and when they further appeal to the correspondence between the age of the maiden and the years (twelve) during which the woman had suffered from the bloody flux. This coincidence is, indeed, so trivial as not to deserve serious notice; since there can be no conceivable connection between the age of the child and the duration of the woman's disease, nor, indeed, between the two cases, except in this, that both appealed to Jesus. As regards the name Jairus, the supposed symbolism is inapt; while internal reasons are opposed to the hypothesis of its fictitiousness. For, it seems most unlikely that Mark and Luke would have rendered the discovery of a myth easy by needlessly breaking the silence of Matthew, and giving the name of so well-known a person as a Synagogue-ruler of Capernaum. And this the more readily, that the name, though occurring in the Old Testament, and in the ranks of the Nationalist party in the last Jewish War, was apparently not a common one. But these are comparatively small difficulties in the way of the mythical interpretation.

Jairus, one of the Synagogue-rulers of Capernaum, had an only daughter, who at the time of this narrative had just passed childhood, and reached the period when Jewish Law declared a woman of age. Although Matthew, contracting the whole narrative into briefest summary, speaks of her as dead at the time of Jairus application to Jesus, the other two Evangelists, giving fuller details, describe her as on the point of death, literally, at the last breath (in extremis). Unless her disease had been both sudden and exceedingly rapid, which is barely possible, it is difficult to understand why her father had not on the previous day applied to Jesus, if his faith had been such as is generally supposed. But if, as the whole tenour of the history shows, his faith had been only general and scarcely formed, we can account the more easily for the delay. Only in the hour of supreme need, when his only child lay dying, did he resort to Jesus. There was need to perfect such faith, on the one

side into perseverance of assurance, and on the other into energy of trustfulness. The one was accomplished through the delay caused by the application of the woman, the other by the supervention of death during this interval.

There was nothing unnatural or un-Jewish in the application of this Ruler to Jesus. He must have known of the healing of the son of the Court-official, and of the servant of the Centurion, there or in the immediate neighbourhood as it was said, by the mere word of Christ. For there had been no imposition of silence in regard to them, even had such been possible. Yet in both cases the recovery might be ascribed by some to coincidence, by others to answer of prayer. And perhaps this may help us to understand one of the reasons for the prohibition of telling what had been done by Jesus, while in other instances silence was not enjoined. Of course, there were occasions such as the raising of the young man at Nain and of Lazarus when the miracle was done so publicly, that a command of this kind would have been impossible. But in other cases may this not be the line of demarcation, that silence was not enjoined when a result was achieved which, according to the notions of the time, might have been attributed to other than direct Divine Power, while in the latter cases publicity was (whenever possible) forbidden? And this for the twofold reason, that Christ's Miracles were intended to aid, not to supersede, faith; to direct to the Person and Teaching of Christ, as that which proved the benefit to be real and Divine; not to excite the carnal Jewish expectancies of the people, but to lead in humble discipleship to the Feet of Jesus. In short, if only those were made known which would not necessarily imply Divine Power (according to Jewish notions), then would not only the distraction and tumult of popular excitement be avoided, but in each case faith in the Person of Christ be still required, ere the miracles were received as evidence of His Divine claims. And this need of faith was the main point.

That, in view of his child's imminent death, and with the knowledge he had of the mighty deeds commonly reported of Jesus, Jairus should have applied to Him, can the less surprise us, when we remember how often Jesus must, with consent and by invitation of this Ruler, have spoken in the Synagogue; and what irresistible impression His words had made. It is not necessary to suppose, that Jairus was among those elders of the Jews who interceded for the Centurion; the form of his present application seems rather opposed to it. But after all, there was nothing in what he said which a Jew in those days might not have spoken to a Rabbi, who was regarded as Jesus must have been by all in Capernaum who believed not the horrible charge, which the Judæan Pharisees had just raised. Though we cannot point to any instance where the laying on of a great Rabbi's hands was sought for healing, such, combined with prayer, would certainly be in entire accordance with Jewish views at the time. The confidence in the result, expressed by the father in the accounts of Mark and Matthew, is not mentioned by Luke. And perhaps, as being the language of an Eastern, it should not be taken in its strict literality as indicating actual conviction on the part of Jairus, that the laying on of Christ's Hands would certainly restore the maiden.

Be this as it may, when Jesus followed the Ruler to his house, the multitude thronging Him in eager curiosity, another approached Him from out that crowd, whose inner history was far different from that of Jairus. The disease from which this woman had suffered for twelve years would render her Levitically unclean. It must have been not unfrequent in Palestine, and proved as intractable as modern science has found it, to judge by the number and variety of remedies prescribed, and by their character. On one leaf of the Talmud not less than eleven different remedies are proposed, of which at most only six can possibly be regarded as astringents or tonics, while the rest are merely the outcome of superstition, to which resort is had in the absence of knowledge. But what possesses real interest is, that, in all cases where astringents or tonics are prescribed, it is ordered, that, while the woman takes the remedy, she is to be addressed in the words: Arise (Qum) from thy flux. It is not only that psychical means are apparently to accompany the the rapeutical in this disease, but the coincidence in the command, Arise (Qum), with the words used by Christ in raising Jairus daughter is striking. But here also we mark only contrast to the magical cures of the Rabbis. For Jesus neither used remedies, nor spoke the word Qum to her who had come in the press behind to touch for her

healing the fringe of His outer garment.

As this is almost the only occasion on which we can obtain a glimpse of Christ's outward appearance and garb, it may be well to form such accurate conception of it, as is afforded by a knowledge of the dress of the ancient Hebrews. The Rabbis laid it down as a rule, that the learned ought to be most careful in their dress. It was a disgrace if a scholar walked abroad with clouted shoes; to wear dirty clothes deserved death; for the glory of God was man, and the glory of man was his dress. This held specially true of the Rabbi, whose appearance might otherwise reflect on the theological profession. It was the general rule to eat and drink below (or else according to) a man's means, but to dress and lodge above them. For, in these four things a man's character might be learned; at his cups, in many matters, when he was angry and by his ragged dress. Nay, The clothing of the wife of a Chabher (learned associate) is of greater importance than the life of the ignorant (rustic), for the sake of the dignity of the learned. Accordingly, the Rabbis were wont to wear such dress by which they might be distinguished. At a latter period they seem at their ordination to have been occasionally arrayed in a mantle of gold-stuff. Perhaps a distinctive garment, most likely a headgear, was worn, even by rulers (the elder Nqz), at their ordination. The Palestinian Nasi, or President of the Sanhedrin, also had a distinctive dress, and the head of the Jewish community in Babylon a distinctive girdle.

In referring to the dress which may on a Sabbath be saved from a burning house not, indeed, by carrying it, but by successively putting it on, no fewer than eighteen articles are mentioned. If the meaning of all the terms could be accurately ascertained, we should know precisely what the Jews in the second century, and presumably earlier, wore, from the shoes and stockings on their feet to the gloves on the hands. Unfortunately, many of these designations are in dispute. Nor must it be thought that, because there are eighteen names, the dress of an Israelite consisted of so many separate pieces. Several of them apply to different shapes or kinds of the same under or upper garments, while the list indicates their extreme number and variety rather than the ordinary dress worn. The latter consisted, to judge by the directions given for undressing and dressing in the bathroom, of six, or perhaps more generally, of five articles: the shoes, the head-covering, the Tallith or upper cloak, the girdle, the Chaluq or under-dress, and the Aphqarsin or innermost covering. As regarded shoes, a man should sell his very roof-tree for them, although he might have to part with them for food if he were in a weak condition through blood-letting. But it was not the practice to provide more than one pair of shoes, and to this may have referred the injunction of Christ to the Apostle not to provide shoes for their journey, or else to the well-known distinction between shoes (Manalim) and sandals (Sandalim). The former, which were sometimes made of very coarse material, covered the whole foot, and were specially intended for winter or rainy weather; while the sandals, which only protected the soles and sides of the feet, were specially for summer use.

In regard to the covering of the head, it was deemed a mark of disrespect to walk abroad, or to pass a person, with bared head. Slaves covered their heads in presence of their masters, and the Targum Onkelos indicates Israel's freedom by paraphrasing the expression they went out with a high hand by with uncovered head 36 The ordinary covering of the head was the so-called Sudar (or Sudarimn), a kerchief twisted into a turban, and which might also be worn round the neck. A kind of hat was also in use, either of light material or of felt (Aphilyon shel rosh or Philyon). The Sudar was twisted by Rabbis in a peculiar manner to distinguish them from others. We read besides of a sort of cap or hood attached to garments.

Three, or else four articles commonly constituted the dress of the body. First came the undergarment, commonly the Chaluq of the Kittuna (The Biblical Kethoneth), from which latter some have derived the word cotton. The Chaluq might be of linen or of wool. The sages wore it down to the feet. It was covered by the upper garment or Tallith to within about a handbreadth. The Chaluq lay close to the body, and had no other opening than that round the neck and for the arms. At the bottom it had a kind of hem. To possess only one such coat or inner garment was a mark of poverty. Hence, when the Apostles were sent on their temporary mission, they were directed not to take two coats. Closely similar to, if not identical with, the Chaluq, was the ancient garment mentioned in the Old Testament

as Kethoneth, to which the Greek Chiton (citwn) corresponds. As the garment which our Lord wore, and those of which He spoke to His Apostles are designated by that name, we conclude that it represents the well-known Kethoneth or Rabbinic Kittuna. This might be of almost any material, even leather, though it was generally of wool or flax. It was sleeved, close-fitting, reached to the ankles, and was fastened round the loins, or just under the breast, by a girdle. One kind of the latter, the Pundah or Aphundah, was provided with pockets or other receptacles, and hence might not be worn outside by those who went into the Temple, probably to indicate that he who went to worship should not be engaged in, nor bear mark of, any other occupation.

Of the two other garments mentioned as parts of a man's toilette, the Aphqarsin or Aphikarsus seems to have been an article of luxury rather than of necessity. Its precise purpose is difficult to determine. A comparison of the passages in which the term occurs conveys the impression, that it was a large kerchief used partly as a headgear, and which hung down and was fastened under the right arm. Probably it was also used for the upper part of the body. But the circumstance that, unlike the other articles of dress, it need not be rent in mourning, and that, when worn by females, it was regarded as a mark of wealth, shows that it was not a necessary article of dress, and hence that, in all likelihood, it was not worn by Christ. It was otherwise with the upper garment. Various shapes and kinds of such were in use, from the coarser Boresin and Bardesin the modern Burnoose upwards. The Gelima was a cloak of which the border or hem is specially mentioned. The Gunda was a peculiarly Pharisaic garb. But the upper garment which Jesus wore would be either the so-called Goltha, or, most likely, the Tallith. Both the Goltha and the Tallith were provided, on the four borders, with the so-called Tsitsith, or fringes. These were attached to the four corners of the outer dress, in supposed fulfilment of the command, Numb. xv. 38-41; Deut. xxii. 1 At first, this observance seems to have been comparatively simple. The question as to the number of filaments on these fringes was settled in accordance with the teaching of the School of Shammai. Four filaments (not three, as the Hillelites proposed), each of four finger-lengths (these, as later tradition put it, doubled), and attached to the four corners of what must be a strictly square garment such were the earliest rules on the subject. 58 The Mishnah leaves it still a comparatively open question, whether these filaments were to be blue or white. But the Targum makes a strong point of it as between Moses and Korah, that there was to be a filament of hyacinth colour among four of white. It seems even to imply the peculiar symbolical mode of knotting them at present in use. Further symbolic details were, of course, added in the course of time. As these fringes were attached to the corners of any square garment, the question, whether the upper garment which Jesus wore was the Goltha or the Tallith, is of secondary importance. But as all that concerns His Sacred Person is of deepest interest, we may be allowed to state our belief in favour of the Tallith. Both are mentioned as distinctive dresses of teachers, but the Goltha (so far as it differed from the Tallith) seems the more peculiarly Rabbinic.

We can now form an approximate idea of the outward appearance of Jesus on that spring-morning amidst the throng at Capernaum. He would, we may safely assume, go about in the ordinary, although not in the more ostentatious, dress, worn by the Jewish teachers of Galilee. His headgear would probably be the Sudar (Sudarium) wound into a kind of turban, or perhaps the Maaphoreth, which seems to have served as a covering for the head, and to have descended over the back of the neck and shoulders, somewhat like the Indian pugaree. His feet were probably shod with sandals. The Chaluq, or more probably the Kittuna, which formed his inner garment, must have been close-fitting, and descended to His feet, since it was not only so worn by teachers, but was regarded as absolutely necessary for any one who would publicly read or Targum the Scriptures, or exercise any function in the Synagogue. As we know, it was without seam, woven from the top throughout; and this closely accords with the texture of these garments. Round the middle it would be fastened with a girdle. Over this inner, He would most probably wear the square outer garment, or Tallith, with the customary fringes of four long white threads with one of hyacinth knotted together on each of the four corners. There is reason to believe, that three square garments were made with these fringes although, by way of ostentation, the Pharisees made them particularly wide so as to attract attention,

just as they made their phylacteries broad. Although Christ only denounced the latter practice, not the phylacteries themselves, it is impossible to believe that Himself ever wore them, either on the forehead or the arm. There was certainly no warrant for them in Holy Scripture, and only Pharisee externalism could represent their use as fulfilling the import of Exod. xiii. 9, 16; Deut. vi. 8; xi. 18. The admission that neither the officiating priests, nor the representatives of the people, wore them in the Temple, seems to imply that this practice was not quite universal. For our part, we refuse to believe that Jesus, like the Pharisees, appeared wearing phylacteries every day and all day long, or at least a great part of the day. For such was the ancient custom, and not merely; as the modern practice, to wear them only at prayer.

One further remark may be allowed before dismissing this subject. Our inquiries enable us in this matter also to confirm the accuracy of the Fourth Gospel. We read that the quaternion of soldiers who crucified Christ made division of the riches of His poverty, taking each one part of His dress, while for the fifth, which, if divided, would have had to be rent in pieces, they cast lots. This incidental remark carries evidence of the Judaeian authorship of the Gospel in the accurate knowledge which it displays. The four pieces of dress to be divided would be the headgear, the more expensive sandals or shoes, the long girdle, and the coarse Tallith all about equal in value. And the fifth undivided and, comparatively, most expensive garment, without seam, woven from the top throughout probably of wool, as befitted the season of the year, was the Kittuna, or inner garment. How strange, that, what would have been of such priceless value to Christendom, should have been divided as the poor booty of a rough, unappreciative soldiery! Yet how well for us, since not even the sternest warning could have kept within the bounds of mere reverence the veneration with which we should have viewed and handled that which He wore, Who died for us on the Cross.

Can we, then, wonder that this Jewish woman, having heard the things concerning Jesus with her imperfect knowledge, in the weakness of her strong faith, thought that, if she might but touch His garment, she would be made whole? It is but what we ourselves might think, if He were still walking on earth among men: it is but what, in some form or other, we still feel when in the weakness the rebound or diastole of our faith it seems to us, as if the want of this touch in not outwardly-perceived help or Presence left us miserable and sick, while even one real touch, if it were only of His garment, one real act of contact, however mediate, would bring us perfect healing. And in some sense it really is so. For, assuredly, the Lord cannot be touched by disease and misery, without healing coming from Him, for He is the God-Man. And He is also the loving, pitying Saviour, Who disdains not, nor turns from our weakness in the manifestation of our faith, even as He turned not from hers who touched His garment for her healing.

We can picture her to our minds as, mingling with those who thronged and pressed upon the Lord, she put forth her hand and touched the border of His garment most probably the long Tsitsith of one of the corners of the Tallith. We can understand how, with a disease which not only rendered her Levitically defiling, but where womanly shamefacedness would make public speech so difficult, she, thinking of Him Whose Word, spoken at a distance, had brought healing, might thus seek to have her heart's desire. What strong faith to expect help where all human help, so long and earnestly sought, had so signally failed! And what strong faith to expect, that even contact with Him, the bare touch of His garment, would carry such Divine Power as to make her whole. Yet in this very strength lay also its weakness. She believed so much in Him, that she felt as if it needed not personal appeal to Him; she felt so deeply the hindrances to her making request of Himself, that, believing so strongly in Him, she deemed it sufficient to touch, not even Himself, but that which in itself had no power nor value, except as it was in contact with His Divine Person. But it is here that her faith was beset by twofold danger. In its excess it might degenerate into superstition, as trees in their vigour put forth shoots, which, unless they be cut off, will prevent the fruit-bearing, and even exhaust the life of the tree. Not the garments in which He appeared among men, and which touched His Sacred Body, nor even that Body, but Himself brings healing. Again, there was the danger of losing sight of that which, as the moral element, is necessary in faith: personal application to, and personal contact with, Christ.

And so it is to us also. As we realise the Mystery of the Incarnation, His love towards, and His Presence with, His own, and the Divine Power of the Christ, we cannot think too highly of all that is, or brings, in contact with Him. The Church, the Sacraments, the Apostolic Ministry of His Institution in a word, the grand historic Church, which is alike His Dwelling-place, His Witness, and His Representative on earth, ever since He instituted it, endowed it with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and hallowed it by the fulfilled promise of His Eternal Presence, is to us what the garment He wore was to her who touched Him. We shall think highly of all this in measure as we consciously think highly of Him. His Bride the Church; the Sacraments which are the fellowship of His Body and Blood, of His Crucifixion and Resurrection; the Ministry and Embassy of Him, committed to the Apostles, and ever since continued with such direction and promise, cannot be of secondary importance must be very real and full of power, since they are so connected, and bring us into such connection with Him: the spirituo-physical points of contact between Him, Who is the God-man, and those who, being men, are also the children of God. Yet in this strength of our faith may also lie its danger if not its weakness. Through excess it may pass into superstition, which is the attachment of power to anything other than the Living God; or else, in the consciousness of our great disease, want of courage might deprive faith of its moral element in personal dealing and personal contact with Christ.

Very significantly to us who, in our foolish judging and merciless condemning of one another, ever re-enacted the Parable of the Two Debtors, the Lord did not, as Pseudo-orthodoxy would prescribe it, disappoint her faith for the weakness of its manifestation. To have disappointed her faith, which was born of such high thoughts of Him, would have been to deny Himself and he cannot deny Himself. But very significantly, also, while He disappointed not her faith, He corrected the error of its direction and manifestation. And to this His subsequent bearing toward her was directed. No sooner had she so touched the border of His garment than she knew in the body that she was healed of the scourge. No sooner, also, had she so touched the border of His garment than He knew, perceived in Himself what had taken place: the forthgoing of the Power that is from out of Him.

Taking this narrative in its true literality, there is no reason to overweight and mar it by adding what is not conveyed in the text. There is nothing in the language of Mark (as correctly rendered), nor of Luke, to oblige us to conclude that this forthgoing of Power, which He perceived in Himself, had been through an act, of the full meaning of which Christ was unconscious in other words, that He was ignorant of the person who, and the reason why, she Had touched Him. In short, the forthgoing of the Power that is out of Him was neither unconscious nor unwilling on His part. It was caused by her faith, not by her touch. Thy faith hath made thee whole. And the question of Jesus could not have been misleading, when straightway He turned Him about in the crowd and said, Who touched My garments? That He knew who had done it, and only wished, through self-confession, to bring her to clearness in the exercise of her faith, appears from what is immediately added: And He looked round about not to see who had done it, but to see her that had done this thing. And as His look of unspoken appeal was at last fixed on her alone in all that crowd, which, as Peter rightly said, was thronging and pressing Him, the woman saw that she was not hid and came forward to make full confession. Thus, while in His mercy He had borne with her weakness, and in His faithfulness not disappointed her faith, its twofold error was also corrected. She learned that it was not from the garment, but from the Saviour, that the Power proceeded; she learned also, that it was not the touch of it, but the faith in Him, that made whole and such faith must ever be of personal dealing with Him. And so He spoke to her the Word of twofold help and assurance: Thy faith hath made thee whole go forth into peace, and be healed of thy scourge.

Brief as is the record of this occurrence, it must have caused considerable delay in the progress of our Lord to the house of Jairus. For in the interval the maiden, who had been at the last gasp when her father went to entreat the help of Jesus, had not only died, but the house of mourning was already filled with relatives, hired mourners, wailing women, and musicians, in preparation for the funeral. The intentional delay of Jesus when summoned to Lazarus leads us to ask, whether similar purpose may not have influenced His conduct in the present instance. But even were it otherwise, no outcome of

God's Providence is of chance, but each is designed. The circumstances, which in their concurrence make up an event, may all be of natural occurrence, but their conjunction is of Divine ordering and to a higher purpose, and this constitutes Divine Providence. It was in the interval of this delay that the messengers came, who informed Jairus of the actual death of his child. Jesus overheard it, as they whispered to the Ruler not to trouble the Rabbi any further, but He heeded it not, save so far as it affected the father. The emphatic admonition, not to fear, only to believe, gives us an insight into the threatening failure of the Ruler's faith; perhaps, also, into the motive which prompted the delay of Christ. The utmost need, which would henceforth require the utmost faith on the part of Jairus had now come. But into that, which was to pass within the house, no stranger must intrude. Even of the Apostles only those, who now for the first time became, and henceforth continued, the innermost circle, might witness, without present danger to themselves or others, what was about to take place. How Jesus dismissed the multitude, or else kept them at bay, or where He parted from all his disciples except Peter, James, and John, does not clearly appear, and, indeed, is of no importance. He may have left the nine Apostles with the people, or outside the house, or parted from them in the courtyard of Jairus house before he entered the inner apartments.

Within, the tumult and weeping, the wail of the mourners, real or hired, and the melancholy sound of the mourning flutes sad preparation for, and pageantry of, an Eastern funeral broke with dismal discord on the majestic calm of assured victory over death, with which Jesus had entered the house of mourning. But even so He would tell it them, as so often in like circumstances He tells it to us, that the damsel was not dead, but only sleeping. The Rabbis also frequently have the expression to sleep (demakh Kmd, or Kwmd, when the sleep is overpowering and oppressive), instead of to die. It may well have been that Jesus made use of this word of double meaning in some such manner as this: Talyetha dimkhath, the maiden sleepeth. And they understood Him well in their own way, yet understood Him not at all.

As so many of those who now hear this word, they to whom it was then spoken, in their coarse realism, laughed Him to scorn. For did they not verily know that she had actually died, even before the messengers had been despatched to prevent the needless trouble of His coming? Yet even this their scorn served a higher purpose. For it showed these two things: that to the certain belief of those in the house the maiden was really dead, and that the Gospel-writers regarded the raising of the dead as not only beyond the ordinary range of Messianic activity, but as something miraculous even among the miracles of Christ. And this also is evidential, at least so far as to prove that the writers recorded the event not lightly, but with full knowledge of the demand which it makes on our faith.

The first thing to be done by Christ was to put out the mourners, whose proper place this house no longer was, and who by their conduct had proved themselves unfit to be witnesses of Christ's great manifestation. The impression which the narrative leaves on the mind is, that all this while the father of the maiden was stupefied, passive, rather than active in the matter. The great fear, which had come upon him when the messengers apprised him of his only child's death, seemed still to numb his faith. He followed Christ without taking any part in what happened; he witnessed the pageantry of the approaching obsequies in his house without interfering; he heard the scorn which Christ's majestic declaration of the victory over death provoked, without checking it. The fire of his faith was that of dimly burning flax. 86 But He will not quench it.

He now led the father and the mother into the chamber where the dead maiden lay, followed by the three Apostles, witnesses of His chiefest working and of His utmost earthly glory, but also of His inmost sufferings. Without doubt or hesitation He took her by the hand and spoke only these two words: Talyetha Qum, Maiden, arise! And straightway the damsel arose. But the great astonishment which came upon them, as well as the strait charge that no man should know it, are further evidence, if such were required, how little their faith had been prepared for that which in its weakness was granted to it. And thus Jesus, as He had formerly corrected in the woman that weakness of faith which came through very excess, so now in the Ruler of the Synagogue the weakness which was by failure. And so He hath done all things well: He maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

How Jesus conveyed Himself away, whether through another entrance into the house, or by the road of the roofs we are not told. But assuredly, He must have avoided the multitude. Presently we find Him far from Capernaum . Probably He had left it immediately on quitting the house of Jairus. But what of that multitude? The tidings must have speedily reached them, that the daughter of the Synagogue-Ruler was not dead. Yet it had been straitly charged that none of them should be informed, how it had come to pass that she lived. They were then with this intended mystery before them. She was not dead: thus much was certain. The Christ had, ere leaving that chamber, given command that meat should be brought her; and, as that direction must have been carried out by one of the attendants, this would become immediately known to all that household. Had she then not really died, but only been sleeping? Did Christ's words of double meaning refer to literal sleep? Here then was another Parable of twofold different bearing: to them that had hearts to understand, and to them who understood not. In any case, their former scorn had been misplaced; in any case, the Teacher of Nazareth was far other than all the Rabbis. In what Name, and by what Power, did He come and act? Who was He really? Had they but known of the Talyetha Qum and how these two words had burst open the two-leaved doors of death and Hades! Nay, but it would have only ended in utter excitement and complete misunderstanding, to the final impossibility of the carrying out of Christ's Mission . For, the full as well as the true knowledge, that He was the Son of God, could only come after His contest and suffering. And our faith also in Him is first of the suffering Saviour, and then of the Son of God. Thus was it also from the first. It was through what He did for them that they learned Who He was. Had it been otherwise, the full blaze of the Sun's glory would have so dazzled them, that they could not have seen the Cross.

Yet to all time has this question engaged the minds of men: Was the maiden really dead, or did she only sleep? With it this other and kindred one is connected: Was the healing of the woman miraculous, or only caused by the influence of mind over body, such as is not unfrequently witnessed, and such as explains modern so-called miraculous cures, where only superstition perceives supernatural agency? But these very words Influence of mind over body with which we are so familiar, are they not, so to speak, symbolic and typical? Do they not point to the possibility, and, beyond it, to the fact of such influence of the God-Man, of the command which he wielded over the body? May not command of soul over body be part of unfallen Man's original inheritance; all most fully realised in the Perfect Man, the God-Man, to Whom has been given the absolute rule of all things, and Who has it in virtue of His Nature? These are only dim feelings after possible higher truths.

No one who carefully reads this history can doubt, that the Evangelists, at least, viewed this healing as a real miracle, and intended to tell it as such. Even the statement of Christ, that by the forthgoing of Power He knew the moment when the woman touched the hem of His garment, would render impossible the view of certain critics (Keim and others), that the cure was the effect of natural causes: expectation acting through the imagination on the nervous system, and so producing the physical results. But even so, and while these writers reiterate certain old cavils propounded by Strauss, and by him often derived from the ancient armoury of our own Deists (such as Woolston), they admit being so impressed with the simple natural and life-like cast of the narrative, that they contend for its historic truth. But the great leader of negativism, Strauss, has shown that any natural explanation of the event is opposed to the whole tenour of the narrative, indeed of the Gospel history; so that the alternative is its simple acceptance or its rejection. Strauss boldly decides for the latter, but in so doing is met by the obvious objection, that his denial does not rest on any historical foundation. We can understand, how a legend could gather around historical facts and embellish them, but not how a narrative so entirely without precedent in the Old Testament, and so opposed, not only to the common Messianic expectation, but to Jewish thought, could have been invented to glorify a Jewish Messiah. As regards the restoration to life of Jairus daughter, there is a like difference in the negative school (between Keim and Strauss). One party insists that the maiden only seemed, but was not really dead, a view open also to this objection, that it is manifestly impossible by such devices to account for the

raising of the young man at Nain, or that of Lazarus. On the other hand, Strauss treats the whole as a myth. It is well, that in this case, he should have condescended to argument in support of his view, appealing to the expectancy created by like miracles of Elijah and Elisha, and to the general belief at that time, that the Messiah would raise the dead. For, the admitted differences between the recorded circumstances of the miracles of Elijah and Elisha and those of Christ are so great, that another negative critic (Keim) finds proof of imitation in their contrasts! But the appeal to Jewish belief at that time tells, if possible, even more strongly against the hypothesis in question (of Keim and Strauss). It is, to say the least, doubtful whether Jewish theology generally ascribed to the Messiah the raising of the dead. There are isolated statements to that effect, but the majority of opinions is, that God would Himself raise the dead. But even those passages in which this is attributed to the Messiah tell against the assertions of Strauss. For, the resurrection to which they refer is that of all the dead (whether at the end of the present age, or of the world), and not of single individuals. To the latter there is not the faintest allusion in Jewish writings, and it may be safely asserted that such a dogma would have been foreign, even incongruous, to Jewish theology.

The unpleasant task of stating and refuting these objections seemed necessary, if only to show that, as of old so now, this history cannot be either explained or accounted for. It must be accepted or rejected, accordingly as we think of Christ. Admittedly, it formed part of the original tradition and belief of the Church. And it is recorded with such details of names, circumstances, time and place, as almost to court inquiry, and to render fraud well-nigh impossible. And it is so recorded by all the three Evangelists, with such variations, or rather, additions, of details as only to confirm the credibility of the narrators, by showing their independence of each other. Lastly, it fits into the whole history of the Christ, and into this special period of it; and it sets before us the Christ and His bearing in a manner, which we instinctively feel to be accordant with what we know and expect. Assuredly, it implies determined rejection of the claims of the Christ, and that on grounds, not of history, but of preconceived opinions hostile to the Gospel, not to see and adore in it the full manifestation of the Divine Saviour of the world, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. And with this belief our highest thoughts of the potential for humanity, and our dearest hopes for ourselves and those we love, are inseparably connected.

Chapter 27 Second Visit to Nazareth

The Mission of the Twelve

(Matthew 13:54-58, 10:1,5-42, 11:1; Mark 6:1-13; Luke 9:1-6.)

It almost seems, as if the departure of Jesus from Capernaum marked a crisis in the history of that town. From henceforth it ceases to be the center of His activity, and is only occasionally, and in passing, visited. Indeed, the concentration and growing power of Pharisaic opposition, and the proximity of Herod's residence at Tiberias would have rendered a permanent stay there impossible at this stage in our Lord's history. Henceforth, His Life is, indeed, not purely missionary, but He has no certain dwelling-place: in the sublime pathos of His own language, He hath not where to lay His Head.

The notice in Mark's Gospel, that His disciples followed Him, seems to connect the arrival of Jesus in His own country (at Nazareth) with the departure from the house of Jairus, into which He had allowed only three of His Apostles to accompany Him. The circumstances of the present visit, as well as the tone of His countrymen at this time, are entirely different from what is recorded of His former sojourn at Nazareth . The tenacious narrowness, and the prejudices, so characteristic of such a town, with its cliques and petty family pride, all the more self-asserting that the gradation would be almost

imperceptible to an outsider, are, of course, the same as on the former visit of Jesus. Nazareth would have ceased to be Nazareth, had its people felt or spoken otherwise than nine or ten months before. That His fame had so grown in the interval, would only stimulate the conceit of the village-town to try, as it were, to construct the great Prophet out of its own building materials, with this additional gratification that He was thoroughly their own, and that they possessed even better materials in their Nazareth. All this is so quite according to life, that the substantial repetition of the former scene in the Synagogue, so far from surprising us, seems only natural. What surprises us is, what He marvelled at: the unbelief of Nazareth, which lay at the foundation of its estimate and treatment of Jesus. Upon their own showing their unbelief was most unwarrantable. If ever men had the means of testing the claims of Jesus, the Nazarenes possessed them. True, they were ignorant of the miraculous event of His Incarnation; and we can now perceive at least one of the reasons for the mystery, which was allowed to enwrap it, as well as the higher purpose in Divine Providence of His being born, not in Nazareth, but in Bethlehem of Judaea, and of the interval of time between that Birth and the return of His parents from Egypt to Nazareth. Apart from prophecy, it was needful for Nazareth that Christ should have been born in Bethlehem, otherwise the mystery of His Incarnation must have become known. And yet it could not have been made known, alike for the sake of those most nearly concerned, and for that of those who, at that period of His History, could not have understood it; to whom, indeed, it would have been an absolute hindrance to believe in Him. And He could not have returned to Bethlehem, where He was born, to be brought up there, without calling attention to the miracle of His Birth. If, therefore, for reasons easily comprehended, the mystery of His Incarnation was not to be divulged, it was needful that the Incarnate of Nazareth should be born at Bethlehem, and the Infant of Bethlehem be brought up at Nazareth.

By thus withdrawing Him successively from one and the other place, there was really none on earth who knew of His miraculous Birth, except the Virgin Mother, Joseph, Elizabeth, and probably Zacharias. The vision and guidance vouchsafed to the shepherds on that December night did not really disclose the mystery of His Incarnation. Remembering their religious nations, it would not leave on them quite the same impression as on us. It might mean much, or it might mean little, in the present: time would tell. In those lands the sand buries quickly and buries deep preserving, indeed, but also hiding what it covers. And the sands of thirty years had buried the tale which the shepherds had brought; the wise men from the East had returned another way; the excitement which their arrival in --Jerusalem-- and its object had caused, was long forgotten. Messianic expectations and movements were of constant recurrence: the religious atmosphere seemed charged with such elements; and the political changes and events of the day were too engrossing to allow of much attention to an isolated report, which, after all, might mean little, and which certainly was of the long past. To keep up attention, there must be communication; and that was precisely what was wanting in this instance. The reign of Herod was tarnished by many suspicious and murders such as those of --Bethlehem--. Then intervened the death of Herod, while the carrying of Jesus into --Egypt and His non-return to --Bethlehem-- formed a complete break in the continuity of His History. Between obscure --Bethlehem in the far south, and obscure --Nazareth-- in the far north, there was no communication such as between towns in our own land, and they who had sought the Child's life, as well as they who might have worshipped Him, must have been dead. The aged parents of the Baptist cannot have survived the thirty years which lay between the Birth of Christ and the commencement of His Ministry. We have already seen reason for supposing that Joseph had died before. None, therefore, knew all except the Virgin Mother; and she would hide it deeper in her heart, the more years passed, and she increasingly felt, as they passed, that, both in His early obscurity and in His later manifestation, she could not penetrate into the real meaning of that mystery, with which she was so closely connected. She could not understand it; how dared she speak of it? She could not understand; nay, we can almost perceive, how she might even misunderstand not the fact, but the meaning and the purport of what had passed.

But in Nazareth they knew nothing of all this; and of Him only as that Infant Whom His parents,

Joseph the carpenter and Mary, had brought with them months after they had first left Nazareth. Jewish law and custom made it possible, that they might have been married long before. And now they only knew of this humble family, that they lived in retirement, and that sons and daughters had grown around their humble board. Of Jesus, indeed, they must have heard that He was not like others around so quite different in all ways, as He grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man. Then came that strange tarrying behind on His first visit to --Jerusalem--, when His parents had to return to seek, and at last found Him in the temple. This, also was only strange, though perhaps not strange in a child such as Jesus; and of His own explanation of it, so full of deepest meaning, they might not have heard. If we may draw probable, though not certain, inferences, after that only these three outward circumstances in the history of the family might have been generally noticed: that Jesus followed the occupation of His adoptive father; 5 that Joseph had died; and that the mother and brethren of Jesus had left Nazareth, while His sisters apparently continued there, being probably married to Nazarenes.

When Jesus had first left Nazareth to seek Baptism at the hands of John, it could scarcely have attracted much attention. Not only did the whole world go after the Baptist, but, considering what was known of Jesus, His absence from, not His presence at the banks of Jordan, would have surprised the Nazarenes. Then came vague reports of His early doings, and, what probably His countrymen would much more appreciate, the accounts which the Galileans brought back from the Feast of what Jesus had done at Jerusalem . His fame had preceded Him on that memorable Sabbath, when all Nazareth had thronged the Synagogue, curious to hear what the Child of Nazareth would have to say, and still more eager to see what He could do. Of the charm of His words there could be no question. Both what He said and how He said it, was quite other than what they had ever listened to. The difference was not in degree, but in kind: He spoke to them of the Kingdom; yet not as for Israel's glory, but for unspeakable comfort in the soul's deepest need. It was truly wonderful, and that not abstractly, but as on the part of Joseph's Son. That was all they perceived. Of that which they had most come to see there was, and could be, no manifestation, so long as they measured the Prophet by His outward antecedents, forgetful that it was inward kinship of faith, which connected Him that brought the blessing with those who received it.

But this seeming assumption of superiority on the part of Joseph's Son was quite too much for the better classes of Nazareth . It was intolerable, that He should not only claim equality with an Elijah or an Elisha, but place them, the burghers of Nazareth', as it were, outside the pale of Israel , below a heathen man or woman. And so, if He had not, without the show of it, proved the authority and power He possessed, they would have cast Him headlong over the ledge of the hill of their insulted town. And now He had come back to them, after nine or ten months, in totally different circumstances. No one could any longer question His claims, whether for good or for evil. As on the Sabbath He stood up once more in that Synagogue to teach, they were astonished. The rumour must have spread that, notwithstanding all, His own kin probably His sisters whom He might have been supposed by many to have come to visit did not own and honour Him as a Prophet. Or else, had they of His own house purposely spread it, so as not to be involved in His Fate? But the astonishment with which they heard Him on that Sabbath was that of unbelief. The cause was so apparently inadequate to the effect! They knew His supposed parentage and His brothers; His sisters were still with them; and for these many years had they known Him as the carpenter, the son of the carpenter. Whence, then, had this One these things and what the wisdom which was given to this One' and these mighty works done by His Hands?

It was, indeed, more than a difficulty an impossibility to account for it on their principles. There could be no delusion, no collusion, no deception. In our modern cant-phraseology, theirs might have been designated Agnosticism and philosophic doubt. But philosophic it certainly was not, any more than much that now passes, because it bears that name; at least, if, according to modern negative criticism, the inexplicable is also the unthinkable. Nor was it really doubt or Agnosticism, any more than much that now covers itself with that garb. It was, what Christ designated it unbelief, since the

questions would have been easily answered indeed, never have arisen had they believed that He was the Christ. And the same alternative still holds true. If this One is what negative criticism declares Him, which is all that it can know of Him by the outside: the Son of Mary, the Carpenter and Son of the carpenter of Nazareth, Whose family occupied the humblest position among Galileans then whence this wisdom which, say of it what you will, underlies all modern thinking, and these mighty works, which have moulded all modern history? Whence if He be only what you can see by the outside, and yet His be such wisdom, and such mighty deeds have been wrought by His Hands? Is He only what you say and see, seeing that such results are nowadays explicable on such principles; or is He not much more than this even the Christ of God?

And He marvelled because of their unbelief. In view of their own reasoning it was most unreasonable. And equally unreasonable is modern unbelief. For, the more strongly negative criticism asserts its position as to the Person of Jesus, the more unaccountable are His Teaching and the results of His Work.

In such circumstances as at Nazareth, nothing could be done by a Christ, in contradistinction to a miracle-monger. It would have been impossible to have finally given up His own town of Nazareth without one further appeal and one further opportunity of repentance. As He had begun, so He closed this part of His Galilean Ministry, by preaching in His own Synagogue of Nazareth. Save in the case of a few who were receptive, on whom He laid His Hands for healing, His visit passed away without such mighty works as the Nazarenes had heard of. He will not return again to Nazareth. Henceforth He will make commencement of sending forth His disciples, partly to disarm prejudices of a personal character, partly to spread the Gospel-tiding farther and wider than he alone could have carried them. For His Heart compassionated the many who were ignorant and out of the way. And the harvest was near, and the harvesting was great, and it was His Harvest, into which He would send forth labourers. For, although, in all likelihood, the words, from which quotation has just been made, were spoken at a later time, they are so entirely in the spirit of the present Mission of the Twelve, that they, or words to a similar effect, may also have been uttered on the present occasion. Of such seeming repetitions, when the circumstances were analogous, although sometimes with different application of the same many-sided words, there are not a few instances, of which one will presently come under notice. Truly those to whom the Twelve were sent forth were troubled as well as scattered like sheep that have not a Shepherd, and it was to deliver them from the distress caused by grievous wolves and to gather into His fold those that had been scattered abroad, that Jesus sent forth the Twelve with the special commission to which attention will now be directed. Viewing it in its fullest form, it is to be noted: First: That this Discourse of Christ consists of five parts: vv. 5 to 15; vv. 16 to 23; vv. 24 to 33; vv. 34 to 39; vv. 40 to the end.

Secondly: That many passages in it occur in different connections in the other two Synoptic Gospels, specially in Mark xiii. and in Luke xii. and xxi. From this it may be inferred, either that Jesus spake the same or similar words on more than one occasion (when the circumstances were analogous), or else that Matthew grouped together into one Discourse, as being internally connected, sayings that may have been spoken on different occasions. Or else and this seems to us the most likely both these inferences may in part be correct. For,

Thirdly: It is evident, that the Discourse reported by Matthew goes far beyond that Mission of the Twelve, beyond even that of the Early Church, indeed, sketches the history of the Church's Mission in a hostile world, up to the end. At the same time it is equally evident, that the predictions, warnings, and promises applicable to a later period in the Church's history, hold equally true in principle in reference to the first Mission of the Twelve; and, conversely, that what specially applied to it, also holds true in principle of the whole subsequent history of the Church in its relation to a hostile world. Thus, what was specially spoken at this time to the Twelve, has ever since, and rightly, been applied to the Church; while that in it, which specially refers to the Church of the future, would in principle apply also to the Twelve.

Fourthly: This distinction of primary and secondary application in the different parts of the Discourse,

and their union in the general principles underlying them, has to be kept in view, if we are to understand this Discourse of Christ. Hence, also, the present and the future seem in it so often to run into each other. The horizon is gradually enlarging throughout the Discourse, but there is no change in the standpoint originally occupied; and so the present merges into the future, and the future mingles with the present. And this, indeed, is also the characteristic of much of Old Testament prophecy, and which made the prophet ever a preacher of the present, even while he was a foreteller of the future.

Lastly: It is evidential of its authenticity, and deserves special notice, that this Discourse, while so un-Jewish in spirit, is more than any other, even more than that on the Mount, Jewish in its forms of thought and modes of expression.

With the help of these principles, it will be more easy to mark the general outline of this Discourse. Its first part applies entirely to this first Mission of the Twelve, although the closing words point forward to the judgment. Accordingly it has its parallels, although in briefer form, in the other two Gospels.

1. The Twelve were to go forth two and two, furnished with authority or, as Luke more fully expresses it, with power and authority' alike over all demons and to heal all manner of diseases. It is of secondary importance, whether this was conveyed to them by word only, or with some sacramental sign, such as breathing on them or the laying on of hands. The special commission, for which they received such power, was to proclaim the near advent of the Kingdom, and, in manifestation as well as in evidence of it, to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. They were to speak good and to do good in the highest sense, and that in a manner which all would feel good: freely, even as they had received it. Again, they were not to make any special provision for their journey, beyond the absolute immediate present. They were but labourers, yet as such they had claim to support. Their Employer would provide, and the field in which they worked might well be expected to supply it.

In accordance with this, singleness of purpose and an entire self-denial, which should lead them not to make provision for the flesh but as labourers to be content with daily food, were the further injunctions laid on them. Before entering into a city, they were to make inquiry, literally to search out who in it was worthy and of them to ask hospitality; not seeking during their stay a change for the gratification of vanity or for self-indulgence. If the report on which they had made choice of a host proved true, then the Peace with thee! with which they had entered their temporary home, would become a reality. Christ would make it such. As He had given them power and authority so He would honour the draft on Him, in acknowledgment of hospitable reception, which the Apostles Peace with thee! implied.

But even if the house should prove unworthy, the Lord would none the less own the words of His messengers and make them real; only, in such case the peace would return to them who had spoken it. Yet another case was possible. The house to which their inquiries had led them, or the city into which they had entered, might refuse to receive them, because they came as Christ's ambassadors. Greater, indeed, would be their guilt than that of the cities of the plain, since these had not known the character of the heavenly guests to whom they refused reception; and more terrible would be their future punishment. So Christ would vindicate their authority as well as His own, and show the reality of their commission: on the one hand, by making their Word of Peace a reality to those who had proved worthy; and, on the other, by punishment if their message was refused. Lastly, in their present Mission they were not to touch either Gentile or Samaritan territory. The direction so different in spirit from what Jesus Himself had previously said and done, and from their own later commission was, of course, only for the present necessity. For the present they were neither prepared nor fitted to go beyond the circuit indicated. It would have been a fatal anticipation of their inner and outer history to have attempted this, and it would have defeated the object of our Lord of disarming prejudices when making a final appeal to the Jews of Galilee.

Even these considerations lead us to expect a strictly Jewish cast in this Discourse to the Disciples. The command to abstain from any religious fellowship with Gentiles and Samaritans was in

temporary accommodation to the prejudices of His disciples and of the Jews. And the distinction between the way of the Gentiles and any city of the Samaritans is the more significant, when we bear in mind that even the dust of a heathen road was regarded as defiling, while the houses, springs, roads, and certain food of the Samaritans were declared clean. At the same time, religiously and as regarded fellowship, the Samaritans were placed on the same footing with Gentiles. Nor would the injunction, to impart their message freely, sound strange in Jewish ears. It was, in fact, what the Rabbis themselves most earnestly enjoined in regard to the teaching of the Law and traditions, however different their practice may have been. Indeed, the very argument, that they were to impart freely, because they had received freely, is employed by the Rabbis, and derived from the language and example of Moses in Deut. iv. 5. Again, the directions about not taking staff, shoes, nor money-purse, exactly correspond to the Rabbinic injunction not to enter the Temple-precincts with staff, shoes (mark, not sandals), and a money-girdle. The symbolic reasons underlying this command would, in both cases, be probably the same: to avoid even the appearance of being engaged on other business, when the whole being should be absorbed in the service of the Lord. At any rate, it would convey to the disciples the idea, that they were to consider themselves as if entering the Temple-precincts, thus carrying out the principle of Christ's first thought in the Temple: Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? Nor could they be in doubt what severity of final punishment a doom heavier than that of Sodom and Gomorrah would imply, since, according to early tradition, their inhabitants were to have no part in the world to come. And most impressive to a Jewish mind would be the symbolic injunction, to shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against such a house or city. The expression, no doubt, indicated that the ban of the Lord was resting on it, and the symbolic act would, as it were, be the solemn pronouncing that nought of the cursed thing clave to them. In this sense, anything that clave to a person was metaphorically called the dust as for example, the dust of an evil tongue the dust of usury as, on the other hand, to dust to idolatry meant to cleave to it. Even the injunction not to change the dwelling, where one had been received, was in accordance with Jewish views, the example of Abraham being quoted, who returned to the place where his tent had been at the beginning.

These remarks show how closely the Lord followed, in this first part of His charge to the disciples, Jewish forms of thinking and modes of expression. It is not otherwise in the second, although the difference is here very marked. We have no longer merely the original commission, as it is given in almost the same terms by Mark and Luke. But the horizon is now enlarged, and Matthew reports that which the other Evangelists record at a later stage of the Lord's Ministry. Whether or not when the Lord charged His disciples on their first mission, He was led gradually to enlarge the scope of His teaching so as to adapt it to all times, need not be discussed. For Matthew himself could not have intended to confine the words of Christ to this first journey of the Apostles, since they contain references to division in families, persecutions, and conflict with the civil power, such as belong to a much later period in the history of the Church; and, besides, contain also that prediction which could not have applied to this first Mission of the Apostles, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.

Without here anticipating the full inquiry into the promise of His immediate Coming, it is important to avoid, even at this stage, any possible misunderstanding on the point. The expectation of the Coming of the Son of Man was grounded on a prophecy of Daniel, in which that Advent, or rather manifestation, was associated with judgment. The same is the case in this Charge of our Lord. The disciples in their work are described as sheep in the midst of wolves a phrase which the Midrash applies to the position of Israel amidst a hostile world, adding: How great is that Shepherd, Who delivers them, and vanquishes the wolves! Similarly, the admonition to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves is reproduced in the Midrash, where Israel is described as harmless as the dove towards God, and wise as serpents towards the hostile Gentile nations. Such and even greater would be the enmity which the disciples, as the true Israel, would have to encounter from Israel after the flesh. They would be handed over to the various Sanhedrin, and visited with such punishments as

these tribunals had power to inflict. More than this, they would be brought before governors and kings primarily, the Roman governors and the Herodian princes. And so determined would be this persecution, as to break the ties of the closest kinship, and to bring on them the hatred of all men. The only, but the all-sufficient, support in those terrible circumstances was the assurance of such help from above, that, although unlearned and humble, they need have no care, nor make preparation in their defence, which would be given them from above. And with this they had the promise, that he who endured to the end would be saved, and the prudential direction, so far as possible, to avoid persecution by timely withdrawal, which could be the more readily achieved, since they would not have completed their circuit of the cities of Israel before the Son of Man be come.

It is of the greatest importance to keep in view that, at whatever period of Christ's Ministry this prediction and promise were spoken, and whether only once or oftener, they refer exclusively to a Jewish state of things. The persecutions are exclusively Jewish. This appears from verse 18, where the answer of the disciples is promised to be for a testimony against them who had delivered them up, that is, here evidently the Jews, as also against the Gentiles. And the Evangelistic circuit of the disciples in their preaching was to be primarily Jewish; and not only so, but in the time when there were still cities of Israel that is, previous to the final destruction of the Jewish commonwealth. The reference, then, is to that period of Jewish persecution and of Apostolic preaching in the cities of Israel', which is bounded by the destruction of Jerusalem. Accordingly, the coming of the Son of Man and the end here spoken of, must also have the same application. It was, as we have seen, according to Dan. vii. 13, a coming in judgment. To the Jewish persecuting authorities, who had rejected the Christ, in order, as they imagined, to save their City and Temple from the Romans, and to whom Christ had testified that He would come again, this judgment on their city and state, this destruction of their polity, was the Coming of the Son of Man in judgment, and the only coming which the Jews, as a state, could expect, the only one meet for them, even as, to them who look for Him, He will appear a second time, without sin unto salvation.

That this is the only natural meaning attaching to this prediction, especially when compared with the parallel utterances recorded in Mark xiii. 9-13, appears to us indubitable. It is another question how, or how far, those to whom these words were in the first place addressed would understand their full bearing, at least at that time. Even supposing, that the disciples who first heard did not distinguish between the Coming to Israel in judgment, and that to the world in mingled judgment and mercy, as it was afterwards conveyed to them in the Parable of the Forthshooting of the Fig-tree, yet the early Christians must soon have become aware of it. For, the distinction is sharply marked. As regards its manner, the second Coming of Christ may be said to correspond to the state of those to whom He cometh. To the Jews His first Coming was visible, and as claiming to be their King. They had asked for a sign; and no sign was given them at the time. They rejected Him, and placed the Jewish polity and nation in rebellion against the King. To the Jews, who so rejected the first visible appearance of Christ as their King, the second appearance would be invisible but real; the sign which they had asked would be given them, but as a sign of judgment, and His Coming would be in judgment. Thus would His authority be vindicated, and He appear, not, indeed, visibly but really, as what He had claimed to be. That this was to be the manner and object of His Coming to Israel, was clearly set forth to the disciples in the Parable of the Unthankful Husbandmen. The coming of the Lord of the vineyard would be the destruction of the wicked husbandmen. And to render misunderstanding impossible, the explanation is immediately added, that the Kingdom of God was to be taken from them, and given to those who would bring forth the fruits thereof. Assuredly, this could not, even in the view of the disciples, which may have been formed on the Jewish model, have applied to the Coming of Christ at the end of the present AEon dispensation.

We bear in mind that this second, outwardly invisible but very real, Coming of the Son of Man to the Jews, as a state, could only be in judgment on their polity, in that Sign which was once refused, but which, when it appeared, would only too clearly vindicate His claims and authority. Thus viewed, the passages, in which that second Coming is referred to, will yield their natural meaning. Neither the

mission of the disciples, nor their journeying through the cities of Israel, was finished, before the Son of Man came. Nay, there were those standing there who would not taste death, till they had seen in the destruction of the city and state the vindication of the Kingship of Jesus, which Israel had disowned. And even in those last Discourses in which the horizon gradually enlarges, and this Coming in judgment to Israel merges in the greater judgment on an unbelieving world, this earlier Coming to the Jewish nation is clearly marked. The three Evangelists equally record it, that this generation should not pass away, till all things were fulfilled. To take the lowest view, it is scarcely conceivable that these sayings would have been allowed to stand in all the three Gospels, if the disciples and the early Church had understood the Coming of the Son of Man in any other sense than as to the Jews in the destruction of their polity. And it is most significant, that the final utterances of the Lord as to His Coming were elicited by questions arising from the predicted destruction of the Temple. This the early disciples associated with the final Coming of Christ. To explain more fully the distinction between them would have been impossible, in consistency with the Lord's general purpose about the doctrine of His Coming. Yet the Parables which in the Gospels (especially in that by Matthew) follow on these predictions, and the teaching about the final Advent of the Son of Man point clearly to a difference and an interval between the one and the other.

The disciples must have the more readily applied this prediction of His Coming to Palestine, since the woes connected with it so closely corresponded to those expected by the Jews before the Advent of Messiah. Even the direction to flee from persecution is repeated by the Rabbis in similar circumstances and established by the example of Jacob, of Moses, and of David.

In the next section of this Discourse of our Lord, as reported by Matthew, the horizon is enlarged. The statements are still primarily applicable to the early disciples, and their preaching among the Jews and in Palestine. But their ultimate bearing is already wider, and includes predictions and principles true to all time. In view of the treatment which their Master received, the disciples must expect misrepresentation and evil-speaking. Nor could it seem strange to them, since even the common Rabbinic proverb had it: It is enough for a servant to be as his lord (hy# rb(l wyd wbrk). As we hear it from the lips of Christ, we remember that this saying afterwards comforted those, who mourned the downfall of wealthy and liberal homes in Israel, by thoughts of the greater calamity which had overthrown Jerusalem and the Temple. And very significant is its application by Christ: If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebul, how much more them of His household. This charge, brought of course by the Pharisaic party of Jerusalem, had a double significance. We believe, that the expression Master of the house looked back to the claims which Jesus had made on His first purification of the Temple. We almost seem to hear the coarse Rabbinic witticism in its play on the word Beelzebul. For, Zebhul, means in Rabbinic language, not any ordinary dwelling, but specifically the Temple, and Beel-Zebul would be the Master of the Temple. On the other hand, Zibbul means sacrificing to idols; and hence Beel-zebul would, in that sense, be equivalent to lord or chief of idolatrous sacrificing the worst and chiefest of demons, who presided over, and incited to, idolatry. The Lord of the Temple (which truly was His Church) was to them the chief of idolatrous worship the Representative of God that of the worst of demons: Beelzebul was Beelzibbul! What then might His Household expect at their hands?

But they were not to fear such misrepresentations. In due time the Lord would make manifest both His and their true character. Nor were they to be deterred from announcing in the clearest and most public manner, in broad daylight, and from the flat roofs of houses, that which had been first told them in the darkness, as Jewish teachers communicated the deepest and highest doctrines in secret to their disciples, or as the preacher would whisper his discourse into the ear of the interpreter. The deepest truths concerning His Person, and the announcement of His Kingdom and Work, were to be fully revealed, and loudly proclaimed. But, from a much higher point of view, how different was the teaching of Christ from that of the Rabbis! The latter laid it down as a principle, which they tried to prove from Scripture, that, in order to save one's life, it was not only lawful, but even duty if necessary, to commit any kind of sin, except idolatry, incest, or murder. Nay, even idolatry was

allowed, if only it were done in secret, so as not to profane the Name of the Lord than which death was infinitely preferable. Christ, on the other hand, not only ignored this vicious Jewish distinction of public and private as regarded morality, but bade His followers set aside all regard for personal safety, even in reference to the duty of preaching the Gospel. There was a higher fear than of men: that of God and it should drive out the fear of those who could only kill the body. Besides, why fear? God's Providence extended even over the meanest of His creatures. Two sparrows cost only an assarion (rsyabout the third of a penny. Yet even one of them would not perish without the knowledge of God. No illustration was more familiar to the Jewish mind than that of His watchful care even over the sparrows. The beautiful allusion in Amos iii. 5 was somewhat realistically carried out in a legend which occurs in more than one Rabbinic passage. We are told that, after that great miracle-worker of Jewish legend, R. Simeon ben Jochai, had been for thirteen years in hiding from his persecutors in a cave, where he was miraculously fed, he observed that, when the bird-catcher laid his snare, the bird escaped, or was caught, according as a voice from heaven proclaimed, Mercy or else, Destruction. Arguing, that if even a sparrow could not be caught without heaven's bidding, how much more safe was the life of a son of man, he came forth.

Nor could even the additional promise of Christ: But of you even the hairs of the head are all numbered surprise His disciples. But it would convey to them the gladsome assurance that, in doing His Work, they were performing the Will of God, and were specially in His keeping. And it would carry home to them with the comfort of a very different application, while engaged in doing the Work and Will of God what Rabbinism expressed in a realistic manner by the common sayings, that whither a man was to go, thither his feet would carry him; and, that a man could not injure his finger on earth, unless it had been so decreed of him in heaven. And in later Rabbinic writings we read, in almost the words of Christ: Do I not number all the hairs of every creature? And yet an even higher outlook was opened to the disciples. All preaching was confessing, and all confessing a preaching of Christ; and our confession or denial would, almost by a law of nature, meet with similar confession or denial on the part of Christ before His Father in heaven. This, also, was an application of that fundamental principle, that nothing is covered that shall not be revealed which, indeed, extendeth to the inmost secrets of heart and life.

What follows in our Lord's Discourse 85 still further widens the horizon. It describes the condition and laws of His Kingdom, until the final revelation of that which is now covered and hidden. So long as His claims were set before a hostile world they could only provoke war. On the other hand, so long as such decision was necessary, in the choice of either those nearest and dearest, of ease, nay, of life itself, or else of Christ, there could be no compromise. Not that, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, a very great degree of love to the dearest on earth amounts to loving them more than Christ. No degree of proper affection can ever make affection wrongful, even as no diminution of it could make wrongful affection right. The love which Christ condemneth differs not in degree, but in kind, from rightful affection. It is one which takes the place of love to Christ not which is placed by the side of that of Christ. For, rightly viewed, the two occupy different provinces. Wherever and whenever the two affections come into comparison, they also come into collision. And so the questions of not being worthy of Him (and who can be positively worthy?), and of the true finding or losing of our life, have their bearing on our daily life and profession.

But even in this respect the disciples must, to some extent, have been prepared to receive the teaching of Christ. It was generally expected, that a time of great tribulation would precede the Advent of the Messiah. Again, it was a Rabbinic axiom, that the cause of the Teacher, to whom a man owed eternal life, was to be taken in hand before that of his father, to whom he owed only the life of this world. Even the statement about taking up the cross in following Christ, although prophetic, could not sound quite strange. Crucifixion was, indeed, not a Jewish punishment, but the Jews must have become sadly familiar with it. The Targum speaks of it as one of the four modes of execution of which Naomi described to Ruth as those in custom in Palestine, the other three being stoning, burning, and beheading. Indeed, the expression bearing the cross as indicative of sorrow and suffering, is so

common, that we read, Abraham carried the wood for the sacrifice of Isaac, like who bears his cross on his shoulder.

Nor could the disciples be in doubt as to the meaning of the last part of Christ's address. They were old Jewish forms of thought, only filled with the new wine of the Gospel. The Rabbis taught, only in extravagant terms, the merit attaching to the reception and entertainment of sages. The very expression in the name of a prophet, or a righteous man, is strictly Jewish (M#I), and means for the sake of, or with intention, in regard to. It appears to us, that Christ introduced His own distinctive teaching by the admitted Jewish principle, that hospitable reception for the sake of, or with the intention of doing it to, a prophet or a righteous man, would procure a share in the prophet's righteous man's reward. Thus, tradition had it, that a Obadiah of King Ahab's court had become the prophet of that name, because he had provided for the hundred prophets. And we are repeatedly assured, that to receive a sage, or even an elder, was like receiving the Shekhinah itself. But the concluding promise of Christ, concerning the reward of even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple goes far beyond the farthest conceptions of His contemporaries. Yet even so, the expression would, so far as its form is concerned, perhaps bear a fuller meaning to them than to us. These little ones (Mynmq) were the children who were still learning the elements of knowledge, and who would by-and-by grow into disciples. For, as the Midrash has it: Where there are no little ones, there are no disciples; and where no disciples, no sages: where no sages, there no elders; where no elders, there no prophets; and where no prophets, there does God not cause His Shekhinah to rest. We have been so particular in marking the Jewish parallelisms in this Discourse, first, because it seemed important to show, that the words of the Lord were not beyond the comprehension of the disciples. Starting from forms of thought and expressions with which they were familiar, He carried them far beyond Jewish ideas and hopes. But, secondly, it is just in this similarity of form, which proves that it was of the time, and to the time, as well as to us and to all times, that we best see, how far the teaching of Christ transcended all contemporary conception.

But the reality, the genuineness, the depth and fervour of self-surrender, which Christ expects, is met by equal fullness of acknowledgment on His part, alike in heaven and on earth. In fact, there is absolute identification with His ambassadors on the part of Christ. As He is the Ambassador of the Father, so are they His, and as such also the ambassadors of the Father. To receive them was therefore, not only to receive Christ, but the Father, Who would own the humblest, even the meanest service of love to one of the learners, the little ones. All the more painful is the contrast of Jewish pride and self-righteousness, which attributes supreme merit to ministering, not as to God, but as to man; not for God's sake, but for that of the man; a pride which could give utterance to such a saying, All the prophets have announced salvation only to the like of those who give their daughters in marriage to sages, or cause them to make gain, or give of their goods to them. But what the bliss of the sages themselves is, no mortal eye has seen.

It was not with such sayings that Christ sent forth His disciples; nor in such spirit, that the world has been subdued to Him. The relinquishing of all that is nearest and dearest, cross-bearing, loss of life itself such were the terms of His discipleship. Yet acknowledgment there would surely, be first, in the felt and assured sense of His Presence; then, in the reward of a prophet, a righteous man, or, it might be, a disciple. But all was to be in Him, and for Him, even the gift of a cup of cold water to a little one. Nay, neither the little ones the learners, nor the cup of cold water given them, would be overlooked or forgotten.

But over all did the Meek and Lowly One cast the loftiness of His Humility.

Chapter 28 The Story of the Baptist

(1. John 3:25-30. 2. Matthew 9:14-17; Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39. 3. Matthew 11:2-14; Luke

7:18-35. 4. Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9.)

While the Apostles went forth by two and two on their first Mission, Jesus Himself taught and preached in the towns around Capernaum. This period of undisturbed activity seems, however, to have been of brief duration. That it was eminently successful, we infer not only from direct notices, but also from the circumstance that, for the first time, the attention of Herod Antipas was now called to the Person of Jesus. We suppose that, during the nine or ten months of Christ's Galilean Ministry, the Tetrarch had resided in his Paraeon dominions (east of the Jordan), either at Julias or at Machaerus, in which latter fortress the Baptist was beheaded. We infer, that the labours of the Apostles had also extended thus far, since they attracted the notice of Herod. In the popular excitement caused by the execution of the Baptist, the miraculous activity of the messengers of the Christ, Whom John had announced, would naturally attract wider interest, while Antipas would, under the influence of fear and superstition, give greater heed to them. We can scarcely be mistaken in supposing, that this accounts for the abrupt termination of the labours of the Apostles, and their return to Jesus. At any rate, the arrival of the disciples of John, with tidings of their master's death, and the return of the Apostles, seem to have been contemporaneous. Finally, we conjecture, that it was among the motives which influenced the removal of Christ and His Apostles from Capernaum. Temporarily to withdraw Himself and His disciples from Herod, to give them a season of rest and further preparation after the excitement of the last few weeks, and to avoid being involved in the popular movements consequent on the murder of the Baptist such we may venture to indicated as among the reasons of the departure of Jesus and His disciples, first into the dominions of the Tetrarch Philip, on the eastern side of the Lake, and after that into the borders of Tyre and Sidon . Thus the fate of the Baptist was, as might have been expected, decisive in its influence on the History of the Christ and of His Kingdom. But we have yet to trace the incidents in the life of John, so far as recorded in the Gospels, from the time of His last contact with Jesus to his execution.

1. It was in the late spring, or rather early summer of the year 27 of our era, that John was baptizing in AEnon, near to Salim. In the neighbourhood, Jesus and His disciples were similarly engaged. The Presence and activity of Jesus in Jerusalem at the Passover had determined the Pharisaic party to take active measures against Him and His Forerunner, John. As to the first outcome of this plan we notice the discussions on the question of purification and the attempt to separate between Christ and the Baptist by exciting the jealousy of the latter. But the result was far different. His disciples might have been influenced, but John himself was too true a man, and too deeply convinced of the reality of Christ's Mission , to yield even for a moment to such temptation. Nothing more noble can be conceived than the self-abnegation of the Baptist in circumstances which would not only have turned aside an impostor or an enthusiast, but must have severely tried the constancy of the truest man. At the end of a most trying career of constant self-denial its scanty fruits seemed, as it were, snatched from Him, and the multitude, which he had hitherto swayed, turned after Another, to Whom himself had first given testimony, but Who ever since had apparently neglected him. And now he had seemingly appropriated the one distinctive badge of his preaching! Not to rebel, nor to murmur, but even to rejoice in this as the right and proper thing, for which he had longed as the end of his own work this implies a purity, simplicity, and grandeur of purpose, and a strength of conviction unsurpassed among men. The moral height of this testimony of John, and the evidential force of the introduction of this narrative utterly unaccountable, nay, unintelligible on the hypothesis that it is not true seem to us among the strongest evidences in favour of the Gospel history.

It was not the greatness of the Christ, to his own seeming loss, which could cloud the noonday of the Baptist's convictions. In simple Judaeon illustration, he was only the friend of the Bridegroom (the Shoshebheyna), with all that popular association or higher Jewish allegory connected with that relationship. He claimed not the bride. His was another joy that of hearing the Voice of her rightful Bridegroom, Whose groomsman he was. In the sound of that Voice lay the fulfilment of his office. And John, looking back upon the relation between the Baptist and Jesus on the reception of the testimony

of the former and the unique position of the Bridegroom' points out the lessons of the answer of the Baptist to his disciples (John iii. 31 to 36) as formerly those of the conversation with Nicodemus. This hour of the seeming abasement of the Baptist was, in truth, that of the highest exaltation, as marking the fulfilment of his office, and, therefore, of his joy. Hours of cloud and darkness were to follow.

2. The scene has changed, and the Baptist has become the prisoner of Herod Antipas. The dominions of the latter embraced, in the north: Galilee, west of the Jordan and of the Lake of Galilee; and in the south: Peraea, east of the Jordan. To realise events we must bear in mind that, crossing the Lake eastwards, we should pass from the possessions of Herod to those of the Tetrarch Philip, or else come upon the territory of the Ten Cities or Decapolis', a kind of confederation of townships, with constitution and liberties, such as those of the Grecian cities. By a narrow strip northwards, Peraea just slipped in between the Decapolis and Samaria. It is impossible with certainty to localise the AEnon, near Salim, where John baptized. Ancient tradition placed the latter a few miles south of Scythopolis or Bethshean, on the borders of Galilee, or rather, the Decapolis, and Samaria. But as the eastern part of Samaria towards the Jordan was very narrow, one may well believe that the place was close to, perhaps actually in, the north-eastern angle of the province of Judaea, where it borders on Samaria. We are now on the western bank of Jordan. The other, or eastern, bank of the river would be that narrow northern strip of Peraea which formed part of the territory of Antipas. Thus a few miles, or the mere crossing of the river, would have brought the Baptist into Peraea. There can be no doubt but that the Baptist must either have crossed into, or else that AEnon, near Salim, was actually within the dominions of Herod. It was on that occasion that Herod seized on his person, and that Jesus, Who was still within Judaeian territory, withdrew from the intrigues of the Pharisees and the proximity of Herod, through Samaria, into Galilee.

For, although Galilee belonged to Herod Antipas, it was sufficiently far from the present residence of the Tetrarch in Peraea. Tiberias, his Galilean residence, with its splendid royal palace, had only been built a year or two before; and it is impossible to suppose, that Herod would not have sooner heard of the fame of Jesus, if his court had been in Tiberias, in the immediate neighbourhood of Capernaum. We are, therefore, shut up to the conclusion, that during the nine or ten months of Christ's Ministry in Galilee', the Tetrarch resided in Peraea. Here he had two palaces, one at Julias, or Livias, the other at Machaerus. The latter will be immediately described as the place of the Baptist's imprisonment and martyrdom. The Julias, or Livias, of Peraea must be distinguished from another city of that name (also called Bethsaida) in the North (east of the Jordan), and within the dominions of the Tetrarch Philip. The Julias of Peraea represented the ancient Beth Haram in the tribe of Gad, a name for which Josephus gives Betharamphtha, and the Rabbis Beth Ramthah. It still survives in the modern Beit-harân. But of the fortress and palace which Herod had built, and named after the Empress, all that remains are a few traces of walls and foundations.

Supposing Antipas to have been at the Peraean Julias, he would have been in the closest proximity to the scene of the Baptist's last recorded labours at AEnon. We can now understand, not only how John was imprisoned by Antipas, but also the threefold motives which influenced it. According to Josephus, the Tetrarch was afraid that his absolute influence over the people, who seemed disposed to carry out whatever he advised, might lead to a rebellion. This circumstance is also indicated in the remark of Matthew, that Herod was afraid to put the Baptist to death on account of the people's opinion of him. On the other hand, the Evangelic statement, that Herod had imprisoned John on account of his declaring his marriage with Herodias unlawful, is in no way inconsistent with the reason assigned by Josephus. Not only might both motives have influenced Herod, but there is an obvious connection between them. For, John's open declaration of the unlawfulness of Herod's marriage, as unlike incestuous and adulterous, might, in view of the influence which the Baptist exercised, have easily led to a rebellion. In our view, the sacred text gives indication of yet a third cause which led to John's imprisonment, and which indeed, may have given final weight to the other two grounds of enmity against him. It has been suggested, that Herod must have been attached to the Sadducees, if

to any religious party, because such a man would not have connected himself with the Pharisees. The reasoning is singularly inconclusive. On political grounds, a Herod would scarcely have lent his weight to the Sadducean or aristocratic priest-party in Jerusalem ; while, religiously, only too many instances are on record of what the Talmud itself calls painted ones, who are like the Pharisees, and who act like Zimri, but expect the reward of Phinehas. Besides, the Pharisees may have used Antipas as their tool, and worked upon his wretched superstition to effect their own purposes. And this is what we suppose to have been the case. The reference to the Pharisaic spying and to their comparisons between the influence of Jesus and John, which led to the withdrawal of Christ into Galilee, seems to imply that the Pharisees had something to do with the imprisonment of John. Their connection with Herod appears even more clearly in the attempt to induce Christ's departure from Galilee', on pretext of Herod's machinations. It will be remembered that the Lord unmasked their hypocrisy by bidding them go back to Herod, showing that He fully knew that real danger threatened Him, not from the Tetrarch, but from the leaders of the party in Jerusalem . Our inference therefore is, that Pharisaic intrigue had a very large share in giving effect to Herod's fear of the Baptist and of his reproofs.

3. We suppose, then, that Herod Antipas was at Julias, in the immediate neighbourhood of AEnon, at the time of John's imprisonment. But, according to Josephus, whose testimony there is no reason to question, the Baptist was committed to the strong fortress of Machaerus. If Julias lay where the Wady of the Heshban debouches into the Jordan, east of that river, and a little north of the Dead Sea, Machaerus is straight south of it, about two and a half hours north-west of the ancient Kiriathaim (the modern Kurêiyât), the site of Chedorlaomer's victory. Machaerus (the modern M'Khaur) marked the extreme point south, as Pella that north, in Peraea. As the boundary fortress in the south-east (towards Arabia), its safety was of the greatest importance, and everything was done to make a place, exceedingly strongly by nature, impregnable. It had been built by Alexander Jannaeus, but destroyed by Gabinius in the wars of Pompey. It was not only restored, but greatly enlarged, by Herod the Great, who surrounded it with the best defences known at that time. In fact, Herod the Great built a town along the shoulder of the hill, and surrounded it by walls, fortified by towers. From this town a farther height had to be climbed, on which the castle stood, surrounded by walls, and flanked by towers one hundred and sixty cubits high. Within the inclosure of the castle Herod had built a magnificent palace. A large number of cisterns, storehouses, and arsenals, containing every weapon of attack or defence, had been provided to enable the garrison to stand a prolonged siege. Josephus describes even its natural position as unassailable. The highest point of the fort was on the west, where it looked sheer down into a valley. North and south the fort was equally cut off by valleys, which could not be filled up for siege purposes. On the east there was, indeed, a valley one hundred cubits deep, but it terminated in a mountain opposite to Machaerus. This was evidently the weak point of the situation.

A late and very trustworthy traveller has pronounced the description of Josephus as sufficiently accurate, although exaggerated, and as probably not derived from personal observation. He has also furnished such pictorial details, that we can transport ourselves to that rocky keep of the Baptist, perhaps the more vividly that, as we wander over the vast field of stones, upturned foundations, and broken walls around, we seem to view the scene in the lurid sunset of judgment. A rugged line of upturned squared stones shows the old Roman paved road to Machaerus. Ruins covering quite a square mile, on a group of undulating hills, mark the site of the ancient town of Machaerus. Although surrounded by a wall and towers, its position is supposed not to have been strategically defensible. Only a mass of ruins here, with traces of a temple to the Syrian Sun-God, broken cisterns, and desolateness all around. Crossing a narrow deep valley, about a mile wide, we climb up to the ancient fortress on a conical hill. Altogether it covered a ridge of more than a mile. The key of the position was a citadel to the extreme east of the fortress. It occupied the summit of the cone, was isolated, and almost impregnable, but very small. We shall return to examine it. Meanwhile, descending a steep slope about 150 yards towards the west, we reach the oblong flat plateau that formed the fortress, containing Herod's magnificent palace. Here, carefully collected, are piled up the stones of which the

citadel was built. These immense heaps look like a terrible monument of judgment.

We pass on among the ruins. No traces of the royal palace are left, save foundations and enormous stones upturned. Quite at the end of this long fortress in the west, and looking southwards, is a square fort. We return, through what we regard as the ruins of the magnificent castle-palace of Herod, to the highest and strongest part of the defences the eastern keep or the citadel, on the steep slope 150 yards up. The foundations of the walls all around, to the height of a yard or two above the ground, are still standing. As we clamber over them to examine the interior, we notice how small this keep is: exactly 100 yards in diameter. There are scarcely any remains of it left. A well of great depth, and a deep cemented cistern with the vaulting of the roof still complete, and of most terrible interest to us two dungeons, one of them deep down, its sides scarcely broken in, with small holes still visible in the masonry where staples of wood and iron had once been fixed! As we look down into its hot darkness, we shudder in realising that this terrible keep had for nigh ten months been the prison of that son of the free wilderness the bold herald of the coming Kingdom, the humble, earnest, self-denying John the Baptist. Is this the man whose testimony about the Christ may be treated as a falsehood?

We withdraw our gaze from trying to pierce this gloom and to call up in it the figure of the camel-hair-clad and leather-girt preacher, and look over the ruins at the scene around. We are standing on a height not less than 3,800 feet above the Dead Sea. In a straight line it seems not more than four or five miles; and the road down to it leads, as it were, by a series of ledges and steps. We can see the whole extent of this Sea of Judgment, and its western shores from north to south. We can almost imagine the Baptist, as he stands surveying this noble prospect. Far to the south stretches the rugged wilderness of Judaea, bounded by the hills of Hebron. Here nestles Bethlehem, there is Jerusalem. Or, turning another way, and looking into the deep cleft of the Jordan valley: this oasis of beauty is Jericho; beyond it, like a silver thread, Jordan winds through a burnt, desolate-looking country, till it is lost to view in the haze which lies upon the edge of the horizon. As the eye of the Baptist travelled over it, he could follow all the scenes of His life and labours, from the home of his childhood in the hill-country of Judaea, to those many years of solitude and communing with God in the wilderness, and then to the first place of his preaching and Baptism, and onwards to that where he had last spoken of the Christ, just before his own captivity. And now the deep dungeon in the citadel on the one side, and, on the other, down that slope, the luxurious palace of Herod and his adulterous, murderous wife, while the shouts of wild revelry and drunken merriment rise around! Was this the Kingdom he had come to announce as near at hand; for which he had longed, prayed, toiled, suffered, utterly denied himself and all that made life pleasant, and the rosy morning of which he had hailed with hymns of praise? Where was the Christ? Was He the Christ? What was He doing? Was he eating and drinking all this while with publicans and sinners, when he, the Baptist, was suffering for Him? Was He in His Person and Work so quite different from himself? and why was He so? And did the hot haze and mist gather also over this silver thread in the deep cleft of Israel's barren burnt-up desolateness?

4. In these circumstances we scarcely wonder at the feelings of John's disciples, as months of this weary captivity passed. Uncertain what to expect, they seem to have oscillated between Machaerus and Capernaum. Any hope in their Master's vindication and deliverance lay in the possibilities involved in the announcement he had made of Jesus as the Christ. And it was to Him that their Master's finger had pointed them. Indeed, some of Jesus earliest and most intimate disciples had come from their ranks; and, as themselves had remarked, the multitude had turned to Jesus even before the Baptist's imprisonment. And yet, could He be the Christ? How many things about Him that were strange and seemed inexplicable! In their view, there must have been a terrible contrast between him who lay in the dungeon of Machaerus, and Him Who sat down to eat and drink at a feast of the publicans.

His reception of publicans and sinners they could understand; their own Master had not rejected them. But why eat and drink with them? Why feasting, and this in a time when fasting and prayer would have seemed specially appropriate? And, indeed, was not fasting always appropriate? And yet

this new Messiah had not taught his disciples either to fast or what to pray! The Pharisees, in their anxiety to separate between Jesus and His Forerunner, must have told them all this again and again, and pointed to the contrast.

At any rate, it was at the instigation of the Pharisees, and in company with them, that the disciples of John propounded to Jesus this question about fasting and prayer, immediately after the feast in the house of the converted Levi-Matthew. We must bear in mind that fasting and prayer, or else fasting and alms, or all the three, were always combined. Fasting represented the negative, prayer and alms the positive element, in the forgiveness of sins. Fasting, as self-punishment and mortification, would avert the anger of God and calamities. Most extraordinary instances of the purposes in view in fasting, and of the results obtained are told in Jewish legend, which (as will be remembered) went so far as to relate how a Jewish saint was thereby rendered proof against the fire of Gehenna, of which a realistic demonstration was given when his body was rendered proof against ordinary fire.

Even apart from such extravagances, Rabbinism gave an altogether external aspect to fasting. In this it only developed to its utmost consequences a theology against which the Prophets of old had already protested. Perhaps, however, the Jews are not solitary in their misconception and perversion of fasting. In their view, it was the readiest means of turning aside any threatening calamity, such as drought, pestilence, or national danger. This, *ex opere operato*, because fasting was self-punishment and mortification, not because a fast meant mourning (for sin, not for its punishment), and hence indicated humiliation, acknowledgment of sin, and repentance. The second and fifth days of the week (Monday and Thursday) were those appointed for public fasts, because Moses was supposed to have gone up the Mount for the second Tables of the Law on a Thursday, and to have returned on a Monday. The self-introspection of Pharisaism led many to fast on these two days all the year round, just as in Temple-times not a few would offer daily trespass-offering for sins of which they were ignorant. Then there were such painful minutiae of externalism, as those which ruled how, on a less strict fast, a person might wash and anoint; while on the strictest fast, it was prohibited even to salute one another.

It may well have been, that it was on one of those weekly fasts that the feast of Levi-Matthew had taken place, and that this explains the expression: And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. This would give point to their complaint Thy disciples fast not. Looking back upon the standpoint from which they viewed fasting, it is easy to perceive why Jesus could not have sanctioned, not even tolerated, the practice among His disciples, as little as Paul could tolerate among Judaising Christians the, in itself indifferent, practice of circumcision. But it was not so easy to explain this at the time of the disciples of John. For, to understand it, implied already entire transformation from the old to the new spirit. Still more difficult must it have been to do it in in such manner, as at the same time to lay down principles that would rule all similar questions to all ages. But our Lord did both, and even thus proved His Divine Mission.

The last recorded testimony of the Baptist had pointed to Christ as the Bridegroom. As explained in a previous chapter, John applied this in a manner which appealed to popular custom. As he had pointed out, the Presence of Jesus marked the marriage-week. By universal consent and according to Rabbinic law, this was to be a time of unmixed festivity. Even in the Day of Atonement a bride was allowed to relax one of the ordinances of that strictest fast. During the marriage-week all mourning was to be suspended even the obligation of the prescribed daily prayers ceased. It was regarded as a religious duty to gladden the bride and bridegroom. Was it not, then, inconsistent on the part of John's disciples to expect the sons of the bride-chamber to fast, so long as the Bridegroom was with them? This appeal of Christ is still further illustrated by the Talmudic ordinance which absolved the friends of the bridegroom and all the sons of the bride-chamber even from the duty of dwelling in booths (at the Feast of Tabernacles). The expression, sons of the bride-chamber, which means all invited guests, has the more significance, when we remember that the Covenant-union between God and Israel was not only compared to a marriage, but the Tabernacle and Temple designated as the bridal chambers. And, as the institution of friends of the bridegroom prevailed in Judaea, but not in Galilee, this marked

distinction of the friends of the bridegroom in the mouth of the Judæan John and sons of the bride-chamber in that of the Galilean Jesus, is itself evidential of historic accuracy, as well as of the Judæan authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

But let it not be thought that it was to be a time of unbroken joy to the disciples of Jesus. Nay, the ideas of the disciples of John concerning the Messianic Kingdom, as one of resistless outward victory and assertion of power, were altogether wrong. The Bridegroom would be violently taken from them, and then would be the time for mourning and fasting. Not that this necessarily implies literal fasting, any more than it excludes it, provided the great principles, more fully indicated immediately afterwards, are contrary to the spirit of the joyous liberty of the children of God. It is only a sense of sin, and the felt absence of the Christ, which should lead to mourning and fasting, though not in order thereby to avert either the anger of God or outward calamity. Besides the evidential force of this highly spiritual, and thoroughly un-Jewish view of fasting, we notice some other points in confirmation of this, and of the Gospel history generally. On the hypothesis of a Jewish invention of the Gospel history, or of its Jewish embellishment, the introduction of this narrative would be incomprehensible. Again, on the theory of a fundamental difference in the Apostolic teaching, Matthew and Mark representing the original Judaic, Luke the freer Pauline development, the existence of this narrative in the first two Gospels would seem unaccountable. Or, to take another view on the hypothesis of the much later and non-Judæan (Ephesian) authorship of the Fourth Gospel, the minute archaeological touches, and the general fitting of the words of the Baptist into the present narrative would be inexplicable. Lastly, as against all deniers and detractors of the Divine Mission of Jesus, this early anticipation of His violent removal by death, and of the consequent mourning of the Church, proves that it came not to him from without, as by the accident of events, but that from the beginning He anticipated the end, and pursued it of set, steadfast purpose.

Yet another point in evidence comes to us from the eternal and un-Jewish principles implied in the two illustrations, of which Christ here made use. In truth, the Lord's teaching is now carried down to its ultimate principles. The slight variations which here occur in the Gospel of Luke, as, indeed, such exist in so many of the narratives of the same events by different Evangelists, should not be explained away. For, the sound critic should never devise an explanation for the sake of a supposed difficulty, but truthfully study the text as an interpreter, not an apologist. Such variations of detail present no difficulty. As against a merely mechanical unspiritual accord, they afford evidence of truthful, independent witness, and irrefragable proof that, contrary to modern negative criticism, and three narratives are not merely different recensions of one and the same original document.

In general, the two illustrations employed that of the piece of undressed cloth (or, according to Luke, a piece torn from a new garment) sewed upon the rent of an old garment, and that of the new wine put into a old wine-skins must not be too closely pressed in regard to their language. They seem chiefly to imply this: You ask, why do we fast often, but Thy disciples fast not? You are mistaken in supposing that the old garment can be retained, and merely its rents made good by patching it with a piece of new cloth. Not to speak of the incongruity, the effect would only be to make the rent ultimately worse. The old garment will not bear mending with the undressed cloth. Christ's was not merely a reformation: all things must become new. Or, again, take the other view of it as the old garment cannot be patched from the new, so, on the other hand, can the new wine of the Kingdom not be confined in the old forms. It would burst those wineskins. The spirit must, indeed, have its corresponding form of expression; but that form must be adapted, and correspond to it. Not the old with a little of the new to hold it together where it is rent; but the new, and that not in the old wineskins, but in a form corresponding to the substance. Such are the two final principles the one primary addressed to the Pharisees, the other to the disciples of John, by which the illustrative teaching concerning the marriage-feast, with its bridal garment and wine of banquet, is carried far beyond the original question of the disciples of John, and receives an application to all time.

5. We are in spirit by the mount of God, and about to witness the breaking of a terrible storm. It is one that uproots the great trees and rends the rocks; and all we shall watch it solemnly, earnestly, as with

bared head or, like Elijah, with face wrap in mantle. Weeks had passed, and the disciples of John had come back and showed their Master of all these things. He still lay in the dungeon of Machaerus; his circumstances unchanged perhaps, more hopeless than before. For, Herod was in that spiritually most desperate state: he had heard the Baptist, and was much perplexed. And still he heard but only heard him gladly. It was a case by no means singular, and of which Felix, often sending for Paul, at whose preaching of righteousness, temperance, and the judgement to come, he had trembled, offers only one of many parallels. That, when hearing him, Herod was much perplexed we can understand, since he feared him, knowing that he was a righteous man and holy and thus fearing heard him. But that being much perplexed he still heard him gladly constituted the hopelessness of his case. But was the Baptist right? Did it constitute part of his Divine calling to have not only denounced, but apparently directly confronted Herod on his adulterous marriage? Had he not attempt to lift himself the axe which seemed to have slip from the grasp of Him, of Whom the Baptist had hoped and said that He would lay it to the root of the tree?

Such thoughts may have been with him, as he passed from his dungeon to the audience of Herod, and from such bootless interviews back to his deep keep. Strange as it may seem, it was, perhaps, better for the Baptist when he was alone. Much as his disciples honoured and loved him, and truly zealous and jealous for him as they were, it was best when they were absent. There are times when affection only pains, by forcing on our notice inability to understand, and adding to our sorrow that of feeling our inmost being a stranger to those nearest, and who love us must. Then, indeed, is a man alone. It is so with the Baptist. The state of mind and experience of his disciples had already appeared, even in the slight notices of his disciples has already appeared, even in the slight notices concerning them. Indeed, had they fully understood him, and not ended where he began which, truly, is the characteristic of all sects, in their crystallisation, or, rather, ossification of truth they would not have remained his disciples; and this consciousness must also have brought exquisite pain. Their very affection for him, and their zeal for his credit (as shown in the almost coarse language of their inquiry: John the Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?), as well as their tenacity of unprogressiveness were all, so to speak, marks of his failure. And, if he had failed with them, had he succeeded in anything?

And yet further and more terrible questions rose in that dark dungeon. Like serpents that crept out of its walls, they would uncoil and raise their heads with horrible hissing. What if, after all, there had been some terrible mistake on his part? At any rate the logic of events was against him. He was now the fast prisoner of that Herod, to whom he had spoken with authority; in the power of that bold adulteress, Herodias. If he were Elijah, the great Tishbite had never been in the hands of Ahab and Jezebel. And the Messiah, Whose Elijah he was, moved not; could not, or would not, move, but feasted with publicans and sinners! Was it all a reality? or oh, thought too horrible for utterance could it have been a dream, bright but fleeting, uncaused by any reality, only the reflection of his own imagination? It must have been a terrible hour, and the power of darkness. At the end of one's life, and that of such self-denial and suffering, and with a conscience so alive to God, which had when a youth driven him burning with holy zeal into the wilderness, to have such a question meeting him as: Art Thou He, or do we wait for another? Am I right, or in error and leading others into error? must have been truly awful. Not Paul, when forsaken of all he lay in the dungeon, the aged prisoner of Christ; not Huss, when alone at Constance he encountered the whole Catholic Council and the flames; only He, the God-Man, over Whose soul crept the death-coldness of great agony when, one by one, all light of God and man seemed to fade out, and only that one remained burning His own faith in the Father, could have experienced bitterness like this. Let no one dare to say that the faith of John failed, at least till the dark waters have rolled up to his own soul. For mostly all and each of us must pass through some like experience; and only our own hearts and God know, how death-bitter are the doubts, whether of head or of heart, when question after question raises, as with devilish hissing, its head, and earth and heaven seem alike silent to us.

But here we must for a moment pause to ask ourselves this, which touches the question of all

questions: Surely, such a man as this Baptist, so thoroughly disillusioned in that hour, could not have been an imposter, and his testimony to Christ a falsehood? Nor yet could the record, which gives us this insight into the weakness of the strong man and the doubts of the great Testimony-bearer, be a cunningly-invented fable. We cannot imagine the record of such a failure, if the narrative were an invention. And if this record be true, it is not only of present failure, but also of the previous testimony of John. To us, at least, the evidential force of this narrative seems irresistible. The testimony of the Baptist to Jesus offers the same kind of evidence as does that of the human soul to God: in both cases the one points to the other, and cannot be understood without it.

In that terrible conflict John overcame, as we all must overcome. His very despair opened the door of hope. The helpless doubt, which none could solve but One, he brought to Him around Whom it had gathered. Even in this there is evidence for Christ, as the unalterably True One. When John asked the question: Do we wait for another? light was already struggling through darkness. It was incipient victory even in defeat. When he sent his disciples with this question straight to Christ, he had already conquered; for such a question addressed to a possibly false Messiah has no meaning. And so must it ever be with us. Doubt is the offspring of our disease, diseased as is its paternity. And yet it cannot be cast aside. It may be the outcome of the worst, or the problems of the best souls. The twilight may fade into outer night, or it may usher in the day. The answer lies in this: whether doubt will lead us to Christ, or from Christ.

Thus viewed, the question: Art Thou the Coming One, or do we wait for another? indicated faith both in the great promise and in Him to Whom it was addressed. The designation The Coming One (habba), though a most truthful expression of Jewish expectancy, was not one ordinarily used of the Messiah. But it was invariably used in reference to the Messianic age, as the Athid labho, or coming future (literally, the prepared for to come), and the Olam habba, the coming world or AEon. But then it implied the setting right of all things by the Messiah, the assumption and vindication of His Power. In the mouth of John it might therefore mean chiefly this: Art Thou He that is to establish the Messianic Kingdom in its outward power, or have we to wait for another? In that case, the manner in which the Lord answered it would be all the more significant. The messengers came just as He was engaged in healing body and soul. Without interrupting His work, or otherwise noticing their inquiry, He bade them tell John for answer what they had seen and heard, and that the poor, are evangelised. To this, as the inmost characteristic of the Messianic Kingdom, He only added, not by way of reproof nor even of warning, but as a fresh Beatitude: Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be scandalised in Me. To faith, but only to faith, this was the most satisfactory and complete answer to John's inquiry. And such a sight of Christ's distinctive Work and Word, with believing submission to the humbleness of the Gospel, is the only true answer to our questions, whether of head or heart.

But a harder saying than this did the Lord speak amidst the forthpouring of His testimony to John, when his messengers had left. It pointed the hearers beyond their present horizon. Several facts here stand out prominently. First, He to Whom John had formerly borne testimony, now bore testimony to him; and that, not in the hour when John had testified for Him, but when his testimony had wavered and almost failed. This is the opposite of what one would have expected, if the narrative had been a fiction, while it is exactly what we might expect if the narrative be true. Next, we mark that the testimony of Christ is as from a higher standpoint. And it is a full vindication as well as unstinted praise, spoken, not as in his hearing, but after his messengers who had met a seemingly cold reception had left. The people were not coarsely to misunderstand the deep soul-agony, which had issued in John's inquiry. It was not the outcome of a fickleness which, like the reed shaken by every wind, was moved by popular opinion. Nor was it the result of fear of bodily consequences, such as one that pampered the flesh might entertain. Let them look back to the time when, in thousands, they had gone into the wilderness to hear his preaching. What had attracted them thither? Surely it was, that he was the opposite of one swayed by popular opinion, a reed shaken by the wind. And when they had come to him, what had they witnessed? Surely, his dress and food betokened the opposite of pampering or care of the body, such as they saw in the courtiers of a Herod. But what they did

expect, that they really did see: a prophet, and much more than a mere prophet, the very Herald of God and Preparer of Messiah's Way. And yet and this truly was a hard saying and utterly un-Judaic it was neither self-denial nor position, no, not even that of the New Testament Elijah, which constituted real greatness, as Jesus viewed it, just as nearest relationship constituted not true kinship to Him. To those who sought the honour which is not of man's bestowing, but of God, to be a little one in the Kingdom of God was greater greatness than even the Baptist's.

But, even so, let there be no mistake. As afterwards Paul argued with the Jews, that their boast in the Law only increased their guilt as breakers of the Law, so here our Lord. The popular concourse to, and esteem of, the Baptist, did not imply that spiritual reception which was due to his Mission. It only brought out, in more marked contrast, the wide inward difference between the expectancy of the people as a whole, and the spiritual reality presented to them in the Forerunner of the Messiah and in the Messiah Himself. Let them not be deceived by the crowds that had submitted to the Baptism of John. From the time that John began to preach the Kingdom, hindrances of every kind had been raised. To overcome them and enter the Kingdom, it required, as it were, violence like that to enter a city which was surrounded by a hostile army. Even by Jewish admission, the Law and all the prophets prophesied only of the days of Messiah. John, then, was the last link; and, if they would but have received it, he would have been to them the Elijah, the Restorer of all things. Selah he that hath ears, let him hear.

Nay, but it was not so. The children of that generation expected quite another Elijah and quite another Christ, and disbelieved and complained, because the real Elijah and Christ did not meet their foolish thoughts. They were like children in a market-place, who expected their fellows to adapt themselves to the tunes they played. It was as if they said: We have expected great Messianic glory and national exaltation, and ye have not responded (we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced); we have looked for deliverance from our national sufferings, and they stirred not your sympathies nor brought your help (we have mourned to you, and ye have not lamented). But you thought of the Messianic time as children, and of us, as if we were your fellows, and shared your thoughts and purposes! And so when John came with his stern asceticism, you felt he was not one of you. He was in one direction outside your boundary-line, and I, as the Friend of sinners, in the other direction. The axe which he wielded you would have laid to the tree of the Gentile world, not to that of Israel and of sin; the welcome and fellowship which I extended, you would have had to the wise and the righteous not to sinners. Such was Israel as a whole. And yet there was an election according to grace: the violent, who had to fight their way through all this, and who took the Kingdom by violence and so Heaven's Wisdom (in opposition to the children's folly) is vindicated by all her children. If anything were needed to show the internal harmony between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel, it would be this final appeal, which recalls those other words: He came unto His own (things or property), and his own (people, they who were His own) received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power (right, authority) to become children of God, which were born (begotten,) not . . . of the will of man, but of God.

6. The scene once more changes, and we are again at Machaerus. Weeks have passed since the return of John's messengers. We cannot doubt that the sunlight of faith has again fallen into the dark dungeon, nor yet that the peace of restful conviction has filled the martyr of Christ. He must have known that his end was at hand, and been ready to be offered up. Those not unfrequent conversations, in which the weak, superstitious, wicked tyrant was perplexed and yet heard him gladly could no longer have inspired even passing hopes of freedom. Nor would he any longer expect from the Messiah assertions of power on his behalf. He now understood that for which He had come; he knew the better liberty, triumph, and victory which He brought. And what mattered it? His lifework had been done, and there was nothing further that fell to him or that he could do, and the weary servant of the Lord must have longed for his rest.

It was early spring, shortly before the Passover, the anniversary of the death of Herod the Great and of the accession of (his son) Herod Antipas to the Tetrarchy. A fit time this for a Belshazzar-feast,

when such an one as Herod would gather to a grand banquet his lords and the military authorities, and the chief men of Galilee. It is evening, and the castle-palace is brilliantly lit up. The noise of music and the shouts of revelry come across the slope into the citadel, and fall into the deep dungeon where waits the prisoner of Christ. And now the merriment in the great banqueting-hall has reached its utmost height. The king has nothing further to offer his satiated guests, no fresh excitement. So let it be the sensuous stimulus of dubious dances, and, to complete it, let the dancer be the fair young daughter of the king's wife, the very descendant of the Asmonaeon priest-princess! To viler depth of coarse familiarity even a Herod could not have descended.

She has come, and she has danced, this princely maiden, out of whom all maidenhood and all princeliness have been brazed by a degenerate mother, wretched offspring of the once noble Maccabees. And she has done her best in that wretched exhibition, and pleased Herod and them that sat at meal with him. And now, amidst the general plaudits, she shall have her reward and the king swears it to her with loud voice, that all around hear it even to the half of his kingdom. The maiden steals out of the banquet-hall to ask her mother what it shall be. Can there be doubt or hesitation in the mind of Herodias? If there was one object she had at heart, which these ten months she had in vain sought to attain: it was the death of John the Baptist. She remembered it all only too well her stormy, reckless past. The daughter of Aristobulus, the ill-fated son of the ill-fated Asmonaeon princess Mariamme (I.), she had been married to her half-uncle, Herod Philip, the son of Herod the Great and of Mariamme (II.), the daughter of the High-Priest (Boëthos). At one time it seemed as if Herod Philip would have been sole heir of his father's dominions. But the old tyrant had changed his testament, and Philip was left with great wealth, but as a private person living in Jerusalem. This little suited the woman's ambition. It was when his half-brother, Herod Antipas, came on a visit to him at Jerusalem, that an intrigue began between the Tetrarch and his brother's wife. It was agreed that, after the return of Antipas from his impending journey to Rome, he would repudiate his wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, and wed Herodias. But Aretas daughter heard of the plot, and having obtained her husband's consent to go to Machaerus, she fled thence to her father. This, of course, led to enmity between Antipas and Aretas. Nevertheless, the adulterous marriage with Herodias followed. In a few sentences the story may be carried to its termination. The woman proved the curse and ruin of Antipas. First came the murder of the Baptist, which sent a thrill of horror through the people, and to which all the later misfortunes of Herod were attributed. Then followed a war with Aretas, in which the Tetrarch was worsted. And, last of all, his wife's ambition led him to Rome to solicit the title of King, lately given to Agrippa, the brother of Herodias. Antipas not only failed, but was deprived of his dominions, and banished to Lyons in Gaul. The pride of the woman in refusing favours from the Emperor, and her faithfulness to her husband in his fallen fortunes, are the only redeeming points in her history. As for Salome, she was first married to her uncle, Philip the Tetrarch. Legend has it, that her death was retributive, being in consequence of a fall on the ice. Such was the woman who had these many months sought with the vengefulness and determination of a Jezebel, to rid herself of the hated person, who alone had dared publicly denounce her sin, and whose words held her weak husband in awe. The opportunity had now come for obtaining from the vacillating monarch what her entreaties could never have secured. As the Gospel puts it, instigated by her mother, the damsel hesitated not. We can readily fill in the outlined picture of what followed. It only needed the mother's whispered suggestion, and still flushed from her dance, Salome reentered the banqueting-hall. With haste as if no time were to be lost, she went up to king: I would that thou forthwith give me in a charger, the head of John the Baptist! Silence must have fallen on the assembly. Even into their hearts such a demand from the lips of little more than a child must have struck horror. They all knew John to be a righteous and holy man. Wicked as they were, in their superstition, if not religiousness, few, if any of them, would have willingly lent himself to such work. And they all knew, also, why Salome, or rather Herodias, had made this demand. What would Herod do? The king was exceedingly sorry. For months he had striven against this. His conscience, fear of the people, inward horror at the deed, all would have kept him from it. But he had sworn to the maiden,

who now stood before him, claiming that the pledge be redeemed, and every eye in the assembly was now fixed upon him. Unfaithful to his God, to his conscience, to truth and righteousness; not ashamed of any crime or sin, he would yet be faithful to his half-drunken oath, and appear honorable and true before such companions!

It has been but the contest of a moment. Straightway the king gives the order to one of the body-guard. The maiden hath withdrawn to await the result with her mother. The guardsman has left the banqueting-hall. Out into the cold spring night, up that slope, and into the deep dungeon. As its door opens, the noise of the revelry comes with the light of the torch which the man bears. No time for preparation is given, nor needed. A few minutes more, and the gory head of the Baptist is brought to the maiden in a charger, and she gives the ghastly dish to her mother.

It is all over! As the pale morning light streams into the keep, the faithful disciples, who had been told of it, come reverently to bear the headless body to the burying. They go forth forever from that accursed place, which is so soon to become a mass of shapeless ruins. They go to tell it to Jesus, and henceforth to remain with Him. We can imagine what welcome awaited them. But the people ever afterwards cursed the tyrant, and looked for those judgments of God to follow, which were so soon to descend on him. And he himself was ever afterwards restless, wretched, and full of apprehensions. He could scarcely believe that the Baptist was really dead, and when the fame of Jesus reached him, and those around suggested that this was Elijah, a prophet, or as one of them, Herod's mind, amidst its strange perplexities, still reverted to the man whom he had murdered. It was a new anxiety, perhaps, even so, a new hope; and as formerly he had often and gladly heard the Baptist, so now he would fain have seen Jesus. He would see Him; but not now. In that dark night of betrayal, he, who at the bidding of the child of an adulteress, had murdered the Forerunner, might, with the approbation of a Pilate, have rescued Him whose faithful witness John had been. But night was to merge into yet darker night. For it was the time and the power of the Evil One. And yet: Jehovah reigneth.

Chapter 29 The Miraculous Feeding of the Five Thousand

(Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14)

In the circumstances described in the previous chapter, Jesus resolved at once to leave Capernaum; and this probably alike for the sake of His disciples, who needed rest; for that of the people, who might have attempted a rising after the murder of the Baptist; and temporarily to withdraw Himself and His followers from the power of Herod. For this purpose He chose the place outside the dominions of Antipas, nearest to Capernaum. This was Beth-Saida (the house of fishing Fisher-town as we might call it), on the eastern border of Galilee, just within the territory of the Tetrarch Philip. Originally a small village, Philip had converted it into a town, and named it Julias, after Caesar's daughter. It lay on the eastern bank of Jordan', just before that stream enters the Lake of Galilee . It must, however, not be confounded with the other Fisher-town or Bethsaida, on the western shore of the Lake, which the Fourth Gospel, evidencing by this local knowledge its Judaeian, or rather Galilean, authorship, distinguishes from the eastern as Bethsaida of Galilee.

Other minute points of deep interest in the same direction will present themselves in the course of this narrative. Meantime we note, that this is the only history, previous to Christ's last visit to Jerusalem , which is recorded by all the four Evangelists; the only series of events also in the whole course of that Galilean Ministry, which commenced after His return from the Unknown Feast which is referred to in the Fourth Gospel; and that it contains distinct notices as to time, which enable us to fit it exactly into the frame-work of this history. For, the statement of the Fourth Gospel, that the Passover was nigh is confirmed by the independent notice of Mark, that those whom the Lord miraculously led

were ranged on the green grass. In that climate there would have been no green grass soon after the Passover. We must look upon the coincidence of these two notices as one of the undesigned confirmations of their narrative.

For, miraculous it certainly is, and the attempts rationalistically to explain it, to sublimate it into a parable, to give it the spiritualistic meaning of spiritual feeding, or to account for its mythical origin by the precedent of the descent of the manna, or of the miracle of Elisha, are even more palpable failures than those made to account for the miracle at Cana. The only alternative is to accept or entirely to reject it. In view of the exceptional record of this history in all the four Gospels, no unbiased historical student would treat it as a simple invention, for which there was no ground in reality. Nor can its origin be accounted for by previous Jewish expectancy, or Old Testament precedent. The only rational mode of explaining it is on the supposition of its truth. This miracle, and what follows, mark the climax in our Lord's doing, as the healing of the Syro-Phoenician maiden the utmost sweep of His activity, and the Transfiguration the highest point in regard to the miraculous about His Person. The only reason which can be assigned for the miracle of His feeding the five thousand was that of all His working: Man's need, and, in view of it, the stirring of the Pity and Power that were King Herod, and the banquet that ended with the murder of the Baptist, and King Jesus, and the banquet that ended with His lonely prayer on the mountain-side, the calming of the storm on the lake, and the deliverance from death of His disciples.

Only a few hours sail from Capernaum', and even a shorter distance by land (round the head of the Lake) lay the district of the Bethsaida-Julias. It was natural that Christ, wishing to avoid public attention, should have gone by ship and equally so that the many seeing them departing, and knowing' viz., what direction the boat was taking, should have followed on foot, and been joined by others from the neighbouring villages, as those from Capernaum passed through them, perhaps, also, as they recognised on the Lake the now well-known sail, speeding towards the other shore. It is an incidental but interesting confirmation of the narrative, that the same notice about this journey occurs, evidently undesignedly, in John vi. 22. Yet another we find in the fact, that some of those who ran there on foot had reached the place before Jesus and His Apostles. Only some, as we judge. The largest proportion arrived later, and soon swelled to the immense number of about 5,000 men besides women and children. The circumstances that the Passover was nigh at hand, so that many must have been starting on their journey to Jerusalem', round the Lake and through Peraea, partly accounts for the concourse of such multitudes. And this, perhaps in conjunction with the effect on the people of John's murder, may also explain their ready and eager gathering to Christ, thus affording yet another confirmation of the narrative.

It was a well-known spot where Jesus and His Apostles touched the shore. Not many miles south of it was the Gerasa or Gergesa, where the great miracle of healing the demonised had been wrought. Just beyond Gerasa the mountains and hills recede, and the plain along the shore enlarges, till it attains wide proportions on the northern bank of the Lake. The few ruins which mark the site of Bethsaida-Julias most of the basalt-stones having been removed for building purposes lie on the edge of a hill, three or four miles north of the Lake. The ford, by which those who came from -- Capernaum crossed the --Jordan, was, no doubt, that still used, about two miles from where the river enters the --Lake. About a mile further, on that wide expanse of grass, would be the scene of the great miracle. In short, the locality thoroughly accords with the requirements of the Gospel-narrative.

As we picture it to ourselves, our Lord with His disciples, and perhaps followed by those who had outrun the rest, first retired to the top of a height, and there rested in teaching converse with them. Presently, as He saw the great multitudes gathering, He was moved with compassion towards them. There could be no question of retirement or rest in view of this. Surely, it was the opportunity which God had given a call which came to Him from His Father. Every such opportunity was unspeakably precious to Him, Who longed to gather the lost under His wings. It might be, that even now they would learn what belonged to their peace. Oh, that they would learn it! At least, He must

work while it was called to-day, ere the night of judgment came; work with that unending patience and intense compassion which made Him weep, when He could no longer work. It was this depth of longing and intenseness of pity which now ended the Saviour's rest, and brought Him down from the hill to meet the gathering multitude in the desert plain beneath.

And what a sight to meet His gaze these thousands of strong men, besides women and children; and what thoughts of the past, the present, and the future, would be called up by the scene! The Passover was nigh with its remembrances of the Paschal night, the Paschal Lamb, the Paschal Supper, the Paschal deliverance and most of them were Passover-pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. These Passover-pilgrims and God's guests, now streaming out into this desert after Him; with a murdered John just buried, and no earthly teacher, guide, or help left! Truly they were as sheep having no shepherd. The very surroundings seemed to give to the thought the vividness of a picture: this wandering, straying multitude, the desert sweep of country, the very want of provisions. A Passover, indeed, but of which He would be the Paschal Lamb, the Bread which He gave, the Supper, and around which He would gather those scattered, shepherdless sheep into one flock of many companies to which His Apostles would bring the bread He had blessed and broken, to their sufficient and more than sufficient nourishment; from which, indeed, they would carry the remnant-baskets full, after the flock had been fed, to the poor in the outlying places of far-off heathendom. And so thoughts of the past, the present, and the future must have mingled thoughts of the Passover in the past, of the Last, the Holy Supper in the future, and of the deeper inward meaning and bearing of both the one and the other; thoughts also of this flock, and of that other flock which was yet to gather, and of the far-off places, and of the Apostles and their service, and of the provision which they were to carry from His Hands a provision never exhausted by present need, and which always leaves enough to carry thence and far away.

There is, at least in our view, no doubt that thoughts of the Passover and of the Holy Supper, of their commingling and mystic meaning, were present to the Saviour, and that it is in this light the miraculous feeding of the multitude must be considered, if we are in any measure to understand it. Meantime the Saviour was moving among them beginning to teach them many things and healing them that had need of healing. Yet, as He so moved and thought of it all, from the first, He Himself knew what He was about to do. And now the sun had passed its meridian, and the shadows fell longer on the surging crowd. Full of the thoughts of the great Supper, which was symbolically to link the Passover of the past with that of the future, and its Sacramental continuation to all time, He turned to Philip with this question: Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? It was to try him and show how he would view and meet what, alike spiritually and temporally, has so often been the great problem. Perhaps there was something in Philip which made it specially desirable, that the question should be put to him. At any rate, the answer of Philip showed that there had been a need be for it. This two hundred denarii (between six and seven pounds) worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little is the course realism, not of unbelief, but of an absence of faith which, entirely ignoring any higher possibility, has not even its hope left in a Thou knowest, Lord.

But there is evidence, also, that the question of Christ worked deeper thinking and higher good. As we understand it, Philip told it to Andrew, and they to the others. While Jesus taught and healed, they must have spoken together of this strange question of the Master. They knew Him sufficiently to judge, that it implied some purpose on His part. Did He intend to provide for all that multitude? They counted them roughly going along the edge and through the crowd and reckoned them by thousands, besides women and children. They thought of all the means for feeding such a multitude. How much had they of their own? As we judge by combining the various statements, there was a lad there who carried the scant, humble provisions of the party perhaps a fisher-lad brought for the purpose from the boat. It would take quite what Philip had reckoned about two hundred denarii if the Master meant them to go and buy victuals for all that multitude. Probably the common stock at any rate as computed by Judas, who carried the bag did not contain that amount. In any case, the right and the wise thing was to dismiss the multitude, that they might go into the towns and villages and buy for

themselves victuals, and find lodgment. For already the bright spring-day was declining, and what was called the first evening had set in. For the Jews reckoned two evenings, although it is not easy to determine the exact hour when each began and ended. But, in general, the first evening may be said to have begun when the sun declined, and it was probably reckoned as lasting to about the ninth hour, or three o'clock of the afternoon. Then began the period known as between the evenings which would be longer or shorter according to the season of the year, and which terminated with the second evening' the time from when the first star appeared to that when the third star was visible. With the night began the reckoning of the following day.

It was the first evening when the disciples, whose anxiety must have been growing with the progress of time, asked the Lord to dismiss the people. But it was as they had thought. He would have them give the people to eat! Were they, then, to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of loaves? No they were not to buy, but to give of their own store! How many loaves had they! Let them go and see. And when Andrew went to see what store the fisher-lad carried for them, he brought back the tidings, He hath five barley loaves and two small fishes to which he added, half in disbelief, half in faith's rising expectancy of impossible possibility: But what are they among so many? It is to the fourth Evangelist alone that we owe the record of this remark, which we instinctively feel gives to the whole the touch of truth and life. It is to him also that we owe other two minute traits of deepest interest, and of far greater importance than at first sight appears.

When we read that these five were barley-loaves, we learn that, no doubt from voluntary choice, the fare of the Lord and of His followers was the poorest. Indeed, barley-bread was, almost proverbially, the meanest. Hence, as the Mishnah puts it, while all other meat-offerings were of wheat, that brought by the woman accused of adultery was to be of barley, because (so R. Gamaliel puts it), as her deed is that of animals, so her offering is also of the food of animals. The other minute trait in John's Gospel consists in the use of a peculiar word for fish (oyarion), opsarion which properly means what was eaten along with the bread, and specially refers to the small, and generally dried or pickled fish eaten with bread, like our sardines or the caviar of Russia, the pickled herrings of Holland and Germany, or a peculiar kind of small dried fish, eaten with the bones, in the North of Scotland. Now just as any one who would name that fish as eaten with bread, would display such minute knowledge of the habits of the North-east of Scotland as only personal residence could give, so in regard to the use of this term, which, be it marked, is peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, Dr. Westcott suggests, that it may have been a familiar Galilean word and his conjecture is correct, for Ophsonin (Nyniwsp:)af) derived from the same Greek word (oyon), of which that used by John is the diminutive, means a savoury dish while Aphyan (N)ypor Aphits (Cyp), is the term for a kind of small fish, such as sardines. The importance of tracing accurate local knowledge in the Fourth Gospel warrants our pursuing the subject further. The Talmud declares that of all kinds of meat, fish only becomes more savoury by salting, 33 and names certain kinds, specially designated as small fishes which might be eaten without being cooked. Small fishes were recommended for health; and a kind of pickle or savoury was also made of them. Now the Lake of Galilee was particularly rich in these fishes, and we know that both the salting and pickling of them was a special industry among its fishermen. For this purpose a small kind of them were specially selected, which bear the name Terith (tyr 363235 Now the diminutive used by John (oyarion) of which our Authorized Version no doubt gives the meaning fairly by rendering it small fishes refers, no doubt, to those small fishes (probably a kind of sardine) of which millions were caught in the Lake, and which, dried and salted, would form the most common savoury with bread for the fisher-population along the shores.

If the Fourth Gospel in the use of this diminutive displays such special Lake-knowledge as evidences its Galilean origin, another touching trait connected with its use may here be mentioned. It has already been said that the term is used only by John, as if to mark the Lake of Galilee origin of the Fourth Gospel. But only once again does the expression occur in the Fourth Gospel. On that morning, when the Risen One manifested Himself by the Lake of Galilee to them who had all the night toiled in vain, He had Provided for them miraculously the meal, when on the fire of charcoal they saw the well-

remembered little fish (the opsarion), and, as He bade them bring of the little fish (the Opsaria) which they had miraculously caught, Peter drew to shore the net full, not of opsaria, but of great fishes (icquwn megalwn). And yet it was not of those great fishes that He gave them, but He took the bread and gave them, and the opsarion likewise. Thus, in infinite humility, the meal at which the Risen Saviour sat down with His disciples was still of bread and small fishes' even though He gave them, the draught of large fishes; and so at that last meal He recalled that first miraculous feeding by the Lake of Galilee. And this also is one of those undesigned, too often unobserved traits in the narrative, which yet carry almost irresistible evidence.

There is one proof at least of the implicit faith or rather trust of the disciples in their Master. They had given Him account of their own scanty provision, and yet, as He bade them make the people sit down to the meal, they hesitated not to obey. We can picture it to ourselves, what is so exquisitely sketched: the expanse of grass, green and fresh, much grass; then the people in their companies of fifties and hundreds, reclining, and looking in their regular divisions, and with their bright many-coloured dresses, like garden-beds on the turf. But One Figure must every eye have been bent. Around Him stood His Apostles. They had laid before Him the scant provision made for their own wants, and which was now to feed their great multitude. As was wont at meals, on the part of the head of the household, Jesus took the bread, blessed or, as John puts it, gave thanks and brake it. The expression recalls that connected with the Holy Eucharist, and leaves little doubt on the mind that, in the Discourse delivered in the Synagogue of Capernaum, there is also reference to the Lord's Supper. As of comparatively secondary importance, yet helping us better to realise the scene, we recall the Jewish ordinance, that the Head of the meal, yet if they who sat down to it were not merely guests, but his children, or his household, then might he speak it, even if he himself did not partake of the bread which he had broken.

We can scarcely be mistaken as to the words which Jesus spake when He gave thanks. The Jewish Law 49 allows the grace at meal to be said, not only in Hebrew, but in any language, the Jerusalem Talmud aptly remarking, that it was proper a person should understand to Whom he was giving thanks. Similarly, we have very distinct information as regards a case like the present. We gather, that the use of savoury with bread was specially common around the Lake of Galilee, and the Mishnah lays down the principle, that if bread and savory were eaten, it would depend which of the two was the main article of diet, to determine whether thanksgiving should be said for one or the other. In any case only one benediction was to be used. In this case, of course, it would be spoken over the bread, the savory being merely an addition. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the words which Jesus spake, whether in Aramaean, Greek, or Hebrew, were those so well known: Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the world, Who causes to come forth bread from the earth. Assuredly it was this threefold thought: the upward thought, the recognition of the creative act as regards every piece of bread we eat, and the thanksgiving, which was realised anew in all its fullness, when, as He distributed to the disciples, the provision miraculously multiplied in His Hands. And still they bore it from His Hands from company to company, laying before each a store. When they were all filled, He that had provided the meal bade them gather up the fragments before each company. So doing, each of the twelve had his basket filled. Here also we have another life-touch. Those baskets, known in Jewish writings by a similar name (Kephiphah), made of wicker or willows were in common use, but considered of the poorest kind. There is a sublimeness of contrast that passes description between this feast to the five thousand, besides women and children and the poor's provision of barley bread and the two small fishes; and, again, between the quantity left and the coarse wicker baskets in which it was stored. Nor do we forget to draw mentally the parallel between this Messianic feast and that banquet of the latter days which Rabbinism pictured so realistically. But as the wondering multitude watched, as the disciples gathered from company to company the fragments into their baskets, the murmur ran through the ranks: This is truly the Prophet, This is truly the Prophet, "the coming One" into the world. And so the Baptist's last inquiry, Art Thou the Coming One? was fully and publicly answered, and that by the Jews themselves.

Chapter 30 The Night of Miracles on the Lake of Gennesaret

(Matthew 14:22-36; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21)

The last question of the Baptist, spoken in public, had been: Art Thou the Coming One, or look we for another? It had, in part, been answered, as the murmur had passed through the ranks: This One is truly the Prophet, the Coming One! So, then, they had no longer to wait, nor to look for another! And this Prophet was Israel's long expected Messiah. What this would imply to the people, in the intensity and longing of the great hope which, for centuries, nay, far beyond the time of Ezra, had swayed their hearts, it is impossible fully to conceive. Here, then, was the Great Reality at last before them. He, on Whose teaching they had hung entranced, was the Prophet nay, more, the Coming One: He Who was coming all those many centuries, and yet had not come till now. Then, also, was He more than a Prophet a King: --Israel--'s King, the King of the world. An irresistible impulse seized the people. They would proclaim Him King, then and there; and as they knew, probably from previous utterances, perhaps when similar movements had to be checked, that He would resist, they would constrain Him to declare Himself, or at least to be proclaimed by them. Can we wonder at this; or that thoughts of a Messianic worldly kingdom should have filled, moved, and influenced to discipleship a Judas; or that, with such a representative of their own thoughts among the disciples, the rising waves of popular excitement should have swollen into the mighty billows?

Jesus therefore, perceiving that they were about to come, and to take Him by force, that they might make Him King, withdrew again into the mountain, Himself alone or, as it might be rendered, though not quite in the modern usage of the expression, became an anchorite again . . . Himself alone. This is another of those sublime contrasts, which render it well-nigh inconceivable to regard this history otherwise than as true and Divine. Yet another is the manner in which He stilled the multitude, and the purpose for which He became the lonely Anchorite on the mountain-top. He withdrew to pray; and He stilled the people, and sent them, no doubt solemnised, to their homes, by telling them that He withdrew to pray. And He did pray till far on, when the (second) evening had come and the first stars shone out in the deep blue sky over the Lake of Galilee, with the far lights twinkling and trembling on the other side. And yet another sublime contrast as He constrained the disciples to enter the ship, and that ship, which bore those who had been sharers in the miracle, could not make way against storm and waves, and was at last driven out of its course. And yet another contrast as He walked on the storm-tossed waves and subdued them. And yet another, and another for is not all this history one sublime contrast to the seen and the thought of by men, but withal most true and Divine in the sublimeness of these contrasts?

For whom and for what He prayed, alone on that mountain, we dare not, even in deepest reverence, inquire. Yet we think, in connection with it, of the Passover, the Manna, the Wilderness, the Lost Sheep, the Holy Supper, the Bread which is His Flesh, and the remnant in the Baskets to be carried to those afar off, and then also of the attempt to make Him a King, in all its spiritual unreality, ending in His View with the betrayal, the denial, and the cry: We have no King but Caesar. And as He prayed, the faithful stars in the heavens shone out. But there on the Lake', where the bark which bore His disciples made for the other shore, a great wind contrary to them was rising. And still He was alone on the land but looking out into the evening after them, as the ship was in the midst of the sea and they toiling and distressed in rowing.

Thus far, to the utmost verge of their need, but not farther. The Lake is altogether about forty furlongs or stadia (about six miles) wide, and they had as yet reached little more than half the distance (twenty-five or thirty furlongs). Already it was the fourth watch of the night. There was some difference of opinion among the Jews, whether the night should be divided into three, or (as among the

Romans) into four watches. The latter (which would count the night at twelve instead of nine hours) was adopted by many. In any case it would be what might be termed the morning-watch, when the well-known Form seemed to be passing them, walking upon the sea. There can, at least, be no question that such was the impression, not only of one or another, but that all saw Him. Nor yet can there be here question of any natural explanation. Once more the truth of the event must be either absolutely admitted, or absolutely rejected. The difficulties of the latter hypothesis, which truly cuts the knot, would be very formidable. Not only would the origination of this narrative, as given by two of the Synoptists and by John, be utterly unaccountable neither meeting Jewish expectancy, nor yet supposed Old Testament precedent but, if legend it be, it seems purposeless and irrational. Moreover, there is this noticeable about it, as about so many of the records of the miraculous in the New Testament, that the writers by no means disguise from themselves or their readers the obvious difficulties involved. In the present instance they tell us, that they regarded His Form moving on the water as a spirit and cried out for fear; and again, that the impression produced by the whole scene, even on them that had witnessed the miracle of the previous evening, was one of overwhelming astonishment. This walking on the water, then, was even to them within the domain of the truly miraculous, and it affected their minds equally, perhaps even more than ours, from the fact that in their view so much, which to us seems miraculous, lay within the sphere of what might be expected in the course of such a history.

On the other hand, this miracle stands not isolated, but forms one of a series of similar manifestations. It is closely connected both with what had passed on the previous evening, and what was to follow; it is told with a minuteness of detail, and with such marked absence of any attempt at gloss, adornment, apology, or self-glorification, as to give the narrative (considered simply as such) the stamp of truth; while, lastly, it contains much that lifts the story from the merely miraculous into the domain of the sublime and deeply spiritual. As regards what may be termed its credibility, this at least may again be stated, that this and similar instances of dominion over the creature are not beyond the range of what God had originally assigned to man, when He made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour, made him to have dominion over the works of His Hands, and all things were put under his feet. Indeed, this dominion over the sea seems to exhibit the Divinely human rather than the humanly Divine aspect of His Person, ⁸ if such distinction may be lawfully made. Of the physical possibility of such a miracle not to speak of the contradiction in terms which this implies no explanation can be attempted, if it were only on the ground that we are utterly ignorant of the conditions under which it took place.

This much, however, deserves special notice, that there is one marked point of difference between the account of this miracle and what will be found a general characteristic in legendary narratives. In the latter, the miraculous, however extraordinary, is the expected; it creates no surprise, and it is never mistaken for something that might have occurred in the ordinary course of events. For, it is characteristic of the mythical that the miraculous is not only introduced in the most realistic manner, but forms the essential element in the conception of things. This is the very *raison d'être* of the myth or legend, when it attaches itself to the real and historically true. Now the opposite is the case in the present narrative. Had it been mythical or legendary, we should have expected that the disciples would have been described as immediately recognising the Master as He walked on the sea, and worshipping Him. Instead of this, they are troubled and afraid. They supposed it was an apparition (this in accordance with popular Jewish notions), and cried out for fear. Even afterwards, when they had received Him into the ship, they were sore amazed in themselves and understood not while those in the ship (in contradistinction to the disciples), burst forth into an act of worship. This much then is evident, that the disciples expected not the miraculous; that they were unprepared for it; that they had explained it on what to them seemed natural grounds; and that, even when convinced of its reality, the impression of wonder, which it made, was of the deepest. And this also follows is a corollary, that, when they recorded it, it was not in ignorance that they were writing that which sounded strangest, and which would affect those who should read it with even much greater wonderment we had almost

written, unbelief than those who themselves had witnessed it.

Nor let it be forgotten, that what had just been remarked about this narrative holds equally true in regard to other miracles recorded in the New Testament. Thus, even so fundamental an article of the faith as the resurrection of Christ is described as having come upon the disciples themselves as a surprise not only wholly unexpected, but so incredible, that it required repeated and indisputable evidence to command their acknowledgment. And nothing can be more plain, than that Paul himself was not only aware of the general resistance which the announcement of such an event would raise, but that he felt to the full the difficulties of what he so firmly believed, and made the foundation of all his preaching. Indeed, the elaborate exposition of the historical grounds, on which he had arrived at the conviction of reality, affords an insight into the mental difficulties which it must at first have presented to him. And a similar inference may be drawn from the reference of Peter to the difficulties connected with the Biblical predictions about the end of the world.

It is not necessary to pursue this subject further. Its bearing on the miracle of Christ's walking on the Sea of Galilee will be sufficiently manifest. Yet other confirmatory evidence may be gathered from a closer study of the details of the narrative. When Jesus constrained the disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before Him unto the other side 16 they must have thought, that His purpose was to join them by land, since there was no other boat there, save that in which they crossed the Lake. And possibly such had been his intention, till He saw their difficulty, if not danger, from the contrary wind. This must have determined Him to come to their help. And so this miracle also was not a mere display of power, but, being caused by their need, had a moral object. And when it is asked, how from the mountain-height by the Lake He could have seen at night where the ship was labouring so far on the Lake, it must surely have been forgotten that the scene is laid quite shortly before the Passover (the 15th of Nisan), when, of course, the moon would shine on an unclouded sky, all the more brightly on a windy spring-night, and light up the waters far across.

We can almost picture to ourselves the weird scene. The Christ is on that hill-top in solitary converse with His Father praying after that miraculous breaking of bread: fully realising all that it implied to Him of self-surrender, of suffering, and of giving Himself as the Food of the World, and all that it implied to us of blessing and nourishment; praying also with that scene fresh on His mind, of their seeking to make Him, even by force, their King that the carnal might become spiritual reality (as in symbol it would be with the Breaking of Bread). Then, as He rises from His knees, knowing that, alas, it could not and would not be so to the many, He looks out over the Lake after that little company, which embodied and represented all there yet was of His Church, all that would really feed on the Bread from Heaven, and own Him their true King. Without presumption, we may venture to say, that there must have been indescribable sorrow and longing in His Heart, as His gaze was bent across the track which the little boat would follow. As we view it, it seems all symbolical: the night, the moonlight, the little boat, the contrary wind, and then also the lonely Saviour after prayer looking across to where the boatmen vainly labour to gain the other shore. As in the clear moonlight just that piece of water stands out, almost like burnished silver, with all else in shadows around, the sail-less mast is now rocking to and fro, without moving forward. They are in difficulty, in danger: and the Saviour cannot pursue His journey on foot by land; He must come to their help, though it be across the water. It is needful, and therefore it shall be upon the water; and so the storm and unsuccessful toil shall not prevent their reaching the shore, but shall also be to them for teaching concerning Him and His great power, and concerning His great deliverance; such teaching as, in another aspect of it, had been given them in symbol in the miraculous supply of food, with all that it implied (and not to them only, but to us also) of precious comfort and assurance, and as will forever keep the Church from being overwhelmed by fear in the stormy night on the Lake of Galilee, when the labour of our oars cannot make way for us.

And they also who were in the boat must have been agitated by peculiar feelings. Against their will they had been constrained by the Lord to embark and quit the scene; just as the multitude, under the influence of the great miracle, were surrounding their Master, with violent insistence to proclaim him

the Messianic King of Israel. Not only a Judas Iscariot, but all of them, must have been under the strongest excitement: first of the great miracle, and then of the popular movement. It was the crisis in the history of the Messiah and of His Kingdom. Can we wonder, that, when the Lord in very mercy bade them quit a scene which could only have misled them, they were reluctant, nay, that it almost needed violence of His part? And yet the more we consider it was it not most truly needful for them, that they should leave? But, on the other hand, in this respect also, does there seem a need be for His walking upon the sea, that they might learn not only His Almighty Power, and (symbolically) that He ruled the rising waves; but that, in their disappointment at His not being a King, they might learn that He was a King only in a far higher, truer sense than the excited multitude would have proclaimed Him.

Thus we can imagine the feelings with which they had pushed the boat from the shore, and then eagerly looked back to descry what passed there. But soon the shadows of night were enwrapping all objects at a distance, and only the bright moon overhead shone on the track behind and before. And now the breeze from the other side of the Lake, of which they may have been unaware when they embarked on the eastern shore, had freshened into violent, contrary wind. All energies must have been engaged to keep the boat's head towards the shore. Even so it seemed as if they could make no progress, when all at once, in the track that lay behind them, a Figure appeared. As it passed onwards over the water, seemingly upborne by the waves as they rose, not disappearing as they fell, but carried on as they rolled, the silvery moon laid upon the trembling waters the shadows of that Form as it moved, long and dark, on their track. John uses an expression, which shows us in the pale light, those in the boat, intently, fixedly, fearfully, gazing at the Apparition as It neared still closer and closer. We must remember their previous excitement, as also the presence, and, no doubt, the superstitious suggestions of the boatman, when we think how they cried out for fear, and deemed It an Apparition. And He would have passed by them as He so often does in our case bringing them, indeed, deliverance, pointing and smoothing their way, but not giving them His known Presence, if they had not cried out. But their fear, which made them almost hesitate to receive Him into the boat, even though the outcome of error and superstition, brought His ready sympathy and comfort, in language which has so often, and in all ages, converted foolish fears of misapprehension into gladsome, thankful assurance: It is I, be not afraid!

And they were no longer afraid, though truly His walking upon the waters might seem more awesome than any apparition. The storm in their hearts, like that on the Lake', was commanded by His Presence. We must still bear in mind their former excitement, now greatly intensified by what they had just witnessed, in order to understand the request of Peter: Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water. They are the words of a man, whom the excitement of the moment has carried beyond all reflection. And yet this combination of doubt (if it be Thou), with presumption (bid me come on the water), is peculiarly characteristic of Peter. He is the Apostle of Hope and hope is a combination of doubt and presumption, but also their transformation. With reverence be it said, Christ could not have left the request ungranted, even though it was the outcome of yet unreconciled and untransformed doubt and presumption. He would not have done so, or doubt would have remained doubt untransformed; and He could not have done so, without also correcting it, or presumption would have remained presumption untransformed, which is only upward growth, without deeper rooting in inward spiritual experience. And so He bade him come upon the water, to transform his doubt, but left him, unassured from without, to his own feelings as he saw the wind, to transform his presumption; while by stretching out His Hand to save him from sinking, and by the words of correction which He spake, He did actually so point to their transformation in that hope, of which Peter is the special representative, and the preacher in the Church.

And presently, as they two came into the boat, the wind ceased, and immediately the ship was at the land. But they that were in the boat' apparently in contradistinction to the disciples, though the latter must have stood around in sympathetic reverence worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God. The first full public confession this of the fact, and made not by the disciples, but by

others. With the disciples it would have meant something far deeper. But as from the lips of these men it seems, like the echo of what had passed between them on that memorable passage across the Lake'. They also must have mingled in the conversation, as the boat had pushed off from the shore on the previous evening, when they spoke of the miracle of the feeding, and then of the popular attempt to proclaim Him Messianic King, of which they knew not yet the final issue, since they had been constrained to get into the boat while the Master remained behind. They would speak of all that He was and had done, and how the very devils had proclaimed Him to be the Son of God on that other shore, close by where the miracle of feeding had taken place. Perhaps, having been somewhat driven out of their course, they may have passed close to the very spot, and, as they pointed to it recalled the incident. And this designation of Son of God with the worship which followed, would come much more readily, because with much more superficial meaning, to the boatmen than to the disciples. But in them, also, the thought was striking deep root; and presently, by the Mount of Transfiguration, would it be spoken in the name of all by Peter, not as demon- nor as man-taught, but as taught of Christ's Father Who is in Heaven.

Yet another question suggests itself. The events of the night are not recorded by Luke perhaps because they did not come within his general view-plan of that Life; perhaps from reverence, because neither he, nor his teacher -- Paul--, were within that inner circle, with which the events of that night were connected rather in the way of reproof than otherwise. At any rate, even negative criticism cannot legitimately draw any adverse inference from it, in view of its record not only by two of the Synoptists, but in the Fourth Gospel. Mark also does not mention the incident concerning Peter; and this we can readily understand from his connection with that Apostle. Of the two eyewitnesses, -- John-- and Matthew, the former also is silent on that incident. On any view of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, it could not have been from ignorance, either of its occurrence, or else of its record by Matthew. Was it among those many other things which Jesus did which were not written by him, since their complete chronicle would have rendered a Gospel-sketch impossible? Or did it lie outside that special conception of his Gospel, which as regards its details, determined the insertion or else the omission of certain incidents? Or was there some reason for this omission connected with the special relation of John to Peter? And, lastly, why was Matthew in this instance more detailed than the others, and alone told it with such circumstantiality? Was it that it had made such deep impression on his own mind; had he somehow any personal connection with it; or did he feel, as if this bidding of Peter to come to Christ out of the ship and on the water had some close inner analogy with his own call to leave the custom-house and follow Christ? Such, and other suggestions which may arise can only be put in the form of questions. Their answer awaits the morning and the other shore.

Chapter 31 The Pharisees concerning Purification

The Teaching of the Lord Concerning Purity The Traditions Concerning Hand-Washing and Vows

(Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23.)

As we follow the narrative, confirmatory evidence of what had preceded springs up at almost every step. It is quite in accordance with the abrupt departure of Jesus from Capernaum, and its motives, that when, so far from finding rest and privacy at Bethsaida (east of the Jordan), a greater multitude than ever had there gathered around Him, which would fain have proclaimed Him King, He resolved on immediate return to the western shore, with the view of seeking a quieter retreat, even though it were in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. According to Mark, the Master had directed the disciples to make for the other Bethsaida, or Fisherton on the western shore of the Lake'. Remembering how

common the corresponding name is in our own country, and that fishing was the main industry along the shores of the Lake, we need not wonder at the existence of more than one Beth-Saida, or Fisherton. Nor yet does it seem strange, that the site should be lost of what, probably, except for the fishing, was quite an unimportant place. By the testimony both of Josephus and the Rabbis, the shores of Gennesaret were thickly studded with little towns, villages, and hamlets, which have all perished without leaving a trace, while even of the largest the ruins are few and inconsiderable. We would, however, hazard a geographical conjecture. From the fact that Mark 6 names Bethsaida, and John Capernaum, as the original destination of the boat, we would infer that Bethsaida was the fishing quarter of, or rather close to, Capernaum, even as we so often find in our own country a Fisherton adjacent to larger towns. With this would agree the circumstance, that no traces of an ancient harbour have been discovered at Tell Hûm, the site of Capernaum. Further, it would explain, how Peter and Andrew, who, according to John, were of Bethsaida, are described by Mark as having their home in Capernaum. It also deserves notice, that, as regards the house of Peter, Mark, who was so intimately connected with him, names Capernaum, while John, who was his fellow-townsmen, names Bethsaida, and that the reverse difference obtains between the two Evangelists in regard to the direction of the ship. This also suggests, that in a sense as regarded the fishermen the names were interchangeable, or rather, that --Bethsaida was the Fisherton of Capernaum.

A superficial reader might object that, in the circumstances, we would scarcely have expected Christ and His disciples to have returned at once to the immediate neighbourhood of Capernaum, if not to that city itself. But a fuller knowledge of the circumstances will not only, as so often, convert the supposed difficulty into most important confirmatory evidence, but supply some deeply interesting details. The apparently trivial notice, that (at least) the concluding part of the Discourses, immediately on the return to Capernaum, was spoken by Christ in Synagogue enables us not only to localise this address, but to fix the exact succession of events. If this Discourse was spoken in Synagogue it must have been (as will be shown) on the Jewish Sabbath. Reckoning backwards, we arrive at the conclusion, that Jesus with His disciples left Capernaum for Bethsaida-Julias on a Thursday; that the miraculous feeding of the multitude took place on Thursday evening; the passage of the disciples to the other side, and the walking of Christ on the sea, as well as the failure of Peter's faith, in the night of Thursday to Friday; the passage of the people to Capernaum in search of Jesus, with all that followed, on the Friday; and, lastly, the final Discourses of Christ on the Saturday in Capernaum and in the Synagogue.

Two inferences will appear from this chronological arrangement. First, when our Lord had retraced His steps from the eastern shore in search of rest and retirement, it was so close on the Jewish Sabbath (Friday), that He was almost obliged to return to Capernaum to spend the holy day there, before undertaking the further journey to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And on the Sabbath no actual danger, either from Herod Antipas or the Pharisees, need have been apprehended. Thus (as before indicated), the sudden return to Capernaum, so far from constituting a difficulty, serves as confirmation of the previous narrative. Again, we cannot but perceive a peculiar correspondence of dates. Mark here: The miraculous breaking of Bread at Bethsaida on a Thursday evening; the breaking of Bread at the Last Supper on a Thursday evening; the attempt to proclaim Him King, and the betrayal; Peter's bold assertion, and the failure of his faith, each in the night from Thursday to Friday; and, lastly, Christ's walking on the angry, storm-tossed waves, and commanding them, and bringing the boat that bore His disciples safe to land, and His victory and triumph over Death and him that had the power of Death.

These, surely, are more than coincidences; and in this respect also may this history be regarded as symbolic. As we read it, Christ directed the disciples to steer for Bethsaida, the Fisherton of Capernaum. But, apart from the latter suggestion, we gather from the expressions used, that the boat which bore the disciples had drifted out of its course probably owing to the wind and touched land, not where they had intended, but at Gennesaret, where they moored it. There can be no question, that by this term is meant the plain of Gennesaret the richness and beauty of which

Josephus and the Rabbis describe in such glowing language. To this day it bears marks of having been the most favoured spot in this favoured region. Travelling northwards from Tiberias along the Lake, we follow, for about five or six miles, a narrow ledge of land shut in by mountains, when we reach the home of the Magdalene, the ancient Magdala (the modern Mejdal). Right over against us, on the other side, is Kersa (Gerasa), the scene of the great miracle. On leaving Magdala the mountains recede, and form an amphitheatric plain, more than a mile wide, and four or five miles long. This is the land of Gennesaret (el Ghuweir). We pass across the Valley of Doves which intersects it about one mile to the north of Magdala, and pursue our journey over the well-watered plain, till, after somewhat more than an hour, we reach its northern boundary, a little beyond Khân Minyeh. The latter has, in accordance with tradition, been regarded by some as representing Bethsaida, but seems both too far from the Lake, and too much south of Capernaum, to answer the requirements.

No sooner had the well-known boat, which bore Jesus and His disciples, been run up the gravel-beach in the early morning of that Friday, than His Presence must have become known throughout the district, all the more that the boatmen would soon spread the story of the miraculous occurrences of the preceding evening and night. With Eastern rapidity the tidings would pass along, and from all the country around the sick were brought on their pallets, if they might but touch the border of His garment. Nor could such touch, even though the outcome of an imperfect faith, be in vain for He, Whose garment they sought leave to touch, was the God-Man, the Conqueror of Death, the Source and Spring of all Life. And so it was where He landed, and all the way up to Bethsaida and Capernaum.

In what followed, we can still trace the succession of events, though there are considerable difficulties as to their precise order. Thus we are expressly told, that those from the other side came to Capernaum on the day following the miraculous feeding, and that one of the subsequent Discourses, of which the outline is preserved, was delivered in Synagogue. As this could only have been done either on a Sabbath or Feast-Day (in this instance, the Passover), it follows, that in any case a day must have intervened between their arrival at Capernaum and the Discourse in Synagogue. Again, it is almost impossible to believe that it could have been on the Passover day (15th Nisan). For we cannot imagine, that any large number would have left their homes and festive preparations on the Eve of the Pascha (14th Nisan), not to speak of the circumstance that in Galilee, differently from Judaea, all labour, including, of course, that of a journey across the Lake, was intermitted on the Eve of the Passover. Similarly, it is almost impossible to believe, that so many festive pilgrims would have been assembled till late in the evening preceding the 14th Nisan so far from Jerusalem as Bethsaida-Julias, since it would have been impossible after that to reach the city and Temple in time for the feast. It, therefore, only remains to regard the Synagogue-service at which Christ preached as that of an ordinary Sabbath, and the arrival of the multitude as having taken place on Friday in the forenoon. Again, from the place which the narrative occupies in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, as well as from certain internal evidence, it seems difficult to doubt, that the reproof of the Pharisees and Scribes on the subject of the unwashed hands was not administered immediately after the miraculous feeding and the night of miracles. We cannot, however, feel equally sure, which of the two preceded the other: the Discourse in Capernaum, or the Reproof of the Pharisees. Several reasons have determined us to regard the Reproof as having preceded the Discourse. Without entering on a detailed discussion, the simple reading of the two sections will lead to the instinctive conclusion, that such a Discourse could not have been followed by such cavil and such Reproof, while it seems in the right order of things, that the Reproof which led to the offence of the Pharisees, and apparently the withdrawal of some in the outer circle of discipleship, should have been followed by the positive teaching of the Discourse, which in turn resulted in the going back of many who had been in the inner circle of disciples.

In these circumstances, we venture to suggest the following as the succession of events. Early on the Friday morning the boat which bore Jesus and His disciples grated on the sandy beach of the plain of

Gennesaret. As the tidings spread of His arrival and of the miracles which had so lately been witnessed, the people from the neighbouring villages and towns flocked around Him, and brought their sick for the healing touch. So the greater part of the forenoon passed. Meantime, while they moved, as the concourse of the people by the way would allow, the first tidings of all this must have reached the neighbouring Capernaum. This brought immediately on the scene those Pharisees and Scribes who had come from Jerusalem on purpose to watch, and, if possible, to compass the destruction on Jesus. As we conceive it, they met the Lord and His disciples on their way to Capernaum. Possibly they overtook them, as they rested by the way, and the disciples, or some of them, were partaking of some food perhaps, some of the consecrated Bread of the previous evening. The Reproof of Christ would be administered there; then the Lord would, not only for their teaching, but for the purposes immediately to be indicated, turn to the multitude; next would follow the remark of the disciples and the reply of the Lord, spoken, probably, when they were again on the way; and, lastly, the final explanation of Christ, after they had entered the house at Capernaum. In all probability a part of what is recorded in John vi. 24. occurred also about the same time; the rest on the Sabbath which followed.

Although the cavil of the Jerusalem Scribes may have been occasioned by seeing some of the disciples eating without first having washed their hands, we cannot banish the impression that it reflected on the miraculously provided meal of the previous evening, when thousands had sat down to food without the previous observance of the Rabbinic ordinance. Neither in that case, nor in the present, had the Master interposed. He was, therefore, guilty of participation in their offence. So this was all which these Pharisees and Scribes could see in the miracle of Christ's feeding the Multitude that it had not been done according to Law! Most strange as it may seem, yet in the past history of the Church, and, perhaps, sometimes also in the present, this has been the only thing which some men have seen in the miraculous working of the Christ! Perhaps we should not wonder that the miracle itself made no deeper impression, since even the disciples understood not (by reasoning) about the loaves' however they may have accounted for it in a manner which might seem to them reasonable. But, in another aspect, the objection of the Scribes was not a mere cavil. In truth, it represented one of the great charges which the Pharisees brought against Jesus, and which determined them to seek His destruction.

It has already been shown, that they accounted for the miracles of Christ as wrought by the power of Satan, whose special representative almost incarnation they declared Jesus to be. This would not only turn the evidential force of these signs into an argument against Christ, but vindicate the resistance of the Pharisees to His claims. The second charge against Jesus was, that He was not of God; that He was a sinner. If this could be established, it would, of course, prove that He was not the Messiah, but a deceiver who misled the people, and whom it was the duty of the Sanhedrin to unmask and arrest. The way in which they attempted to establish this, perhaps persuaded themselves that it was so, was by proving that He sanctioned in others, and Himself committed, breaches of the traditional law; which, according to their fundamental principles, involved heavier guilt than sins against the revealed Law of Moses. The third and last charge against Jesus, which finally decided the action of the Council, could only be fully made at the close of His career. It might be formulated so as to meet the views of either the Pharisees or Sadducees. To the former it might be presented as a blasphemous claim to equality with God the Very Son of the Living God. To the Sadducees it would appear as a movement on the part of a most dangerous enthusiast if honest and self-deceived, all the more dangerous; one of those pseudo-Messiahs who led away the ignorant, superstitious, and excitable people; and which, if unchecked, would result in persecutions and terrible vengeance by the Romans, and in loss of the last remnants of their national independence. To each of these three charges, of which we are now watching the opening or development, there was (from the then standpoint) only one answer: Faith in His Person. And in our time, also, this is the final answer to all difficulties and objections. To this faith Jesus was now leading His disciples, till, fully realised in the great confession of Peter, it became, and has ever since proved, the Rock on which

that Church is built, against which the very gates of Hades cannot prevail.

It was in support of the second of these charges, that the Scribes now blamed the Master for allowing His disciples to eat without having previously washed, or, as Mark indicating, as we shall see, in the word the origin of the custom expresses it with graphic accuracy: with common hands. Once more we have to mark, how minutely conversant the Gospel narratives are with Jewish Law and practice. This will best appear from a brief account of this tradition of the elders the more needful that important differences prevail even among learned Jewish authorities, due probably to the circumstance that the brief Mishnic Tractate devoted to the subject has no Gemara attached to it, and also largely treats of other matters. At the outset we have this confirmation of the Gospel language, that this practice is expressly admitted to have been, not a Law of Moses, but a tradition of the elders. 38 Still, and perhaps on this very account, it was so strictly enjoined, that to neglect it was like being guilty of gross carnal defilement. Its omission would lead to temporal destruction, or, at least, to poverty. Bread eaten with unwashed hands was as if it had been filth. Indeed, a Rabbi who had held this command in contempt was actually buried in excommunication. Thus, from their point of view, the charge of the Scribes against the disciples, so far from being exaggerated, is most moderately worded by the Evangelists. In fact, although at one time it had only been one of the marks of a Pharisee, yet at a later period to wash before eating was regarded as affording the ready means of recognising a Jew. It is somewhat more difficult to account for the origin of the ordinance. So far as indicated, it seems to have been first enjoined in order to ensure that sacred offerings should not be eaten in defilement. When once it became an ordinance of the elders, this was, of course, regarded as sufficient ground for obedience. Presently, Scriptural support was sought for it. Some based it on the original ordinance of purification in Lev. xv. 11; while others saw in the words Sanctify yourselves the command to wash before meat; in the command, Be ye holy that of washing after meat; while the final clause, for I am the Lord your God was regarded as enjoining the grace at meat. For, soon it was not merely a washing before, but also after meals. The former alone was, however, regarded as a commandment (Mitsvah), the other only as a duty (Chobhah), which some, indeed, explained on sanitary grounds, as there might be left about the hands what might prove injurious to the eyes. Accordingly, soldiers might, in the urgency of campaigning, neglect the washing before, but they ought to be careful about that after meat. By-and-by, the more rigorous actually washed between the courses, although this was declared to be purely voluntary. This washing before meals is regarded by some as referred to in Talmudic writings by the expression the first waters (Mayim rishonim), while what is called the second (sheniyim), or the other later or afterwaters (Mayim acharonim), is supposed to represent the washing after meals.

But there is another and more important aspect of the expression, which leads us to describe the rite itself. The distinctive designation for it is Netilath Yadayim, literally, the lifting of the hands; while for the washing before meat the term Meshi or Mesha is also used, which literally means to rub. Both these terms point to the manner of the rite. The first question here was, whether second tithe prepared first-fruits (Terumah), or even common food (Chullin), or else, holy i.e. sacrificial food, was to be partaken of. In the latter case a complete immersion of the hands (baptism Tebhilath Yadayim), and not merely a Netilath, or uplifting was prescribed. The latter was really an affusion. As the purifications were so frequent, and care had to be taken that the water had not been used for other purposes, or something fallen into it that might discolour or defile it, large vessels or jars were generally kept for the purpose. These might be of any material, although stone is specially mentioned. It was the practice to draw water out of these with what was called a natla, antila, or antelaya, very often of glass, which must hold (at least) a quarter of a log a measure equal to one and a half egg-shells. For, no less quantity than this might be used for affusion. The water was poured on both hands, which must be free of anything covering them, such as gravel, mortar, &c. The hands were lifted up, so as to make the water run to the wrist, in order to ensure that the whole hand was washed, and that the water polluted by the hand did not again run down the fingers. Similarly, each hand was rubbed with the other (the first), provided the hand that rubbed had been affused: otherwise, the

rubbing might be done against the head, or even against a wall. But there was one point on which special stress was laid. In the first affusion which was all that originally was required when the hands were Levitically defiled the water had to run down to the wrist 58 (qrepela, or qrepeha d(a lappereq, or ad happereq). If the water remained short of the wrist (chuts lappereq), the hands were not clean. 59 Accordingly, the words of Mark can only mean that the Pharisees eat not except they wash their hands to the wrist.

Allusion has already been made to what are called the first and the second or other waters. But, in their original meaning, these terms referred to something else than washing before and after meals. The hands were deemed capable of contracting Levitical defilement, which, in certain cases, might even render the whole body unclean. If the hands were defiled two affusions were required: the first, or first waters to remove the defilement, and the second or after waters to wash away the waters that had contracted the defilement of the hands. Accordingly, on the affusion of the first waters the hands were elevated, and the water made to run down at the wrist, while at the second waters the hands were depressed, so that the water might run off by the finger points and tips. By-and-by, it became the practice to have two affusions, whenever Terumah (prepared first-fruits) was to be eaten, and at last even when ordinary food was partaken of. The modern Jews have three affusions, and accompany the rite with a special benediction.

This idea of the defilement of the hands received a very curious application. According to one of the eighteen decrees, which, as we shall presently show, date before the time of Christ, the Roll of the Pentateuch in the Temple defiled all kinds of meat that touched it. The alleged reason for this decree was, that the priests were wont to keep the Terumah (preserved first-fruits) close to the Roll of the Law, on which account the latter was injured by mice. The Rabbinic ordinance was intended to avert this danger. To increase this precaution, it was next laid down as a principle, that all that renders the Terumah unfit, also defiles the hands. Hence, the Holy Scriptures defiled not only the food but the hands that touched them, and this not merely in the Temple, but anywhere, while it was also explained that the Holy Scriptures included the whole of the inspired writings the Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa. This gave rise to interesting discussions, whether the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, or Esther were to be regarded as defiling the hands that is, as part of the Canon. The ultimate decision was in favour of these books: all the holy writings defile the hands; the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes defile the hands. Nay, so far were sequences carried, that even a small portion of the Scriptures was declared to defile the hands if it contained eighty-five letters, because the smallest section (Parashah) in the Law consisted of exactly that number. Even the Phylacteries, because they contained portions of the sacred text, the very leather straps by which they were bound to the head and arm nay, the blank margins around the text of the Scriptures, or at the beginning and end of sections, were declared to defile the hands.

From this exposition it will be understood what importance the Scribes attached to the rite which the disciples had neglected. Yet at a later period Pharisaism, with characteristic ingenuity, found a way of evading even this obligation, by laying down what we would call the Popish principle of intention. It was ruled, that if anyone had performed the rite of handwashing in the morning, with intention that it should apply to the meals of the whole day, this was (with certain precautions) valid. But at the time of which we write the original ordinance was quite new. This touches one of the most important, but also most intricate questions in the history of Jewish dogmas. Jewish tradition traced, indeed, the command of washing the hands before eating at least of sacrificial offerings to Solomon, in acknowledgment of which the voice from heaven had been heard to utter Prov. xxiii. 15, and xxvii. 11. But the earliest trace of this custom occurs in a portion of the Sibylline Books, which dates from about 160 b.c., where we find an allusion to the practice of continually washing the hands, in connection with prayer and thanksgiving. It was reserved for Hillel and Shammai, the two great rival teachers and heroes of Jewish traditionalism, immediately before Christ, to fix the Rabbinic ordinance about the washing of hands, as previously described. This was one of the few points on which they were agreed, and hence emphatically a tradition of the Elders since these two teachers bear, in Rabbinic

writings, each the designation of the Elder. Then followed a period of developing traditionalism, and hatred of all that was Gentile. The tradition of the Elders was not yet so established as to command absolute and universal obedience, while the disputes of Hillel and Shammai, who seemed almost on principle to have taken divergent views on every question, must have disturbed the minds of many. We have an account of a stormy meeting between the two Schools, attended even with bloodshed. The story is so confusedly, and so differently told in the Jerusalem and in the Babylon Talmud, that it is difficult to form a clear view of what really occurred. Thus much, however, appears that the Shammaites had a majority of votes, and that eighteen decrees were passed in which the two Schools agreed, while on other eighteen questions (perhaps a round number) the Shammaites carried their views by a majority, and yet other eighteen remained undecided. Each of the Schools spoke of that day according to its party-results. The Shammaites (such as Rabbi Eliezer) extolled it as that on which the measure of the Law had been filled up to the full, while the Hillelites (like Rabbi Joshua) deplored, that on that day water had been poured into a vessel full of oil, by which some of the more precious fluid had been split. In general, the tendency of these eighteen decrees was of the most violently anti-Gentile, intolerant, and exclusive character. Yet such value was attached to them, that, while any other decree of the sages might be altered by a more grave, learned, and authoritative assembly, these eighteen decrees might not under any circumstances, be modified. But, besides these eighteen decrees, the two Schools on that day agreed in solemnly reenacting the decrees about the Book (the copy of the Law), and the hands. The Babylon Talmud notes that the latter decree, though first made by Hillel and Shammai, the Elders was not universally carried out until re-enacted by their colleges. It is important to notice, that this Decree dates from the time just before, and was finally carried into force in the very days of Christ. This fully accounts for the zeal which the Scribes displayed and explains the extreme minuteness of details with which Mark calls attention to this Pharisaic practice. For, it was an express Rabbinic principle that, if an ordinance had been only recently re-enacted, it might not be called in question or invalidated. Thus it will be seen, that the language employed by the Evangelist affords most valuable indirect confirmation of the trustworthiness of his Gospel, as not only showing intimate familiarity with the minutiae of Jewish tradition but giving prominence to what was then a present controversy and all this the more, that it needs intimate knowledge of that Law even fully to understand the language of the Evangelist. After this full exposition, it can only be necessary to refer in briefest manner to those other observances which orthodox Judaism had received to hold. They connect themselves with those eighteen decrees, intended to separate the Jew from all contact with Gentiles. Any contact with a heathen, even the touch of his dress, might involve such defilement, that on coming from the market the orthodox Jew would have to immerse. Only those who know the complicated arrangements about the defilements of vessels that were in any part, however small, hollow, as these are described in the Mishnah, can form an adequate idea of the painful minuteness with which every little detail is treated. Earthen vessels that had contracted impurity were to be broken; those of wood, horn, glass, or brass immersed; while, if vessels were bought of Gentiles, they were (as the case might be) to be immersed, put into boiling water, purged with fire, or at least polished.

Let us now try to realise the attitude of Christ in regard to these ordinances about purification, and seek to understand the reason of His bearing. That, in replying to the charge of the Scribes against His disciples, He neither vindicated their conduct, nor apologised for their breach of the Rabbinic ordinances, implied at least an attitude of indifference towards traditionalism. This is the more noticeable, since, as we know, the ordinances of the Scribes were declared more precious, and of more binding importance than those of Holy Scripture itself. But, even so, the question might arise, why Christ should have provoked such hostility by placing Himself in marked antagonism to what, after all, was indifferent in itself. The answer to this inquiry will require a disclosure of that aspect of Rabbinism which, from its painfulness, has hitherto been avoided. Yet it is necessary not only in itself, but as showing the infinite distance between Christ and the teaching of the Synagogue. It has already been told, how Rabbinism, in the madness of its self-exaltation, represented God as busying Himself

by day with the study of the Scriptures, and by night with that of the Mishnah; and how, in the heavenly Sanhedrin, over which the Almighty presided, the Rabbis sat in the order of their greatness, and the Halakhah was discussed, and decisions taken in accordance with it. Terrible as this sounds, it is not nearly all. Anthropomorphism of the coarsest kind is carried beyond the verge of profanity, when God is represented as spending the last three hours of every day in playing with Leviathan, and it is discussed, how, since the destruction of Jerusalem, God no longer laughs, but weeps, and that, in a secret place of His own, according to Jer. xiii. 17. Nay, Jer. xxv. 30 is profanely misinterpreted as implying that, in His grief over the destruction of the Temple, the Almighty roars like a lion in each of the three watches of the night. The two tears which He drops into the sea are the cause of earthquakes; although other, though not less coarsely realistic, explanations are offered of this phenomenon.

Sentiments like these, which occur in different Rabbinic writings, cannot be explained away by any ingenuity of allegorical interpretation. There are others, equally painful, as regards the anger of the Almighty, which, as kindling specially in the morning, when the sun-worshippers offer their prayers, renders it even dangerous for an individual Israelite to say certain prayers on the morning of New Year's Day, on which the throne is set for judgment. Such realistic anthropomorphism, combined with the extravagant ideas of the eternal and heavenly reality of Rabbinism and Rabbinic ordinances, help us to understand, how the Almighty was actually represented as saying prayers. This is proved from Is. lvi. 7. Sublime through the language of these prayers is, we cannot but notice that the all covering mercy, for which He is represented as pleading, is extended only to Israel. It is even more terrible to read of God wearing the Tallith, or that He puts on the Phylacteries, which is deduced from Is. lxii. 8. That this also is connected with the vain-glorious boasting of Israel, appears from the passage supposed to be enclosed in these Phylacteries. We know that in the ordinary Phylacteries these are: Exod. xiii. 1-10; 10-16; Deut. vi. 4-10; xi. 13-22. In the Divine Phylacteries they were: 1 Chron. xvii. 21; Deut. iv. 7-8; xxxiii. 29; iv. 34; xxvi. 19. Only one other point must be mentioned as connected with Purifications. To these also the Almighty is supposed to submit. Thus He was purified by Aaron, when He had contracted defilement by descending into Egypt. This is deduced from Lev. xvi. 16. Similarly, He immersed in a bath of fire, after the defilement of the burial of Moses.

These painful details, most reluctantly given, are certainly not intended to raise or strengthen ignorant prejudices against Israel, to whom blindness in part has truly happened; far less to encourage the wicked spirit of contempt and persecution which is characteristic, not of believing, but of negative theology. But they will explain, how Jesus could not have assumed merely an attitude of indifference towards traditionalism. For, even if such sentiments were represented as a later development, they are the outcome of a direction, of which that of Jesus was the very opposite, and to which it was antagonistic. But, if Jesus was not sent of God not the Messiah whence this wonderful contrast of highest spirituality in what He taught of God as our Father, and of His Kingdom as that over the hearts of all men? The attitude of antagonism to traditionalism was never more pronounced than in what He said in reply to the charge of neglect of the ordinance about the washing of hands. Here it must be remembered, that it was an admitted Rabbinic principle that, while the ordinances of Scripture required no confirmation, those of the Scribes needed such, and that no Halakhah (traditional law) might contradict Scripture. When Christ, therefore, next proceeded to show, that in a very important point nay, in many such like things' the Halakhah was utterly incompatible with Scripture, that, indeed, they made void the Word of God by their traditions which they had received, He dealt the heaviest blow to traditionalism. Rabbinism stood self-condemned; on its own showing, it was to be rejected as incompatible with the Word of God.

It is not so easy to understand, why the Lord should, out of many such things have selected in illustration the Rabbinic ordinance concerning vows, as in certain circumstances, contravening the fifth commandment. Of course, the Ten Words were the Holy of Holies of the Law; nor was there any obligation more rigidly observed indeed, carried in practice almost to the verge of absurdity 103 than that of honour to parents. In both respects, then, this was a specially vulnerable point, and it might

well be argued that, if in this Law Rabbinic ordinances came into conflict with the demands of God's Word, the essential contrariety between them must, indeed, be great. Still, we feel as if this were not all. Was there any special instance in view, in which the Rabbinic law about votive offerings had led to such abuse? Or was it only, that at this festive season the Galilean pilgrims would carry with them to Jerusalem their votive offerings? Or, could the Rabbinic ordinances about the sanctification of the hands have recalled to the Lord another Rabbinic application of the word hand in connection with votive offerings? It is at least sufficiently curious to find mention here, and it will afford the opportunity of briefly explaining, what to a candid reader may seem almost inexplicable in the Jewish legal practice to which Christ refers.

At the outset it must be admitted, that Rabbinism did not encourage the practice of promiscuous vowing. As we view it, it belongs, at best, to a lower and legal standpoint. In this respect Rabbi Akiba put it concisely, in one of his truest sayings: Vows are a hedge to abstinence. On the other hand, if regarded as a kind of return for benefits received, or as a promise attaching to our prayers, a vow unless it form part of our absolute and entire self-surrender partakes either of work-righteousness, or appears almost a kind of religious gambling. And so the Jewish proverb has it: In the hour of need a vow; in time of ease excess. Towards such work-righteousness and religious gambling the Eastern, and especially the Rabbinic Jew, would be particularly inclined. But even the Rabbis saw that its encouragement would lead to the profanation of what was holy; to rash, idle, and wrong vows; and to the worst and most demoralising kind of perjury, as inconvenient consequences made themselves felt. Of many sayings, condemnatory of the practice, one will suffice to mark the general feeling: He who makes a vow, even if he keeps it, deserves the name of wicked. Nevertheless, the practice must have attained terrible proportions, whether as regards the number of vows, the lightness with which they were made, or the kind of things which became their object. The larger part of the Mishnic Tractate on Vows (Nedarim, in eleven chapters) describes what expressions were to be regarded as equivalent to vows, and what would either legally invalidate and annul a vow, or leave it binding. And here we learn, that those who were of full age, and not in a position of dependence (such as wives) would make almost any kind of vows, such as that they would not lie down to sleep, not speak to their wives or children, not have intercourse with their brethren, and even things more wrong or foolish all of which were solemnly treated as binding on the conscience. Similarly, it was not necessary to use the express words of vowing. Not only the word Qorban, given to God', but any similar expression, such as Qonakh, or Qonam (the latter also a Phoenician expression, and probably an equivalent for Qeyam, let it be established) would suffice; the mention of anything laid upon the altar (though not of the altar itself), such as the wood, or the fire, would constitute a vow, nay, the repetition of the form which generally followed on the votive Qonam or Qorban had binding force, even though not preceded by these terms. Thus, if a man said: That I eat or taste of such a thing it constituted a vow, which bound him not to eat or taste it, because the common formula was: Qorban that I eat or drink, or do such a thing and the omission of the votive word did not invalidate a vow, if it were otherwise regularly expressed.

It is in explaining this strange provision, intended both to uphold the solemnity of vows, and to discourage the rash use of words, that the Talmud makes use of the word hand in a connection which we have supposed might, by association of ideas, have suggested to Christ the contrast between what the Bible and what the Rabbis regarded as sanctified hands and hence between the commands of God and the traditions of the Elders. For the Talmud explains that, when a man simply says: That (or if) I eat or taste such a thing it is imputed as a vow, and he may not eat or taste of it, because the hand is on the Qorban the mere touch of Qorban had sanctified it, and put it beyond his reach, just as if it had been laid on the altar itself. Here, then, was a contrast. According to the Rabbis, the touch of a common hand defiled God's good gift of meat, while the touch of a sanctified hand in rash or wicked words might render it impossible to give anything to a parent, and so involve the grossest breach of the Fifth Commandment! Such, according to Rabbinic Law, was the common and such the sanctifying touch of the hands and did such traditionalism not truly make void the Word of God'?

A few further particulars may serve to set this in clearer light. It must not be thought that the pronunciation of the votive word Qorban although meaning a gift or given to God necessarily dedicated a thing to the Temple . The meaning might simply be, and generally was, that it was to be regarded like Qorban that is, that in regard to the person or persons named, the thing termed was to be considered as if it were Qorban, laid on the altar, and put entirely out of their reach. For, although included under the one name, there were really two kinds of vows: those of consecration to God, and those of personal obligation and the latter were the most frequent.

To continue. The legal distinction between a vow, an oath, and the ban are clearly marked both in reason and in Jewish Law. The oath was an absolute, the vow a conditional undertaking their difference being marked even by this, that the language of a vow ran thus: That or if I or another do such a thing if I eat; while that of the oath was a simple affirmation or negation, I shall not eat. On the other hand, the ban might refer to one of three things: those dedicated for the use of the priesthood, those dedicated to God, or else to a sentence pronounced by the Sanhedrin. In any case it was not lawful to ban the whole of one's property, nor even one class of one's property (such as all one's sheep), nor yet what could not, in the fullest sense, be called one's property, such as a child, a Hebrew slave, or a purchased field, which had to be restored in the Year of Jubilee; while an inherited field, if banned, would go in perpetuity for the use of the priesthood. Similarly, the Law limited vows. Those intended to incite to an act (as on the part of one who sold a thing), or by way of exaggeration, or in cases of mistake, and, lastly, vows which circumstances rendered impossible, were declared null. To these four classes the Mishnah added those made to escape murder, robbery, and the exactions of the publican. If a vow was regarded as rash or wrong, attempts were made to open a door for repentance. Absolutions from a vow might be obtained before a sage or, in his absence, before three laymen, when all obligations became null and void. At the same time the Mishnah admits, that this power of absolving from vows was a tradition hanging, as it were, in the air, since it received little (or, as Maimonides puts it, no) support from Scripture.

There can be no doubt, that the words of Christ referred to such vows of personal obligation. By these a person might bind himself in regard to men or things, or else put that which was another's out of his own reach, or that which was his own out of the reach of another, and this as completely as if the thing or things had been Qorban, a gift given to God. Thus, by simply saying, Qorban or Qorban, that by which I might be profited by thee a person bound himself never to touch, taste, or have anything that belonged to the person so addressed. Similarly, by saying Qorban, that by which thou mightest be profited by me he would prevent the person so addressed from ever deriving any benefit from that which belonged to him. And so stringent was the ordinance that (almost in the words of Christ) it is expressly stated that such a vow was binding, even if what was vowed involved a breach of the Law. It cannot be denied that such vows, in regard to parents, would be binding, and that they were actually made. Indeed, the question is discussed in the Mishnah in so many words, whether honour of father and mother constituted a ground for invalidating a vow, and decided in the negative against a solitary dissenting voice. And if doubt should still exist, a case is related in the Mishnah, in which a father was thus shut out by the vow of his son from anything by which he might be profited by him. Thus the charge brought by Christ is in fullest accordance with the facts of the case. More than this, the manner in which it is put by Mark shows the most intimate knowledge of Jewish customs and law. For, the seemingly inappropriate addition to our Lord's mention of the Fifth Commandment of the words: He that revileth father or mother, he shall (let him) surely die is not only explained but vindicated by the common usage of the Rabbis, to mention along with a command the penalty attaching to its breach, so as to indicate the importance which Scripture attached to it. On the other hand, the words of Mark: Qorban (that is to say, gift to God)) that by which thou mightest be profited by me are a most exact transcription into Greek of the common formula of vowing, as given in the Mishnah and Talmud .

But Christ did not merely show the hypocrisy of the system of traditionalism in conjoining in the name of religion the greatest outward punctiliousness with the grossest breach of real duty. Never, alas!

was that aspect of prophecy, which in the present saw the future, more clearly vindicated than as the words of Isaiah to Israel now appeared in their final fulfilment: This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit, in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. But in thus setting forth for the first time the real character of traditionalism, and setting Himself in open opposition to its fundamental principles, the Christ enunciated also for the first time the fundamental principle of His own interpretation of the Law. That Law was not a system of externalism, in which outward things affected the inner man. It was moral and addressed itself to man as a moral being to his heart and conscience. As the spring of all moral action was within, so the mode of affecting it would be inward. Not from without inwards, but from within outwards: such was the principle of the new Kingdom, as setting forth the Law in its fulness and fulfilling it. There is nothing from without the man, that, entering into him, can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man, those are they that defile the man. Not only negatively, but positively, was this the fundamental principle of Christian practice in direct contrast to that of Pharisaic Judaism. It is in this essential contrariety of principle, rather than in any details, that the unspeakable difference between Christ and all contemporary teachers appears. Nor is even this all. For, the principle laid down by Christ concerning that which entereth from without and that which cometh from within, covers, in its full application, not only the principle of Christian liberty in regard to the Mosaic Law, but touches far deeper and permanent questions, affecting not only the Jew, but all men and to all times.

As we read it, the discussion, to which such full reference has been made, had taken place between the Scribes and the Lord, while the multitude perhaps stood aside. But when enunciating the grand principle of what constituted real defilement, He called to Him the multitude. It was probably while pursuing their way to Capernaum, when this conversation had taken place, that His disciples afterwards reported, that the Pharisees had been offended by that saying of His to the multitude. Even this implies the weakness of the disciples: that they were not only influenced by the good or evil opinion of these religious leaders of the people, but in some measure sympathised with their views. All this is quite natural, and as bringing before us real, not imaginary persons, so far evidential of the narrative. The answer which the Lord gave the disciples bore a twofold aspect: that of solemn warning concerning the inevitable fate of every plant which God had not planted, and that of warning concerning the character and issue of Pharisaic teaching, as being the leadership of the blind by the blind, 136 which must end in ruin to both.

But even so the words of Christ are represented in the Gospel as sounding strange and difficult to the disciples so truthful and natural is the narrative. But they were earnest, genuine men; and when they reached the home in --Capernaum--, Peter, as the most courageous of them, broke the reserve half of fear and half of reverence which, despite their necessary familiarity, seems to have subsisted between the Master and His disciples. And the existence of such reverential reserve in such circumstances appears, the more it is considered, yet another evidence of Christ's Divine Character, just as the implied allusion to it in the narrative is another undesigned proof of its truthfulness. And so Peter would seek for himself and his fellow-disciples an explanation of what still seemed to him only parabolic in the Master's teachings. He received it in the fullest manner. There was, indeed, one part even in the teaching of the Lord, which accorded with the higher views of the Rabbis. Those sins which Christ set before them as sins of the outward and inward man, and of what connects the two: our relation to others, were the outcome of evil thoughts. And this, at least, the Rabbis also taught; explaining, with much detail, how the heart was alike the source of strength and of weakness, of good and of evil thoughts, loved and hated, envied, lusted and deceived, proving each statement from Scripture. But never before could they have realised, that anything entering from without could not defile a man. Least of all could they perceive the final inference which Mark long afterwards derived from this teaching of the Lord: This He said, making all meats clean.

Yet another time had Peter to learn that lesson, when his resistance to the teaching of the vision of the sheet let down from heaven was silenced by this: What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. Not only the spirit of legalism, but the very terms common (in reference to the unwashed

hands) and making clean are the same. Nor can we wonder at this, if the vision of Peter was real, and not, as negative criticism would have it, invented so as to make an imaginary Peter Apostle of the Jews speak and act like Paul. On that hypothesis, the correspondence of thought and expression would seem, indeed, inexplicable; on the former, the Peter, who has had that vision, is telling through Mark the teaching that underlay it all, and, as he looked back upon it, drawing from it the inference which he understood not at the time: This He said, making all meats clean.

A most difficult lesson this for a Jew, and for one like Peter, nay, for us all, to learn. And still a third time had Peter to learn it, when, in his fear of the Judaisers from Jerusalem, he made that common which God had made clean, had care of the unwashed hands, but forgot that the Lord had made clean all meats. Terrible, indeed, must have been that contention which followed between Paul and Peter. Eighteen centuries have passed, and that fatal strife is still the ground of theological contention against the truth. Eighteen centuries, and within the Church also the strife still continues. Brethren sharply contend and are separated, because they will insist on that as of necessity which should be treated as of indifference: because of the not eating with unwashed hands, forgetful that He has made all meats clean to him who is inwardly and spiritually cleansed.

Chapter 32 The Great Crisis in Popular Feeling

The Last Discourses in the Synagogue of Capernaum Christ The Bread of Life; Will Ye Also Go Away?

(John 6:22-71.)

The narrative now returns to those who, on the previous evening, had, after the miraculous meal, been sent away to their homes. We remember, that this had been after an abortive attempt on their part to take Jesus by force and make Him their Messiah-King. We can understand that the effectual resistance of Jesus to their purpose not only weakened, but in great measure neutralised, the effect of the miracle which they had witnessed. In fact, we look upon this check as the first turning of the tide of popular enthusiasm. Let us bear in mind what ideas and expectations of an altogether external character those men connected with the Messiah of their dreams. At last, by some miracle more notable even than the giving of the Manna in the wilderness, enthusiasm has been raised to the highest pitch, and thousands were determined to give up their pilgrimage to the Passover, and then and there proclaim the Galilean Teacher Israel's King. If He were the Messiah, such was His rightful title. Why then did He so strenuously and effectually resist it? In ignorance of His real views concerning the Kingship, they would naturally conclude that it must have been from fear, from misgiving, from want of belief in Himself. At any rate, He could not be the Messiah, Who would not be Israel's King. Enthusiasm of this kind, once repressed, could never be kindled again. Henceforth there was continuous misunderstanding, doubt and defection among former adherents, growing into opposition and hatred unto death. Even to those who took not this position, Jesus, His Words and Works, were henceforth a constant mystery. And so it came, that the morning after the miraculous meal found the vast majority of those who had been fed, either in their homes or on their pilgrim-way to the Passover at Jerusalem. Only comparatively few came back to seek Him, where they had eaten bread at His Hand. And even to them, as the after-conversation shows, Jesus was a mystery. They could not disbelieve, and yet they could not believe; and they sought both a sign to guide, and an explanation to give them its understanding. Yet out of them was there such selection of grace, that all that the Father had given would reach Him, and that they who, by a personal act of believing choice and by determination of conviction, would come, should in no wise be rejected of Him. It is this view of the mental and moral state of those who, on the morning after the meal, came to seek

Jesus, which alone explains the question and answers of the interview at Capernaum. As we read it: the day following the multitude which stood on the other (the eastern) side of the sea saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples. But of two facts they were cognizant. They knew that, on the evening before, only one boat had come over, bringing Jesus and His disciples; and that Jesus had not returned in it with His disciples, for they had seen them depart, while Jesus remained to dismiss the people. In these circumstances they probably imagined, that Christ had returned on foot by land, being, of course, ignorant of the miracle of that night. But the wind which had been contrary to the disciples, had also driven over to the eastern shore a number of fishing-boats from Tiberias (and this is one of the undesigned confirmations of the narrative). These they now hired, and came to Capernaum, making inquiry for Jesus. Whether on that Friday afternoon they went to meet Him on His way from Gennesaret (which the wording of John vi. 25 makes likely), or awaited His arrival at Capernaum, is of little importance. Similarly, it is difficult to determine whether the conversation and outlined address of Christ took place on one or partly on several occasions: on the Friday afternoon or Sabbath morning, or only on the Sabbath. All that we know for certain is, that the last part (at any rate) was spoken in Synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. It has been well observed, that there are evident breaks after verse 40 and verse 51. Probably the succession of events may have been that part of what is here recorded by John had taken place when those from across the Lake had first met Jesus; part on the way to, and entering, the Synagogue; and part as what He spoke in His Discourse, and then after the defection of some of His former disciples. But we can only suggest such an arrangement, since it would have been quite consistent with Jewish practice, that the greater part should have taken place in the Synagogue itself, the Jewish questions and objections representing either an irregular running commentary on His Words, or expressions during breaks in, or at the conclusion of, His teaching.

This, however, is a primary requirement, that, what Christ is reported to have spoken, should appear suited to His hearers: such as would appeal to what they knew, such also as they could understand. This must be kept in view, even while admitting that the Evangelist wrote his Gospel in the light of much later and fuller knowledge, and for the instruction of the Christian Church, and that there may be breaks and omissions in the reported, as compared with the original Discourse, which, if supplied, would make its understanding much easier to a Jew. On the other hand, we have to bear in mind all the circumstances of the case. The Discourse in question was delivered in the city, which had been the scene of so many of Christ's great miracles, and the centre of His teaching, and in the Synagogue, built by the good Centurion, and of which Jairus was the chief ruler. Here we have the outward and inward conditions for even the most advanced teaching of Christ. Again, it was delivered under twofold moral conditions, to which we may expect the Discourse of Christ to be adapted. For, first, it was after that miraculous feeding which had raised the popular enthusiasm to the highest pitch, and also after that chilling disappointment of their Judaistic hopes in Christ's utmost resistance to His Messianic proclamation. They now came seeking for Jesus in every sense of the word. They knew not what to make of those, to them, contradictory and irreconcilable facts; they came, because they did eat of the loaves, without seeing in them signs. And therefore they came for such a sign as they could perceive, and for such teaching in interpretation of it as they could understand. They were outwardly by what had happened prepared for the very highest teaching, to which the preceding events had led up, and therefore they must receive such, if any. But they were not inwardly prepared for it, and therefore they could not understand it. Secondly, and in connection with it, we must remember that two high points had been reached by the people, that Jesus was the Messiah-King; by the ship's company, that He was the Son of God. However imperfectly these truths may have been apprehended, yet the teaching of Christ, if it was to be progressive, must start from them and then point onwards and upwards. In this expectation we shall not be disappointed. And if, by the side of all this, we shall find allusions to peculiarly Jewish thoughts and views, these will not only confirm the Evangelic narrative, but furnish additional evidence of the Jewish authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

1. The question: Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? with which they from the eastern shore greeted

Jesus, seems to imply that they were perplexed about, and that some perhaps had heard a vague rumour of the miracle of His return to the western shore. It was the beginning of that unhealthy craving for the miraculous which the Lord had so sharply to reprove. In His own words: they sought Him not because they saw signs but because they ate of the loaves and, in their coarse love for the miraculous, were filled. What brought them, was not that they had discerned either the higher meaning of that miracle, or the Son of God, but those carnal Judaistic expectancies which had led them to proclaim Him King. What they waited for, was a Kingdom of God not in righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost, but in meat and drink a kingdom with miraculous wilderness-banquets to --Israel--, and coarse miraculous triumphs over the Gentiles. Not to speak of the fabulous Messianic banquet which a sensuous realism expected, or of the achievements for which it looked, every figure in which prophets had clothed the brightness of those days was first literalised, and then exaggerated, till the most glorious poetic descriptions became the most repulsively incongruous caricatures of spiritual Messianic expectancy. The fruit-trees were every day, or at least every week or two, to yield their riches, the fields their harvests; the grain was to stand like palm trees, and to be reaped and winnowed without labour. Similar blessings were to visit the vine; ordinary trees would bear like fruit trees, and every produce, of every clime, would be found in Palestine in such abundance and luxuriance as only the wildest imagination could conceive.

Such were the carnal thoughts about the Messiah and His Kingdom of those who sought Jesus because they ate of the loaves, and were filled. What a contrast between them and the Christ, as He pointed them from the search for such meat to work for the meat which He would give them not a merely Jewish Messiah, but as the son of Man. And yet, in uttering this strange truth, Jesus could appeal to something they knew when He added, for Him the Father hath sealed, even God. The words, which seem almost inexplicable in this connection, become clear when we remember that this was a well-known Jewish expression. According to the Rabbis, the seal of God was Truth the three letters of which this word is composed in Hebrew being, as was significantly pointed out, respectively the first, the middle, and the last letters of the alphabet. Thus the words of Christ would convey to His hearers that for the real meat, which would endure to eternal life for the better Messianic banquet they must come to Him, because God had impressed upon Him His own seal of truth, and so authenticated His Teaching and Mission.

In passing, we mark this as a Jewish allusion, which only a Jewish writer (not an Ephesian Gospel) would have recorded. But it is by no means the only one. It almost seems like a sudden gleam of light as if they were putting their hand to this Divine Seal, when they now ask Him what they must do, in order to work the Works of God? Yet strangely refracted seems this ray of light, when they connect the Works of God with their own doing. And Christ directed them, as before, only more clearly, to Himself. To work the Works of God they must not do, but believe in Him Whom God had sent. Their twofold error consisted in imagining, that they could work the Works of God, and this by some doing of their own. On the other hand, Christ would have taught them that these Works of God were independent of man, and that they would be achieved through man's faith in the Mission of the Christ.

2. As it impresses itself on our minds, what now follows took place at a somewhat different time perhaps on the way to the Synagogue. It is a remarkable circumstance, that among the ruins of the Synagogue of Capernaum the lintel has been discovered, and that it bears the device of a pot of manna, ornamented with a flowing pattern of vine leaves and clusters of grapes. 19 Here then were the outward emblems, which would connect themselves with the Lord's teaching on that day. The miraculous feeding of the multitude in the desert place the evening before, and the Messianic thoughts which clustered around it, would naturally suggest to their minds remembrance of the manna. That manna, which was Angels food, distilled (as they imagined) from the upper light, the dew from above miraculous food, of all manner of taste, and suited to every age, according to the wish or condition of him who ate it, but bitterness to Gentile palates they expected the Messiah to bring again from heaven. For, all that the first deliverer Moses had done, the second Messiah would also do. And here, over their Synagogue, was the pot of manna symbol of what God had done, earnest of

what the Messiah would do: that pot of manna, which was now among the things hidden, but which Elijah, when he came, would restore again!

Here, then, was a real sign. In their view the events of yesterday must lead up to some such sign, if they had any real meaning. They had been told to believe on Him, as the One authenticated by God with the seal of Truth, and Who would give them meat to eternal life. By what sign would Christ corroborate His assertion, that they might see and believe? What work would He do to vindicate His claim? Their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderness. To understand the reasoning of the Jews, implied but not fully expressed, as also the answer of Jesus, it is necessary to bear in mind (what forms another evidence of the Jewish authorship of the Fourth Gospel), that it was the oft and most anciently expressed opinion that, although God had given them this bread out of heaven, yet it was given through the merits of Moses, and ceased with his death. This the Jews had probably in view, when they asked: What werkest Thou?; and this was the meaning of Christ's emphatic assertion, that it was not Moses who gave Israel that bread. And then by what, with all reverence, may still be designated a peculiarly Jewish turn of reasoning such as only those familiar with Jewish literature can fully appreciate (and which none but a Jewish reporter would have inserted in his Gospel) the Saviour makes quite different, yet to them familiar, application of the manna. Moses had not given it his merits had not procured it but His Father gave them the true bread out of heaven. For as He explained, the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Again, this very Rabbinic tradition, which described in such glowing language the wonders of that manna, also further explained its other and real meaning to be, that if Wisdom said, Eat of my bread and drink of my wine it indicated that the manna and the miraculous water-supply were the sequence of Israel's receiving the Law and the Commandments for the real bread from heaven was the Law.

It was an appeal which the Jews understood, and to which they could not but respond. Yet the mood was brief. As Jesus, in answer to the appeal that He would evermore give them this bread, once more directed them to Himself from works of men to the Works of God and to faith the passing gleam of spiritual hope had already died out, for they had seen Him and yet did not believe.

With these words of mingled sadness and judgment, Jesus turned away from His questioners. The solemn sayings which now followed could not have been spoken to, and they would not have been understood by, the multitude. And accordingly we find that, when the conversation of the Jews is once more introduced, it takes up the thread where it had been broken off, when Jesus spake of Himself as the Bread Which had come down from heaven. Had they heard what, in our view, Jesus spake only to His disciples, their objections would have been to more than merely the incongruity of Christ's claim to have come down from heaven.

3. Regarding these words of Christ, then, as addressed to the disciples, there is really nothing in them beyond their standpoint, though they open views of the far horizon. They had the experience of the raising of the young man at Nain, and there, at Capernaum, of Jairus daughter. Besides, believing that Jesus was the Messiah, it might perhaps not be quite strange nor new to them as Jews although not commonly received that He would at the end of the world raise the pious dead. Indeed, one of the names given to the Messiah that of Yinnon, according to Ps. lxxii. 17 has by some been derived from this very expectancy. Again, He had said, that it was not any Law, but His Person, that was the bread which came down from heaven, and gave life, not to Jews only, but unto the world and they had seen Him and believed not. But none the less would the loving purpose of God be accomplished in the totality of His true people, and its joyous reality be experienced by every individual among them: All that (the total number, pan o) which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me (shall reach Me), and him that cometh unto Me (the coming one to Me) I will not cast out outside. What follows is merely the carrying out in all directions, and to its fullest consequences, of this twofold fundamental principle.

The totality of the God-given would really reach Him, despite all hindrances, for the object of His Coming was to do the Will of His Father; and those who came would not be cast outside, for the Will of Him that had sent Him, and which He had come to do, was that of the all which He has given Him, He should not lose anything out of this, but raise it up in the last day. Again, the totality the all would

reach Him, since it was the Will of Him that sent Him that everyone (paV) who intently looketh at the Son, and believeth on Him, should have eternal life; and the coming ones would not be cast outside, since this was His undertaking and promise as the Christ in regard to each: And raise him up will I at the last day.

Although these wonderful statements reached in their full meaning far beyond the present horizon of His disciples, and even to the utmost bounds of later revelation and Christian knowledge, there is nothing in them which could have seemed absolutely strange or unintelligible to those who heard them. Given belief in the Messiahship of Jesus and His Mission by the Father; given experience of what He had done, and perhaps, to a certain extent, Jewish expectancy of what the Messiah would do in the last day; and all this directed or corrected by the knowledge concerning His work which His teaching had imparted, and the words were intelligible and most suitable, even though they would not convey to them all that they mean to us. If so seemingly incongruous an illustration might be used, they looked through a telescope that was not yet drawn out, and saw the same objects, through quite diminutively and far otherwise than we, as gradually the hand of Time has drawn out fully that through which both they and we, who believe, intently gaze on the Son.

4. What now follows is again spoken to the Jews and may have occurred just as they were entering the Synagogue. To those spiritually unenlightened, the point of difficulty seemed, how Christ could claim to be the Bread come down from heaven. Making the largest allowance, His known parentage and early history forbade anything like a literal interpretation of His Words. But this inability to understand, ever brings out the highest teaching of Christ. We note the analogous fact, and even the analogous teaching, in the case of Nicodemus. Only, his was the misunderstanding of ignorance, theirs of wilful resistance to His Manifestation; and so the tone towards them was other than to the Rabbi.

Yet we also mark, that what Jesus now spake to the Jews was the same in substance, though different in application, from what He had just uttered to the disciples. This, not merely in regard to the Messianic prediction of the Resurrection, but even in what He pronounced as the judgment on their murmuring. The words: No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him present only the converse aspect of those to the disciples: All that which the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out. For, far from being a judgment on, it would have been an excuse of, Jewish unbelief, and, indeed, entirely discordant with all Christ's teaching, if the inability to come were regarded as other than personal and moral, springing from man's ignorance and opposition to spiritual things. No man can come to the Christ such is the condition of the human mind and heart, that coming to Christ as a disciple is, not an outward, but an inward, not a physical, but a moral impossibility except the Father draw him. And this, again, not in the sense of any constraint, but in that of the personal, moral, loving influence and revelation, to which Christ afterwards refers when He saith: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself.

Nor did Jesus, even while uttering these high, entirely un-Jewish truths, forget that He was speaking them to Jews. The appeal to their own Prophets was the more telling, that Jewish tradition also applied these two prophecies (Is. liv. 13; Jer. xxxi. 34) to the teaching by God in the Messianic Age. But the explanation of the manner and issue of God's teaching was new: Everyone that hath heard from the Father, and learned, cometh unto Me. And this, not by some external or realistic contact with God, such as they regarded that of Moses in the past, or expected for themselves in the latter days; only He Which is from God, He hath seen the Father. But even this might sound general and without exclusive reference to Christ. So, also, might this statement seem: He that believeth hath eternal life. Not so the final application, in which the subject was carried to its ultimate bearing, and all that might have seemed general or mysterious plainly set forth. The Personality of Christ was the Bread of Life: I am the Bread of Life. The Manna had not been bread of life, for those who ate it had died, their carcasses had fallen in the wilderness. Not so in regard to this, the true Bread from heaven. To share in that Food was to have everlasting life, a life which the sin and death of unbelief and judgment

would not cut short, as it had that of them who had eaten the Manna and died in the wilderness. It was another and a better Bread which came from heaven in Christ, and another, better, and deathless life which was connected with it: the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world.

5. These words, so deeply significant to us, as pointing out the true meaning of all His teaching, must, indeed, have sounded most mysterious. Yet the fact that they strove about their meaning shows, that they must have had some glimmer of apprehension that they bore on His self-surrender, or, as they might view it, His martyrdom. This last point is set forth in the concluding Discourse, which we know to have been delivered in the Synagogue, whether before, during, or after, His regular Sabbath address. It was not a mere martyrdom for the life of the world, in which all who benefitted by it would share but personal fellowship with Him. Eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man, such was the necessary condition of securing eternal life. It is impossible to mistake the primary reference of these words to our personal application of His Death and Passion to the deepest need and hunger of our souls; most difficult, also, to resist the feeling that, secondarily, they referred to that Holy Feast which shows forth that Death and Passion, and is to all time its remembrance, symbol, seal, and fellowship. In this, also, has the hand of History drawn out the telescope; and as we gaze through it, every sentence and word sheds light upon the Cross and light from the Cross, carrying to us this twofold meaning: His Death, and its Celebration in the great Christian Sacrament.

6. But to them that heard it, nay even to many of His disciples, this was an hard saying. Who could bear it? For it was a thorough disenchantment of all their Judaic illusions, an entire upturning of all their Messianic thoughts, and that, not merely to those whose views were grossly carnal, but even to many who had hitherto been drawn closer to Him. The meat and drink from heaven which had the Divine seal of truth were, according to Christ's teaching, not the Law nor yet Israel's privileges, but fellowship with the Person of Jesus in that state of humbleness (the Son of Joseph), nay, or martyrdom, which His words seemed to indicate, My Flesh is the true meat, and My Blood is the true drink; and what even this fellowship secured, consisted only in abiding in Him and He in them; or, as they would understand it, in inner communion with Him, and in sharing His condition and views. Truly, this was a totally different Messiah and Messianic Kingdom from what they either conceived or wished.

Though they spake it not, this was the rock of offence over which they stumbled and fell. And Jesus read their thoughts. How unfit were they to receive all that was yet to happen in connection with the Christ how unprepared for it! If they stumbled at this, what when they came to contemplate the far more mysterious and un-Jewish facts of the Messiah's Crucifixion and Ascension! Truly, not outward following, but only inward and spiritual life-quickening could be of profit even in the case of those who heard the very Words of Christ, which were spirit and life. Thus it again appeared, and most fully, that, morally speaking, it was absolutely impossible to come to Him, even if His Words were heard, except under the gracious influence from above.

And so this was the great crisis in the History of the Christ. We have traced the gradual growth and development of the popular movement, till the murder of the Baptist stirred popular feeling to its inmost depth. With his death it seemed as if the Messianic hope, awakened by his preaching and testimony to Christ, were fading from view. It was a terrible disappointment, not easily borne. Now must it be decided, whether Jesus was really the Messiah. His Works, notwithstanding what the Pharisees said, seemed to prove it. Then let it appear; let it come, stroke upon stroke each louder and more effective than the other till the land rang with the shout of victory and the world itself re-echoed it. And so it seemed. That miraculous feeding that wilderness-cry of Hosanna to the Galilean King-Messiah from thousands of Galilean voices what were they but its beginning? All the greater was the disappointment: first, in the repression of the movement so to speak, the retreat of the Messiah, His voluntary abdication, rather, His defeat; then, next day, the incongruousness of a King, Whose few unlearned followers, in their ignorance and un-Jewish neglect of most sacred ordinances, outraged every Jewish feeling, and whose conduct was even vindicated by their Master in a general

attack on all traditionalism, that basis of Judaism as it might be represented, to the contempt of religion and even of common truthfulness in the denunciation of solemn vows! This was not the Messiah Whom the many nay, Whom almost any would own.

Here, then, we are at the parting of the two ways; and, just because it was the hour of decision, did Christ so clearly set forth the highest truths concerning Himself, in opposition to the views which the multitude entertained about the Messiah. The result was yet another and a sorer defection. Upon this many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Nay, the searching trial reached even unto the hearts of the Twelve. Would they also go away? It was an anticipation of Gethsemane its first experience. But one thing kept them true. It was the experience of the past. This was the basis of their present faith and allegiance. They could not go back to their old past; they must cleave to Him. So Peter spake it in name of them all: Lord, to whom shall we go? Words of Eternal Life hast Thou! Nay, and more than this, as the result of what they had learned: And we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God. It is thus, also, that many of us, whose thoughts may have been sorely tossed, and whose foundations terribly assailed, may have found our first resting-place in the assured, unassailable spiritual experience of the past. Whither can we go for Words of Eternal Life, if not to Christ? If He fails us, then all hope of the Eternal is gone. But He has the Words of Eternal life and we believed when they first came to us; nay, we know that He is the Holy One of God. And this conveys all that faith needs for further learning. The rest will He show, when He is transfigured in our sight.

But of these Twelve Christ knew one to be a devil' like that Angel, fallen from highest height to lowest depth. The apostasy of Judas had already commenced in his heart. And, the greater the popular expectancy and disappointment had been, the greater the reaction and the enmity that followed. The hour of decision was past, and the hand on the dial pointed to the hour of His Death.

Chapter 33 Jesus and the Syro-Phoenician Woman

(Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.)

The purpose of Christ to withdraw His disciples from the excitement of Galilee, and from what might follow the execution of the Baptist, had been interrupted by the events at Bethsaida-Julias, but it was not changed. On the contrary, it must have been intensified. That wild, popular outburst, which had almost forced upon Him a Jewish Messiah-Kingship; the discussion with the Jerusalem Scribes about the washing of hands on the following day; the Discourses of the Sabbath, and the spreading disaffection, defection, and opposition which were its consequences all pointed more than ever to the necessity of a break in the publicity of His Work, and to withdrawal from that part of Galilee. The nearness of the Sabbath, and the circumstance that the Capernaum-boat lay moored on the shore of Bethsaida had obliged Him, when withdrawing from that neighbourhood, to return to Capernaum. And there the Sabbath had to be spent in what manner we know. But as soon as its sacred rest was past, the journey was resumed. For the reasons already explained, it extended much further than any other, and into regions which, we may venture to suggest, would not have been traversed but for the peculiar circumstances of the moment.

A comparatively short journey would bring Jesus and His companions from Capernaum into the parts or, as Mark more specifically calls them, the borders of Tyre and Sidon . At that time this district extended, north of Galilee, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. But the event about to be related occurred, as all circumstances show, not within the territory of Tyre and Sidon, but on its borders, and within the limits of the Land of Israel. If any doubt could attach to the objects which determined Christ's journey to those parts, it would be removed by the circumstance that Matthew tells us, He withdrew thither, while Mark notes that He entered into an house, and would have no man know it.

That house in which Jesus sought shelter and privacy would, of course, be a Jewish home; and, that it was within the borders of Israel, is further evidenced by the notice of Matthew, that the Canaanitish woman who sought His help came out from those borders' that is, from out the Tyro-Sidonian district into that Galilean border where Jesus was.

The whole circumstances seem to point to more than a night's rest in that distant home. Possibly, the two first Passover-days may have been spent here. If the Saviour had left Capernaum on the Sabbath evening, or the Sunday morning, He may have reached that home on the borders before the Paschal Eve, and the Monday and Tuesday may have been the festive Paschal days, on which sacred rest was enjoined. This would also give an adequate motive for such a sojourn in that house, as seems required by the narrative of Mark. According to that Evangelist, Jesus would have no man know His Presence in that place, but He could not be hid. Manifestly, this could not apply to the rest of one night in a house. According to the same Evangelist, the fame of His Presence spread into the neighbouring district of Tyre and Sidon', and reached the mother of the demonised child, upon which she went from her home into Galilee to apply for help to Jesus. All this implies a stay of two or three days. And with this also agrees the after-complaint of the disciples: Send her away, for she crieth after us. As the Saviour apparently received the woman in the house, it seems that she must have followed some of the disciples, entreating their help or intercession in a manner that attracted the attention which, according to the will of Jesus, they would fain have avoided, before, in her despair, she ventured into the Presence of Christ within the house.

All this resolves into a higher harmony those small seeming discrepancies, which negative criticism had tried to magnify into contradictions. It also adds graphic details to the story. She who now sought His help was, as Matthew calls her, from the Jewish standpoint, a Canaanitish woman by which term a Jew would designate a native of Phoenicia, or, as Mark calls her, a Syro-Phoenician (to distinguish her country from Lybo-Phoenicia), and a Greek' that is, a heathen. But, we can understand how she who, as Bengel says, made the misery of her little child her own, would, on hearing of the Christ and His mighty deed, seek His help with the most intense earnestness, and that, in so doing, she would approach Him with lowliest reverence, falling at His Feet. But what in the circumstances seems so peculiar, and, in our view, furnishes the explanation of the Lord's bearing towards this woman, is her mode of addressing Him: O Lord, Thou Son of David! This was the most distinctively Jewish appellation of the Messiah; and yet it is emphatically stated of her, that she was a heathen. Tradition has preserved a few reported sayings of Christ, of which that about to be quoted seems, at least, quite Christ-like. It is reported that, having seen a man working on the Sabbath, He said: "O man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and art a transgressor of the Law." The same principle applied to the address of this woman only that, in what followed, Christ imparted to her the knowledge needful to make her blessed.

Spoken by a heathen, these words were an appeal, not to the Messiah of Israel, but to an Israelitish Messiah for David had never reigned over her or her people. The title might be most rightfully used, if the promises to David were fully and spiritually apprehended not otherwise. If used without that knowledge, it was an address by a stranger to a Jewish Messiah, Whose works were only miracles, and not also and primarily signs. Now this was exactly the error of the Jews which Jesus had encountered and combated, alike when He resisted the attempt to make Him King, in His reply to the Jerusalem Scribes, and in His Discourses at --Capernaum--. To have granted her the help she so entreated, would have been, as it were, to reverse the whole of His Teaching, and to make His works of healing merely works of power. For, it will not be contended that this heathen woman had full spiritual knowledge of the worldwide bearing of the Davidic promises, or of the world embracing designation of the Messiah as the Son of David. In her mouth, then, it meant something to which Christ could not have yielded. And yet He could not refuse her petition. And so He first taught her, in such manner as she could understand that which she needed to know, before she could approach Him in such manner the relation of the heathen to the Jewish world, and of both to the Messiah, and then He gave her what she asked.

It is this, we feel convinced, which explains all. It could not have been, that from His human standpoint He first kept silence, His deep tenderness and sympathy forbidding Him to speak, while the normal limitation of His Mission forbade Him to act as she sought. Such limitations could not have existed in His mind; nor can we suppose such an utter separation of His Human from His Divine consciousness in His Messianic acting. And we recoil from the opposite explanation, which supposes Christ to have either tried the faith of the woman, or else spoken with a view to drawing it out. We shrink from the idea of anything like an afterthought, even for a good purpose, on the part of the Divine Saviour. All such afterthoughts are, to our thinking, incompatible with His Divine Purity and absolute rectitude. God does not make us good by a device and that is a very wrong view of trials, or of delayed answers to prayer, which men sometimes take. Nor can we imagine, that the Lord would have made such cruel trial of the poor agonised woman, or played on her feelings, when the issue would have been so unspeakable terrible, if in her weakness she had failed. There is nothing analogous in the case of this poor heathen coming to petition, and being tried by being told that she could not be heard, because she belonged to the dogs, not the children, and the trial of Abraham, who was a hero of faith, and had long walked with God. In any case, on any of the views just combated, the Words of Jesus would bear a needless and inconceivable harshness, which grates on all our feelings concerning Him. The Lord does not afflict willingly, nor try needlessly, nor disguise His loving thoughts and purposes, in order to bring about some effect in us. He needs not such means; and, with reverence be it said, we cannot believe that He ever uses them.

But, viewed as the teaching of Christ to this heathen concerning Israel's Messiah, all becomes clear, even in the very brief reports of the Evangelists, of which that by Matthew reads like that of one present, that of Mark rather like that of one who relates what he has heard from another (Peter). She had spoken, but Jesus had answered her not a word. When the disciples in some measure, probably, still sharing the views of this heathen, that he was the Jewish Messiah without, indeed, interceding for her, asked that she might be sent away, because she was troublesome to them, He replied, that His Mission was only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This was absolutely true, as regarded His Work while upon earth; and true, in every sense, as we keep in view the world-wide bearing of the Davidic reign and promises, and the real relation between --Israel-- and the world. Thus baffled, as it might seem, she cried no longer Son of David but, Lord, help me. It was then that the special teaching came in the manner she could understand. If it were as the Son of David that He was entreated if the heathen woman as such applied to the Jewish Messiah as such, what, in the Jewish view, were the heathens but dogs and what would be fellowship with them, but to cast to the dogs house-dogs, it may be what should have been the children's bread? And, certainly, no expression more common in the mouth of the Jews, than that which designated the heathens as dogs. Most harsh as it was, as the outcome of national pride and Jewish self-assertion, yet in a sense it was true, that those within were the children, and those without dogs. Only, who were they within and who they without? What made a child whose was the bread and what characterised the dog that was without'?

Two lessons did she learn with that instinct-like rapidity which Christ's personal Presence and it alone seemed ever and again to call forth, just as the fire which fell from heaven consumed the sacrifice of Elijah. Yea, Lord it is as Thou sayest: heathenism stands related to Judaism as the house-dogs to the children, and it were not meet to rob the children of their bread in order to give it to dogs. But Thine own words show, that such would not now be the case. If they are house-dogs, then they are the Master's, and under His table, and when He breaks the bread to the children, in the breaking of it the crumbs must fall all around. As Matthew puts it: The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table; as Mark puts it: The dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. Both versions present different aspects of the same truth. Heathenism may be like the dogs, when compared with the children's place and privileges; but He is their Master still, and they under His table; and when He breaks the bread there is enough and to spare for them even under the table they eat of the children's crumbs.

But in so saying she was no longer under the table but had sat down at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was partaker of the children's bread. He was no longer to her the Jewish Messiah, but truly the Son of David. She now understood what she prayed, and she was a daughter of Abraham. And what had taught her all this was faith in His Person and Work, as not only just enough for the Jews, but enough and to spare for all children at the table and dogs under it; that in and with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, all nations were blessed in Israel's King and Messiah. And so it was, that the Lord said it: O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. Or, as Mark puts it, not quoting the very sound of the Lord's words, but their impression upon Peter: For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And her daughter was healed from that hour. And she went away unto her house, and found her daughter prostrate [indeed] upon the bed, and [but] the demon gone out.

To us there is in this history even more than the solemn interest of Christ's compassion and mighty Messianic working, or the lessons of His teaching. We view it in connection with the scenes of the previous few days, and see how thoroughly it accords with them in spirit, thus recognising the deep internal unity of Christ's Words and Works, where least, perhaps, we might have looked for such harmony. And again we view it in its deeper bearing upon, and lessons to, all times. To how many, not only of all nations and conditions, but in all states of heart and mind, nay, in the very lowest depths of conscious guilt and alienation from God, must this have brought unspeakable comfort, the comfort of truth, and the comfort of His Teaching. Be it so, an outcast, dog; not at the table, but under the table. Still we are at His Feet; it is our Master's Table; He is our Master; and, as He breaks the children's bread, it is of necessity that the children's crumbs fall to us, enough, quite enough, and to spare. Never can we be outside His reach, nor of that of His gracious care, and of sufficient provision to eternal life.

Yet this lesson also must we learn, that as heathens we may not call on Him as David's Son till we know why we so call Him. If there can be no despair, no being cast out by Him, no absolute distance that hopelessly separates from His Person and Provision, there must be no presumption, no forgetfulness of the right relation, no expectancy of magic-miracles, no viewing of Christ as a Jewish Messiah. We must learn it, and painfully, first by His silence, then by this, that He is only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, what we are and where we are that we may be prepared for the grace of God and the gift of grace. All men Jews and Gentiles, children and dogs' are as before Christ and God equally undeserving and equally sinners, but those who have fallen deep can only learn that they are sinners by learning that they are great sinners, and will only taste of the children's bread when they have felt, Yea, Lord for even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs which fall from their Master's table.

Chapter 34 Miracles among a Semi-Heathen Population

(Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37; Luke 8:22-26; Matthew 11:27-31.)

If even the brief stay of Jesus in that friendly Jewish home by the borders of Tyre could not remain unknown, the fame of the healing of the Syro-Phoenician maiden would soon have rendered impossible that privacy and retirement, which had been the chief object of His leaving Capernaum. Accordingly, when the two Paschal days were ended, He resumed His journey, extending it far beyond any previously undertaken, perhaps beyond what had been originally intended. The borders of Palestine proper, though not of what the Rabbis reckoned as belonging to it, were passed. Making a long circuit through the territory of Sidon, He descended probably through one of the passes of the Hermon range into the country of the Tetrarch Philip. Thence He continued through the midst of the borders of Decapolis till He once more reached the eastern, or south-eastern, shore of the Lake of

Galilee. It will be remembered that the Decapolis', or confederacy of the Ten Cities was wedged in between the Tetrarchies of Philip and Antipas. It embraced ten cities, although that was not always their number, and their names are variously enumerated. Of these cities Hippos, on the southeastern shore of the Lake, was the most northern, and Philadelphia, the ancient Rabbath-Ammon, the most southern. Scythopolis, the ancient Beth-Shean, with its district, was the only one of them on the western bank of the Jordan. This extensive Ten Cities district was essentially heathen territory. Their ancient monuments show, in which of them Zeus, Astarte, and Athene, or else Artemis, Hercules, Dionysos, Demeter, or other Grecian divinities, were worshipped. Their political constitution was that of the free Greek cities. They were subject only to the Governor of Syria, and formed part of Coele-Syria, in contradistinction to Syro-Phoenicia. Their privileges dated from the time of Pompey, from which also they afterwards reckoned their era.

It is important to keep in view that, although Jesus was now within the territory of ancient Israel, the district and all the surroundings were essentially heathen, although in closest proximity to, and intermingling with, that which was purely Jewish. Matthew gives only a general description of Christ's activity there, concluding with a notice of the impression produced on those who witnessed His mighty deeds, as leading them to glorify the God of Israel. This, of course, confirms the impression that the scene is laid among a population chiefly heathen, and agrees with the more minute notice of the locality in the Gospel of Mark. One special instance of miraculous healing is recorded in the latter, not only from its intrinsic interest, but perhaps, also, as in some respects typical.

1. Among those brought to Him was one deaf, whose speech had, probably in consequence of this, been so affected as practically to deprive him of its power. This circumstance, and that he is not spoken of as so afflicted from his birth, leads us to infer that the affection was as not unfrequently the result of disease, and not congenital. Remembering, that alike the subject of the miracle and they who brought him were heathens, but in constant and close contact with Jews, what follows is vividly true to life. The entreaty to lay His Hand upon him was heathen, and yet semi-Jewish also. Quite peculiar it is, when the Lord took him aside from the multitude; and again that, in healing him, He spat applying it directly to the diseased organ. We read of the direct application of saliva only here and in the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida. We are disposed to regard this as peculiar to the healing of Gentiles. Peculiar, also, is the term expressive of burden on the mind, when, looking up to heaven, He sighed. Peculiar, also, is the thrusting of His Fingers into the man's ears, and the touch of his tongue. Only the upward look to Heaven and the command Ephphatha' 'be opened' seem the same as in His every day wonders of healing. But we mark that all here seems much more elaborate than in --Israel--. The reason of this must, of course, be sought in the moral condition of the person healed. Certain characteristics about the action of the Lord may, perhaps, help us to understand it better. There is an accumulation of means, yet each and all inadequate to effect the purpose, but all connected with His Person. This elaborate use of such means would banish the idea of magic; it would arouse the attention, and fix it upon Christ, as using these means, which were all connected with His own person; while, lastly, the sighing, and the word of absolute command, would all have here their special significance.

Let us try to realise the scene. They have heard of Him as the wonder-worker, these heathens in the land so near to, and yet so far from, Israel; and they have brought to Him the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others and laid them at His Feet. Oh, what wonder! All disease vanishes in presence of Heaven's Own Life Incarnate. Tongues long weighted are loosed, limbs maimed or bent by disease are restored to health, the lame are stretched straight; the film of disease and the paralysis of nerve-impotence pass from eyes long insensible to the light. It is a new era-- Israel-- conquers the heathen world, not by force, but by love; not by outward means, but by the manifestation of life-power from above. Truly, this is the Messianic conquest and reign: and they glorified the God of Israel.

From amongst this mass of misery we single out and follow one, whom the Saviour takes aside, that it may not merely be the breath of heaven's spring passing over them all, that wooeth him to new life,

but that He may touch and handle him, and so give health to soul and body. The man is to be alone with Christ and the disciples. It is not magic; means are used, and such as might not seem wholly strange to the man. And quite a number of means! He thrust His Fingers into his deaf ears, as if to make a way for the sound: He spat on his tongue, using a means of healing accepted in popular opinion of Jew and Gentile; He touched his tongue. Each act seemed a fresh incitement to his faith and all connected itself with the Person of Christ. As yet there was not breath of life in it all. But when the man's eyes followed those of the Saviour to heaven, he would understand whence He expected, whence came to Him the power Who had sent Him, and Whose He was. And as he followed the movement of Christ's lips, as he groaned under the felt burden He had come to remove, the sufferer would look up expectant. Once more the Saviour's lips parted to speak the word of command: He opened and straightway the gladsome sound would pass into his hearing and the bond that seemed to have held his tongue was loosed. He was in a new world, into which He had put him that had spoken that one Word; He, Who had been burdened under the load which He had lifted up to His Father; to Whom all the means that had been used had pointed, and with Whose Person they had been connected.

It was in vain to enjoin silence. Wider and wider spread the unbidden fame, till it was caught up in this one hymn of praise, which has remained to all time the jubilee of our experience of Christ as the Divine Healer: He hath done all things well, He maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. This Jewish word, Ephphatha, spoken to the Gentile Church by Him, Who, looking up to heaven, sighed under the burden, even while He uplifted it, has opened the hearing and loosed the bond of speech. Most significantly was it spoken in the language of the Jews; and this also does it teach, that Jesus must always have spoken the Jews language. For, if ever, to a Grecian in Grecian territory would He have spoken in Greek, not in the Jews language, if the former and not the latter had been that of which He made use in His Words and Working.

2. Another miracle is recorded by Mark, as wrought by Jesus in these parts, and, as we infer, on a heathen. All the circumstances are kindred to those just related. It was in Bethsaida-Julias, that one blind was brought unto Him, with the entreaty that He would touch him, just as in the case of the deaf and dumb. Here, also, the Saviour took him aside 'led him out of the village' and spat on his eyes, and put His Hands upon him. We mark not only the similarity of the means employed, but the same, and even greater elaborateness in the use of them, since a twofold touch is recorded before the man saw clearly. On any theory even that which would regard the Gospel-narratives as spurious this trait must have been intended to mark a special purpose, since this is the only instance in which a miraculous cure was performed gradually, and not at once and completely. So far as we can judge, the object was, by a gradual process of healing, to disabuse the man of any idea of magical cure, while at the same time the process of healing again markedly centered in the Person of Jesus. With this also agrees (as in the case of the deaf and dumb) the use of spittle in the healing. We may here recall, that the use of saliva was a well-known Jewish remedy for affections of the eyes. It was thus that the celebrated Rabbi Meir relieved one of his fair hearers, when her husband, in his anger at her long detention by the Rabbi's sermons, had ordered her to spit in the preacher's face. Pretending to suffer from his eyes, the Rabbi contrived that the woman publicly spat in his eyes, thus enabling her to obey her husband's command. The anecdote at least proves, that the application of saliva was popularly regarded as a remedy for affections of the eyes.

Thus in this instance also, as in that of the deaf and dumb, there was the use of means, Jewish means, means manifestly insufficient (since their first application was only partially successful), and a multiplication of means yet all centering in, and proceeding from, His Person. As further analogies between the two, we mark that the blindness does not seem to have been congenital, but the consequence of disease, and that silence was enjoined after the healing. Lastly, the confusedness of his sight, when first restored to him, surely conveyed, not only to him but to us all, both a spiritual lesson and a spiritual warning.

3. Yet a third miracle of healing requires to be here considered, although related by Matthew in quite

another connection. But we have learned enough of the structure of the First Gospel to know, that its arrangement is determined by the plan of the writer rather than by the chronological succession of events. The manner in which the Lord healed the two blind men, the injunction of silence, and the notice that none the less they spread His fame in all that land, seem to imply that He was not on the ordinary scene of His labours in Galilee. Nor can we fail to mark an internal analogy between this and the other two miracles enacted amidst a chiefly Grecian population. And, strange though it may sound, the cry with which the two blind men who sought His help followed Him, Son of David, have mercy on us comes, as might be expected, more frequently from Gentile than from Jewish lips. It was, of course, pre-eminently the Jewish designation of the Messiah, the basis of all Jewish thought of Him. But, perhaps on that very ground, it would express in Israel rather the homage of popular conviction, than, as in this case, the cry for help in bodily disease. Besides, Jesus had not as yet been hailed as the Messiah, except by His most intimate disciples; and, even by them, chiefly in the joy of their highest spiritual attainments. He was the Rabbi, Teacher, Wonder-worker, Son of Man, even Son of God; but the idea of the Davidic Kingdom as implying spiritual and Divine, not outwardly royal rule, lay as yet on the utmost edge of the horizon, covered by the golden mist of the Sun of Righteousness in His rising. On the other hand, we can understand, how to Gentiles, who resided in Palestine, the Messiah of Israel would chiefly stand out as the Son of David. It was the most ready, and, at the same time, the most universal, form in which the great Jewish hope could be viewed by them. It presented to their minds the most marked contrast to Israel's present fallen state, and it recalled the Golden Age of Israel's past, and that, as only the symbol of a far wider and more glorious reign, the fulfilment of what to David had only been promises.

Peculiar to this history is the testing question of Christ, whether they really believed what their petition implied, that He was able to restore their sight; and, again, His stern, almost passionate, insistence on their silence as to the mode of their cure. Only on one other occasion do we read of the same insistence. It is, when the leper had expressed the same absolute faith in Christ's ability to heal if He willed it, and Jesus had, as in the case of those two blind men, conferred the benefit by the touch of His Hand. In both these cases, it is remarkable that, along with strongest faith of those who came to Him, there was rather an implied than an expressed petition on their part. The leper who knelt before Him only said: Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean; and the two blind men: Have mercy on us, Thou Son of David. Thus it is the highest and most realising faith, which is most absolute in its trust and most reticent as regards the details of its request.

But as regards the two blind men (and the healed leper also), it is almost impossible not to connect Christ's peculiar insistence on their silence with their advanced faith. They had owned Jesus as the Son of David and that, not in the Judaic sense (as by the Syro-Phoenician woman), but as able to do all things, even to open by His touch the eyes of the blind. And it had been done to them, as it always is according to their faith. But a profession of faith so wide-reaching as theirs, and sealed by the attainment of what it sought, yet scarcely dared to ask, must not be publicly proclaimed. It would, and in point of fact did, bring to Him crowds which, unable spiritually to understand the meaning of such a confession, would only embarrass and hinder, and whose presence and homage would have to be avoided as much, if not more, than that of open enemies. For confession of the mouth must ever be the outcome of heart-belief, and the acclamations of an excited Jewish crowd were as incongruous to the real Character of the Christ, and as obstructive to the progress of His Kingdom, as is the outward homage of a world which has not heart-belief in His Power, nor heart-experience of His ability and willingness to cleanse the leper and to open the eyes of the blind. Yet the leprosy of Israel and the blindness of the Gentile world are equally removed by the touch of His Hand at the cry of faith.

The question has been needlessly discussed, whether they were to praise or blame, who, despite the Saviour's words, spread His fame. We scarcely know what, or how much, they disobeyed. They could not but speak of His Person; and theirs was, perhaps, not yet that higher silence which is content simply to sit at His Feet.

Chapter 35 The Two Sabbath-Controversies

The Plucking of the Ears of Corn by the Disciples, and The Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand

(Matthew 12:1-21; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11.)

In grouping together the three miracles of healing described in the last chapter, we do not wish to convey that it is certain they had taken place in precisely that order. Nor do we feel sure, that they preceded what is about to be related. In the absence of exact data, the succession of events and their location must be matter of combination. From their position in the Evangelic narratives, and the manner in which all concerned speak and act, we inferred, that they took place at that particular period and east of the Jordan, in the Decapolis or else in the territory of Philip. They differ from the events about to be related by the absence of the Jerusalem Scribes, who hung on the footsteps of Jesus. While the Saviour tarried on the borders of Tyre, and thence passed through the territory of Sidon into the Decapolis and to the southern and eastern shores of the Lake of Galilee, they were in Jerusalem at the Passover. But after the two festive days, which would require their attendance in the Temple, they seem to have returned to their hateful task. It would not be difficult for them to discover the scene of such mighty works as His. Accordingly, we now find them once more confronting Christ. And the events about to be related are chronologically distinguished from those that had preceded, by this presence and opposition of the Pharisaic party. The contest now becomes more decided and sharp, and we are rapidly nearing the period when He, Who had hitherto been chiefly preaching the Kingdom, and healing body and soul, will, through the hostility of the leaders of Israel, enter on the second, or prevailing negative stage of His Work, in which, according to the prophetic description, they compassed Him about like bees but are quenched as the fire of thorns.

Where fundamental principles were so directly contrary, the occasion for conflict could not be long wanting. Indeed, all that Jesus taught must have seemed to these Pharisees strangely un-Jewish in cast and direction, even if not in form and words. But chiefly would this be the case in regard to that on which, of all else, the Pharisees laid most stress, the observance of the Sabbath. On no other subject is Rabbinic teaching more painfully minute and more manifestly incongruous to its professed object. For, if we rightly apprehend what underlay the complicated and intolerably burdensome laws and rules of Pharisaic Sabbath-observance, it was to secure, negatively, absolute rest from all labour, and, positively, to make the Sabbath a delight. The Mishnah includes Sabbath-desecration among those most heinous crimes for which a man was to be stoned. This, then, was their first care: by a series of complicated ordinances to make a breach of the Sabbath-rest impossible. How far this was carried, we shall presently see. The next object was, in a similarly external manner, to make the Sabbath a delight. A special Sabbath dress, the best that could be procured; the choicest food, even though a man had to work for it all the week, or public charity were to supply it such were some of the means by which the day was to be honoured and men to find pleasure therein. The strangest stories are told, how, by the purchase of the most expensive dishes, the pious poor had gained unspeakable merit, and obtained, even on earth, Heaven's manifest reward. And yet, by the side of these and similar strange and sad misdirections of piety, we come also upon that which is touching, beautiful, and even spiritual. On the Sabbath there must be no mourning, for to the Sabbath applies this saying: The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it. Quite alone was the Sabbath among the measures of time. Every other day had been paired with its fellow: not so the Sabbath. And so any festival, even the Day of Atonement, might be transferred to another day: not so the observance of the Sabbath. Nay, when the Sabbath complained before God, that of all days it alone stood solitary, God had wedded it to Israel; and this holy union God had bidden His people remember when it stood before the Mount. Even the tortures of Gehenna were intermitted on that

holy, happy day.

The terribly exaggerated views on the Sabbath entertained by the Rabbis, and the endless burdensome rules with which they encumbered everything connected with its sanctity, are fully set forth in another place. The Jewish Law, as there summarised, sufficiently explains the controversies in which the Pharisaic party now engaged with Jesus. Of these the first was when, going through the cornfields on the Sabbath, His disciples began to pluck and eat the ears of corn. Not, indeed, that this was the first Sabbath-controversy forced upon Christ. But it was the first time that Jesus allowed, and afterwards Himself did, in presence of the Pharisees, what was contrary to Jewish notions, and that, in express and unmistakable terms, He vindicated His position in regard to the Sabbath. This also indicates that we have now reached a further stage in the history of our Lord's teaching.

This, however, is not the only reason for placing this event so late in the personal history of Christ. Matthew inserts it at a different period from the other two Synoptists; and although Mark and Luke introduce it amidst the same surroundings, the connection, in which it is told in all the three Gospels, shows that it is placed out of the historical order, with the view of grouping together what would exhibit Christ's relation to the Pharisees and their teaching. Accordingly, this first Sabbath-controversy is immediately followed by that connected with the healing of the man with the withered hand. From Matthew and Mark it might, indeed, appear as if this had occurred on the same day as the plucking of the ears of corn, but Luke corrects any possible misunderstanding, by telling us that it happened on another Sabbath' perhaps that following the walk through the cornfields.

Dismissing the idea of inferring the precise time of these two events from their place in the Evangelic record, we have not much difficulty in finding the needful historical data for our present inquiry. The first and most obvious is, that the harvest was still standing whether that of barley or of wheat. The former began immediately after the Passover, the latter after the Feast of Pentecost; the presentation of the wave-omer of barley making the beginning of the one, that of the two wave-loaves that of the other. Here another historical notice comes to our aid. Luke describes the Sabbath of this occurrence as the second-first' an expression so peculiar that it cannot be regarded as an interpolation, but as designedly chosen by the Evangelist to indicate something well understood in Palestine at the time. Bearing in mind the limited number of Sabbaths between the commencement of the barley and the end of the wheat-harvest, our inquiry is here much narrowed. In Rabbinic writings the term second-first is not applied to any Sabbath. But we know that the fifty days between the Feast of Passover and that of Pentecost were counted from the presentation of the wave-omer on the Second Paschal Day, at the first, second, third day after the Omer. Thus the second-first Sabbath might be either the first Sabbath after the second day which was that of the presentation of the Omer, or else the second Sabbath after this first day of reckoning, or Sefirah as it was called (rm(h tryps). To us the first of these dates seems most in accord with the manner in which Luke would describe to Gentile readers the Sabbath which was the first after the second or, Sefirah-day.

Assuming, then, that it was probably the first possibly, the second Sabbath after the reckoning or second Paschal Day, on which the disciples plucked the ears of corn, we have still to ascertain whether it was in the first or second Passover of Christ's Ministry. The reasons against placing it between the first Passover and Pentecost are of the strongest character. Not to speak of the circumstance that such advanced teaching on the part of Christ, and such advanced knowledge on the part of His disciples, indicate a later period, our Lord did not call His twelve Apostles till long after the Feast of Pentecost, viz. after His return from the so-called Unknown Feast which, as shown in another place, must have been either that of Wood-Gathering in the end of the summer, or else New Year's Day, in the beginning of autumn. Thus, as by the disciples we must in this connection understand, in the first place, the Apostles the event could not have occurred between the first Passover and Pentecost of the Lord's Ministry.

The same result is reached by another process of reasoning. After the first Passover our Lord, with such of His disciples as had then gathered to Him, tarried for some time no doubt for several weeks in Judaea. The wheat was ripe for harvesting, when he passed through Samaria. And, on His return to

Galilee, His disciples seem to have gone back to their homes and occupations, since it was some time afterwards when even His most intimate disciples Peter, Andrew, James, and John were called a second time. Chronologically, therefore, there is no room for this event between the first Passover and Pentecost. Lastly, we have here to bear in mind, that, on His first appearance in Galilee, the Pharisees had not yet taken up this position of determined hostility to Him. On the other hand, all agrees with the circumstance, that the active hostility of the Pharisees and Christ's separation from the ordinances of the Synagogue commenced with His visit to Jerusalem in the early autumn of that year. If, therefore, we have to place the plucking of the ears of corn after the Feast recorded in John v., as can scarcely be doubted, it must have taken place, not between the first, but between the Second Passover and Pentecost of Christ's Public Ministry.

Another point deserves notice. The different setting (chronologically speaking) in which the three Gospels present the event about to be related, illustrates that the object of the Evangelists was to present the events in the History of the Christ in their succession, not of time, but of bearing upon final results. This, because they do not attempt a Biography of Jesus, which, from their point of view, would have been almost blasphemy, but a History of the Kingdom which He brought; and because they write it, so to speak, not by adjectives (expressive of qualities), nor adverbially, but by substantives. Lastly, it will be noted that the three Evangelists relate the event about to be considered (as so many others), not, indeed, with variations, but with differences of detail, showing the independence of their narratives, which, as we shall see, really supplement each other.

We are now in a position to examine the narrative itself. It was on the Sabbath after the Second Paschal Day that Christ and His disciples passed probably by a field-path through cornfields, when His disciples, being hungry, as they went, plucked ears of corn and ate them, having rubbed off the husks in their hands. On any ordinary day this would have been lawful, but on the Sabbath it involved, according to Rabbinic statutes, at least two sins. For, according to the Talmud, what was really one labour, would, if made up of several acts, each of them forbidden, amount to several acts of labour, each involving sin, punishment, and a sin-offering. This so-called division of labour applied only to infringement of the Sabbath-rest not of that of feast-days. Now in this case there were at least two such acts involved: that of plucking the ears of corn, ranged under the sin of reaping, and that of rubbing them, which might be ranged under sifting in a sieve, threshing, sifting out fruit, grinding, or fanning. The following Talmudic passage bears on this: In case a woman rolls wheat to remove the husks, it is considered as sifting; if she rubs the heads of wheat, it is regarded as threshing; if she cleans off the side-adherences, it is sifting out fruit; if she bruises the ears, it is grinding; if she throws them up in her hand, it is winnowing. One instance will suffice to show the externalism of all these ordinances. If a man wished to move a sheaf on his field, which of course implied labour, he had only to lay upon it a spoon that was in his common use, when, in order to remove the spoon, he might also remove the sheaf on which it lay! And yet it was forbidden to stop with a little wax the hole in a cask by which the fluid was running out, or to wipe a wound!

Holding views like these, the Pharisees, who witnessed the conduct of the disciples, would naturally harshly condemn, what they must have regarded as gross desecration of the Sabbath. Yet it was clearly not a breach of the Biblical, but of the Rabbinic Law. Not only to show them their error, but to lay down principles which would forever apply to this difficult question, was the object of Christ's reply. Unlike the others of the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath Law has in it two elements; the moral and the ceremonial: the eternal, and that which is subject to time and place; the inward and spiritual, and the outward (the one as the mode of realising the other). In their distinction and separation lies the difficulty of the subject. In its spiritual and eternal element, the Sabbath Law embodied the two thoughts of rest for worship, and worship which pointed to rest. The keeping of the seventh day, and the Jewish mode of its observance, were the temporal and outward form in which these eternal principles were presented. Even Rabbinism, in some measure, perceived this. It was a principle, that danger to life superseded the Sabbath Law, and indeed all other obligations. Among the curious Scriptural and other arguments by which this principle was supported, that which probably would

most appeal to common sense was derived from Lev. xviii. 5. It was argued, that a man was to keep the commandments that he might live, certainly not, that by so doing he might die. In other words, the outward mode of observance was subordinate to the object of the observance. Yet this other and kindred principle did Rabbinism lay down, that every positive commandment superseded the Sabbath-rest. This was the ultimate vindication of work in the Temple, although certainly not its explanation. Lastly, we should in this connection, include this important canon, laid down by the Rabbis: a single Rabbinic prohibition is not to be heeded, where a graver matter is in question. All these points must be kept in view for the proper understanding of the words of Christ to the Scribes. For, while going far beyond the times and notions of His questioners, His reasoning must have been within their comprehension. Hence the first argument of our Lord, as recorded by all the Synoptists, was taken from Biblical History. When, on his flight from Saul, David had, when an hungered eaten of the shewbread, and given it to his followers, although, by the letter of the Levitical Law, it was only to be eaten by the priests, Jewish tradition vindicated his conduct on the plea that danger to life superseded the Sabbath-Law, and hence, all laws connected with it, while, to show David's zeal for the Sabbath-Law, the legend was added, that he had reproved the priests of Nob, who had been baking the shewbread on the Sabbath. To the first argument of Christ, Matthew adds this as His second, that the priests, in their services in the Temple, necessarily broke the Sabbath-Law without thereby incurring guilt. It is curious, that the Talmud discusses this very point, and that, by way of illustration, it introduces an argument from Lev. xxii. 10: There shall no stranger eat of things consecrated. This, of course, embodies the principle underlying the prohibition of the shewbread to all who were not priests. Without entering further on it, the discussion at least shows, that the Rabbis were by no means clear on the rationale of Sabbath-work in the Temple. In truth, the reason why David was blameless in eating the shewbread was the same as that which made the Sabbath-labour of the priests lawful. The Sabbath-Law was not one merely of rest, but of rest for worship. The Service of the Lord was the object in view. The priests worked on the Sabbath, because this service was the object of the Sabbath; and David was allowed to eat of the shewbread, not because there was danger to life from starvation, but because he pleaded that he was on the service of the Lord and needed this provision. The disciples, when following the Lord, were similarly on the service of the Lord; ministering to Him was more than ministering in the Temple, for He was greater than the Temple. If the Pharisees had believed this, they would not have questioned their conduct, nor in so doing have themselves infringed that higher Law which enjoined mercy, not sacrifice.

To this Mark adds as corollary: The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. It is remarkable, that a similar argument is used by the Rabbis. When insisting that the Sabbath Law should be set aside to avoid danger to life, it is urged: the Sabbath is handed over to you; not, ye are handed over to the Sabbath. Lastly, the three Evangelists record this as the final outcome of His teaching on this subject, that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath also. The Service of God, and the Service of the Temple, by universal consent superseded the Sabbath-Law. But Christ was greater than the Temple, and His Service more truly that of God, and higher than that of the outward Temple, and the Sabbath was intended for man, to serve God: therefore Christ and His Service were superior to the Sabbath-Law. Thus much would be intelligible to these Pharisees, although they would not receive it, because they believed not on Him as the Sent of God.

But to us the words mean more than this. They preach not only that the Service of Christ is that of God, but that, even more than in the Temple, all of work or of liberty is lawful which this service requires. We are free while we are doing anything for Christ; God loves mercy, and demands not sacrifice; His sacrifice is the service of Christ, in heart, and life, and work. We are not free to do anything we please; but we are free to do anything needful or helpful, while we are doing any service to Christ. He is the Lord of the Sabbath, Whom we serve in and through the Sabbath. And even this is significant, that, when designating Himself Lord of the Sabbath, it is as the Son of Man. It shows, that the narrow Judaistic form regarding the day and the manner of observance is enlarged into the wider

Law, which applies to all humanity. Under the New Testament the Sabbath has, as the Church, become Catholic, and its Lord is Christ as the Son of Man, to Whom the body Catholic offers the acceptable service of heart and life.

The question as between Christ and the Pharisees was not, however, to end here. On another Sabbath' probably that following He was in their Synagogue. Whether or not the Pharisees had brought the man with the withered hand on purpose, or placed him in a conspicuous position, or otherwise raised the question, certain it is that their secret object was to commit Christ to some word or deed, which would lay Him open to the capital charge of breaking the Sabbath-law. It does not appear, whether the man with the withered hand was consciously or unconsciously their tool. But in this they judged rightly: that Christ would not witness disease without removing it or, as we might express it, that disease could not continue in the Presence of Him, Who was the Life. He read their inward thoughts of evil, and yet he proceeded to do the good which He purposed. So God, in His majestic greatness, carries out the purpose which He has fixed which we call the law of nature whoever and whatever stand in the way; and so God, in His sovereign goodness, adapts it to the good of His creatures, notwithstanding their evil thoughts.

So much unclearness prevails as to the Jewish views about healing on the Sabbath, that some connected information on the subject seems needful. We have already seen, that in their view only actual danger to life warranted a breach of the Sabbath-Law. But this opened a large field for discussion. Thus, according to some, disease of the ear, according to some throat-disease, while, according to others, such a disease as angina, involved danger, and superseded the Sabbath-Law. All applications to the outside of the body were forbidden on the Sabbath. As regarded internal remedies, such substances as were used in health, but had also a remedial effect, might be taken although here also there was a way of evading the Law. A person suffering from toothache might not gargle his mouth with vinegar, but he might use an ordinary toothbrush and dip it in vinegar. The Gemara here adds, that gargling was lawful, if the substance was afterwards swallowed. It further explains, that affections extending from the lips, or else from the throat, inwards, may be attended to, being regarded as dangerous. Quite a number of these are enumerated, showing, that either the Rabbis were very lax in applying their canon about mortal diseases, or else that they reckoned in their number not a few which we would not regard as such. External lesions also might be attended to, if they involved danger to life. Similarly, medical aid might be called in, if a person had swallowed a piece of glass; a splinter might be removed from the eye, and even a thorn from the body.

But although the man with the withered hand could not be classed with those dangerously ill, it could not have been difficult to silence the Rabbis on their own admissions. Clearly, their principle implied, that it was lawful on the Sabbath to do that which would save life or prevent death. To have taught otherwise, would virtually have involved murder. But if so, did it not also, in strictly logical sequence, imply this far wider principle, that it must be lawful to do good on the Sabbath? For, evidently, the omission of such good would have involved the doing of evil. Could this be the proper observance of God's holy day? There was no answer to such an argument; Mark expressly records that they dared not attempt a reply. On the other hand, Matthew, while alluding to this terribly telling challenge, records yet another and a personal argument. It seems that Christ publicly appealed to them: If any poor man among them, who had one sheep, were in danger of losing it through having fallen into a pit, would he not lift it out? To be sure, the Rabbinic Law ordered that food and drink should be lowered to it, or else that some means should be furnished by which it might either be kept up in the pit, or enabled to come out of it. But even the Talmud discusses cases in which it was lawful to lift an animal out of a pit on a Sabbath. There could be no doubt, at any rate, that even if the Law was, at the time of Christ, as stringent as in the Talmud, a man would have found some device, by which to recover the solitary sheep which constituted his possession. And was not the life of a human being to be more accounted of? Surely, then, on the Sabbath-day it was lawful to do good? Yes to do good, and to neglect it, would have been to do evil. Nay, according to their own admission, should not a man, on the Sabbath, save life? or should he, by omitting it, kill?

We can now imagine the scene in that Synagogue. The place is crowded. Christ probably occupies a prominent position as leading the prayers or teaching: a position whence He can see, and be seen by all. Here, eagerly bending forward, are the dark faces of the Pharisees, expressive of curiosity, malice, cunning. They are looking round at a man whose right hand is withered, perhaps putting him forward, drawing attention to him, loudly whispering, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? The Lord takes up the challenge. He bids the man stand forth right in the midst of them, where they might all see and hear. By one of those telling appeals, which go straight to the conscience, He puts the analogous case of a poor man who was in danger of losing his only sheep on the Sabbath: would he not rescue it; and was not a man better than a sheep? Nay, did they not themselves enjoin a breach of the Sabbath-Law to save human life? Then, must He not do so; might He not do good rather than evil?

They were speechless. But a strange mixture of feeling was in the Saviour's heart strange to us, though it is but what Holy Scripture always tells us of the manner in which God views sin and the sinner, using terms, which, in their combination, seem grandly incompatible: And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart. It was but for a moment, and then, with life-giving power, He bade the man stretch forth his hand. Withered it was no longer, when the Word had been spoken, and a new sap, a fresh life had streamed into it, as, following the Saviour's Eye and Word, he slowly stretched it forth. And as He stretched it forth, his hand was restored. 58 The Saviour had broken their Sabbath-Law, and yet He had not broken it, for neither by remedy, nor touch, nor outward application had He healed him. He had broken the Sabbath-rest, as God breaks it, when He sends, or sustains, or restores life, or does good: all unseen and unheard, without touch or outward application, by the Word of His Power, by the Presence of His Life.

But who after this will say, that it was Paul who first introduced into the Church either the idea that the Sabbath-Law in its Jewish form was no longer binding, or this, that the narrow forms of Judaism were burst by the new wine of that Kingdom, which is that of the Son of Man?

They had all seen it, this miracle of almost new creation. As He did it, He had been filled with sadness: as they saw it, they were filled with madness. So their hearts were hardened. They could not gainsay, but they went forth and took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him. Presumably, then, He was within, or quite close by, the dominions of Herod, east of the Jordan. And the Lord withdrew once more, as it seems to us, into Gentile territory, probably that of the Decapolis. For, as He went about healing all, that needed it, in that great multitude that followed His steps, yet enjoining silence on them, this prophecy of Isaiah blazed into fulfilment: Behold My Servant, Whom I have chosen, My Beloved, in Whom My soul is well-pleased: I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall any hear His Voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His Name shall the Gentiles trust.

And in His Name shall the Gentiles trust. Far out into the silence of those solitary upland hills of the Gentile world did the call, unheard and unheeded in Israel, travel. He had other sheep which were not of that fold. And down those hills, from the far-off lands, does the sound of the bells, as it comes nearer and nearer, tell that those other sheep, which are not of this fold, are gathering at His call to the Good Shepherd; and through these centuries, still louder and more manifold becomes this sound of nearing bells, till they shall all be gathered into one: one flock, one fold, one Shepherd.

Chapter 36 The Feeding of the Four Thousand

To Dalmanutha the Sign from Heaven Journey to Caesarea Philippi what is the Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees?

(Matthew 15:32-16:12; Mark 8:1-21.)

They might well gather to Jesus in their thousands, with their wants of body and soul, these sheep wandering without a shepherd; for His Ministry in that district, as formerly in Galilee, was about to draw to a close. And here it is remarkable, that each time His prolonged stay and Ministry in a district were brought to a close with some supper, so to speak, some festive entertainment on his part. The Galilean Ministry had closed with the feeding of the five thousand, the guests being mostly from Capernaum and the towns around, as far as Bethsaida (Julias), many in the number probably on their way to the Paschal feast at Jerusalem. But now at the second provision for the four thousand, with which His Decapolis Ministry closed, the guests were not strictly Jews, but semi-Gentile inhabitants of that district and its neighbourhood. Lastly, his Judean Ministry closed with the Last Supper. At the first Supper the Jewish guests would fain have proclaimed Him Messiah-King; at the second, as the Son of Man He gave food to those Gentile multitudes which having been with Him those days, and consumed all their victuals during their stay with him, He could not send away fasting, lest they should faint by the way. And on the last occasion, as the true Priest and Sacrifice, He fed His own with the true Paschal Feast, ere He sent them forth alone into the wilderness. Thus these three Suppers seem connected, each leading up, as it were, to the other.

There can, at any rate, be little doubt that this second feeding of the multitude took place in the Gentile Decapolis, and that those who sat down to the meal were chiefly the inhabitants of that district. If it be lawful, departing from strict history, to study the symbolism of this event, as compared with the previous feeding of the five thousand who were Jews, somewhat singular differences will present themselves to the mind. On the former occasion there were five thousand fed with five loaves, when twelve baskets of fragments were left. On the second occasion, four thousand were fed from seven loaves, and seven baskets of fragments collected. It is at least curious, that the number five in the provision for the Jews is that of the Pentateuch, just as the number twelve corresponds to that of the tribes and of the Apostles. On the other hand, in the feeding of the Gentiles we mark the number four, which is the signature of the world, and seven, which is that of the Sanctuary. We would not by any means press it, as if these were, in the telling of the narrative, designed coincidences; but, just because they are undesigned, we value them, feeling that there is more of undesigned symbolism in all God's manifestations in nature, in history, and in grace than meets the eye of those who observe the merely phenomenal. Nay, does it not almost seem, as if all things were cast in the mould of heavenly realities, and all earth's shewbread Bread of His Presence'?

On all general points the narratives of the two-fold miraculous feeding run so parallel, that it is not necessary again to consider this event in detail. But the attendant circumstances are so different, that only the most reckless negative criticism could insist, that one and the same event had been presented by the Evangelists as two separate occasions. The broad lines of difference as to the number of persons, the provision, and the quantity of fragments left, cannot be overlooked. Besides, on the former occasion the repast was provided in the evening for those who had gone after Christ, and listened to Him all day, but who, in their eager haste, had come without victuals, when He would not dismiss them faint and hungry, because they had been so busy for the Bread of Life that they had forgotten that of earth. But on this second occasion, of the feeding of the Gentiles, the multitude had been three days with Him, and what sustenance they had brought must have failed, when, in His compassion, the Saviour would not send them to their homes fasting, lest they should faint by the way. This could not have befallen those Gentiles, who had come to the Christ for food to their souls. And, it must be kept in view, that Christ dismissed them, not, as before, because they would have made Him their King, but because Himself was about to depart from the place; and that, sending them to their homes, He could not send them to faint by the way. Yet another marked difference lies even in the designation of the baskets in which the fragments left were gathered. At the first feeding, there were, as the Greek word shows, the small wicker-baskets which each of the Twelve would carry

in his hand. At the second feeding they were the large baskets, in which provisions, chiefly bread, were stored or carried for longer voyages. For, on the first occasion, when they passed into Israelitish territory and, as they might think, left their home for a very brief time there was not the same need to make provision for storing necessities as on the second, when they were on a lengthened journey, and passing through, or tarrying in Gentile territory.

But the most noteworthy difference seems to us this that on the first occasion, they who were fed were Jews on the second, Gentiles. There is an exquisite little trait in the narrative which affords striking, though utterly undesigned, evidence of it. In referring to the blessing which Jesus spake over the first meal, it was noted, that, in strict accordance with Jewish custom, He only rendered thanks once, over the bread. But no such custom would rule His conduct when dispensing the food to the Gentiles; and, indeed, His speaking the blessing only over the bread, while He was silent when distributing the fishes, would probably have given rise to misunderstanding. Accordingly, we find it expressly stated that He not only gave thanks over the bread, but also spake the blessing over the fishes. Nor should we, when marking such undesigned evidences, omit to notice, that on the first occasion, which was immediately before the Passover, the guests were, as three of the Evangelists expressly state, ranged on the grass while, on the present occasion, which must have been several weeks later, when in the East the grass would be burnt up, we are told by the two Evangelists that they sat on the ground. Even the difficulty, raised by some, as to the strange repetition of the disciples reply, the outcome, in part, of non-expectancy, and, hence, non-belief, and yet in part also of such doubt as tends towards faith: Whence should we have, in a solitary place, so many loaves as to fill so great a multitude? seems to us only confirmatory of the narrative, so psychologically true is it. There is no need for the ingenious apology, that, in the remembrance and tradition of the first and second feeding, the similarity of the two events had led to greater similarity in their narration than the actual circumstances would perhaps have warranted. Interesting thoughts are here suggested by the remark, that it is not easy to transport ourselves into the position and feelings of those who had witnessed such a miracle as that of the first feeding of the multitude. We think of the Power as inherent, and, therefore, permanent. To them it might seem intermittent a gift that came and went. And this might seem borne out by the fact that, ever since, their wants had been supplied in the ordinary way, and that, even on the first occasion, they had been directed to gather up the fragments of the heaven-supplied meal.

But more than this requires to be said. First, we must here once more remind ourselves, that the former provision was for Jews, and the disciples might, from their standpoint, well doubt, or at least not assume, that the same miracle would supply the need of the Gentiles, and the same board be surrounded by Jew and Gentile. But, further, the repetition of the same question by the disciples really indicated only a sense of their own inability, and not a doubt of the Saviour's power of supply, since on this occasion it was not, as on the former, accompanied by a request on their part, to send the multitude away. Thus the very repetition of the question might be a humble reference to the past, of which they dared not, in the circumstances, ask the repetition.

Yet, even if it were otherwise, the strange forgetfulness of Christ's late miracle on the part of the disciples, and their strange repetition of the self-same question which had once and, as it might seem to us, for ever been answered by wondrous deed, need not surprise us. To them the miraculous on the part of Christ must ever have been the new, or else it would have ceased to be the miraculous. Nor did they ever fully realise it, till after His Resurrection they understood, and worshipped Him as God Incarnate. And it is only realising faith of this, which it was intended gradually to evolve during Christ's Ministry on earth, that enables us to apprehend the Divine Help as, so to speak, incarnate and ever actually present in Christ. And yet even thus, how often we do, who have so believed in Him, forget the Divine provision which has come to us so lately, and repeat, though perhaps not with the same doubt, yet with the same want of certainty, the questions with which we had at first met the Saviour's challenge of our faith. And even at the last it is met, as by the prophet, in sight of the apparently impossible, by: Lord, Thou knowest. More frequently, alas! is it met by nonbelief, misbelief,

disbelief, or doubt, engendered by misunderstanding or forgetfulness of that which past experience, as well as the knowledge of Him, should long ago have indelibly written on our minds.

On the occasion referred to in the preceding narrative, those who had lately taken counsel together against Jesus the Pharisees and the Herodians, or, to put it otherwise, the Pharisees and Sadducees were not present. For, those who, politically speaking, were Herodians might also, though perhaps not religiously speaking, yet from the Jewish standpoint of Matthew, be designated as, or else include, Sadducees. But they were soon to reappear on the scene, as Jesus came close to the Jewish territory of Herod. We suppose the feeding of the multitude to have taken place in the Decapolis, and probably on, or close to, the Eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee. As Jesus sent away the multitude whom He had fed, He took ship with His disciples, and came into the borders of Magadan or, as Mark puts it, the parts of Dalmanutha. The borders of Magadan must evidently refer to the same district as the parts of Dalmanutha. The one may mark the extreme point of the district southwards, the other northwards or else, the points west and east in the locality where He and His disciples landed. This is, of course, only a suggestion, since neither Magadan nor Dalmanutha has been identified. This only we infer, that the place was close to, yet not within the boundary of, strictly Jewish territory; since on His arrival there the Pharisees are said to come forth a word which implies, that they resided elsewhere 18 though, of course, in the neighbourhood. Accordingly, we would seek Magadan south of the Lake of Tiberias, and near to the borders of Galilee, but within the Decapolis. Several sites bear at present somewhat similar names. In regard to the strange and un-Jewish name of Dalmanutha, such utterly unlikely conjectures have been made, that one based on etymology may be hazarded. If we take from Dalmanutha the Aramaic termination -utha, and regard the initial de as a prefix, we have the word Laman, Limin, or Liminah (Nml, Nym, hnyml = limhn), which, in Rabbinic Hebrew, means a bay, or port, and Dalmanutha might have been the place of a small bay. Possibly, it was the name given to the bay close to the ancient Tarichaea, the modern Kerak, so terribly famous for a sea-fight, or rather a horrible butchery of poor fugitives, when Tarichaea was taken by the Romans in the great Jewish war. Close by, the Lake forms a bay (Laman), and if, as a modern writer asserts, the fortress of Tarichaea was surrounded by a ditch fed by the Jordan and the Lake, so that the fortress could be converted into an island, we see additional reason for the designation of Lamanutha.

It was from the Jewish territory of Galilee, close by, that the Pharisees now came with the Sadducees tempting Him with questions, and desiring that His claims should be put to the ultimate arbitrament of a sign from heaven. We can quite understand such a challenge on the part of Sadducees, who would disbelieve the heavenly Mission of Christ, or, indeed, to use a modern term, any supra-naturalistic connection between heaven and earth. But, in the mouth of the Pharisees also, it had a special meaning. Certain supposed miracles had been either witnessed by, or testified to them, as done by Christ. As they now represented it since Christ laid claims which, in their view, were inconsistent with the doctrine received in Israel, preached a Kingdom quite other than that of Jewish expectancy was at issue with all Jewish customs more than this, was a breaker of the Law, in its most important commandments, as they understood them it followed that, according to Deut. xiii., He was a false prophet, who was not to be listened to. Then, also, must the miracles which He did have been wrought by the power of Beelzebul, the lord of idolatrous worship the very prince of devils. But had there been real signs, and might it not all have been an illusion? Let Him show them a sign and let that sign come direct from heaven!

Two striking instances from Rabbinic literature will show, that this demand of the Pharisees was in accordance with their notions and practice. We read that, when a certain Rabbi was asked by his disciples about the time of Messiah's Coming, he replied: I am afraid that you will also ask me for a sign. When they promised they would not do so, he told them that the gate of Rome would fall and be rebuilt, and fall again, when there would not be time to restore it, ere the Son of David came. On this they pressed him, despite his remonstrance, for a sign when this was given them that the waters which issued from the --cave of --Pamias-- were turned into blood. Again, as regards a sign from

heaven it is said that Rabbi Eliezer, when his teaching was challenged, successively appealed to certain signs. First, a locust-tree moved at his bidding one hundred, or, according to some, four hundred cubits. Next, the channels of water were made to flow backwards; then the walls of the Academy leaned forward, and were only arrested at the bidding of another Rabbi. Lastly, Eliezer exclaimed: If the Law is as I teach, let it be proved from heaven! when a voice fell from the sky (the Bath Qol): What have ye to do with Rabbi Eliezer, for the Halakhah is as he teaches?

It was, therefore, no strange thing, when the Pharisees asked of Jesus a sign from heaven to attest His claims and teaching. The answer which He gave was among the most solemn which the leaders of Israel could have heard, and He spake it in deep sorrow of spirit. They had asked Him virtually for some sign of His Messiahship; some striking vindication from heaven of His claims. It would be given them only too soon. We have already seen, that there was a Coming of Christ in His Kingdom a vindication of His kingly claim before His apostate rebellious subjects, when they who would not have Him to reign over them, but betrayed and crucified Him, would have their commonwealth and city, their polity and Temple, destroyed. By the lurid light of the flames of --Jerusalem-- and the Sanctuary were the words on the cross to be read again. God would vindicate His claims by laying low the pride of their rebellion. The burning of Jerusalem was God's answer to the Jews cry, Away with Him we have no king but Caesar; the thousands of crosses on which the Romans hanged their captives, the terrible counterpart of the Cross on Golgotha.

It was to this, that Jesus referred in His reply to the Pharisees and Sadducean Herodians. How strange! Men could discern by the appearance of the sky whether the day would be fair or stormy. And yet, when all the signs of the gathering storm, that would destroy their city and people, were clearly visible, they, the leaders of the people, failed to perceive them! Israel asked for a sign! No sign should be given the doomed land and city other than that which had been given to Nineveh : the sign of Jonah. The only sign to Nineveh was Jonah's solemn warning of near judgment, and his call to repentance and the only sign now, or rather unto this generation no sign was the warning cry of judgment and the loving call to repentance.

It was but a natural, almost necessary, sequence, that He left them and departed. Once more the ship, which bore Him and His disciples, spread its sails towards the coast of Bethsaida-Julias'. He was on His way to the utmost limit of the land, to Caesarea Philippi, in pursuit of His purpose to delay the final conflict. For the great crisis must begin, as it would end, in Jerusalem, and at the Feast; it would begin at the Feast of Tabernacles, and it would end at the following Passover. But by the way, the disciples themselves showed how little even they, who had so long and closely followed Christ, understood His teaching, and how prone to misapprehension their spiritual dulness rendered them. Yet it was not so gross and altogether incomprehensible, as the common reading of what happened would imply.

When the Lord touched the other shore, His mind and heart were still full of the scene from which He had lately passed. For truly, on this demand for a sign did the future of Israel seem to hang. Perhaps it is not presumptuous to suppose, that the journey across the Lake had been made in silence on His part, so deeply were mind and heart engrossed with the fate of His own royal city. And now, when they landed, they carried ashore the empty provision-baskets; for, as, with his usual attention to details, Mark notes, they had only brought one loaf of bread with them. In fact, in the excitement and hurry they forgot to take bread with them. Whether or not something connected with this arrested the attention of Christ, He at last broke the silence, speaking that which was so much on His mind. He warned them, as greatly they needed it, of the leaven with which Pharisees and Sadducees had, each in their own manner, leavened, and so corrupted, the holy bread of Scripture truth. The disciples, aware that in their hurry and excitement they had forgotten bread, misunderstood these words of Christ, although not in the utterly unaccountable manner which commentators generally suppose: as implying a caution against procuring bread from His enemies. It is well-nigh impossible, that the disciples could have understood the warning of Christ as meaning any such thing even irrespective of the consideration, that a prohibition to buy bread from either the Pharisees or

Sadducees would have involved an impossibility. The misunderstanding of the disciples was, if unwarrantable, at least rational. They thought the words of Christ implied, that in His view they had not forgotten to bring bread, but purposely omitted to do so, in order, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, to seek of Him a sign of His Divine Messiahship nay, to oblige Him to show such that of miraculous provision in their want. The mere suspicion showed what was in their minds, and pointed to their danger. This explains how, in His reply, Jesus reproved them, not for utter want of discernment, but only for little faith. It was their lack of faith the very leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees which had suggested such a thought. Again, if the experience of the past their own twice-repeated question, and the practical answer which it had received in the miraculous provision of not only enough, but to spare had taught them anything, it should have been to believe, that the needful provision of their wants by Christ was not a sign such as the Pharisees had asked, but what faith might ever expect from Christ, when following after, or waiting upon, Him. Then understood they truly, that it was not of the leaven of bread that He had bidden them beware that His mysterious words bore no reference to bread, nor to their supposed omission to bring it for the purpose of eliciting a sign from Him, but pointed to the far more real danger of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees which had underlain the demand for a sign from heaven.

Here, as always, Christ rather suggests than gives the interpretation of His meaning. And this is the law of His teaching. Our modern Pharisees and Sadducees, also, too often ask of him a sign from heaven in evidence of His claims. And we also too often misunderstand His warning to us concerning their leaven. Seeing the scanty store in our basket, our little faith is busy with thoughts about possible signs in multiplying the one loaf which we have, forgetful that, where Christ is, faith may ever expect all that is needful, and that our care should only be in regard to the teaching which might leaven and corrupt that on which our souls are fed.

Chapter 37 The Great Confession

The Great Commission The Great Instruction The Great Temptation The Great Decision

(Matthew 16:13-28; Mark 8:27-9:1; Luke 9:18-27.)

If we are right in identifying the little bay Dalmanutha with the neighbourhood of Tarichaea, yet another link of strange coincidence connects the prophetic warning spoken there with its fulfilment. From Dalmanutha our Lord passed across the Lake to Caesarea Philippi. From Caesarea Philippi did Vespasian pass through Tiberias to Tarichaea, when the town and people were destroyed, and the blood of the fugitives reddened the Lake, and their bodies choked its waters. Even amidst the horrors of the last Jewish war, few spectacles could have been so sickening as that of the wild stand at Tarichaea, ending with the butchery of 6,500 on land and sea, and lastly, the vile treachery by which they, to whom mercy had been promised, were lured into the circus at Tiberias, when the weak and old, to the number of about 1,200, were slaughtered, and the rest upwards of 30,400 sold into slavery. Well might He, Who foresaw and foretold that terrible end, standing on that spot, deeply sigh in spirit as He spake to them who asked a sign and yet saw not what even ordinary discernment might have perceived of the red and lowering sky overhead.

From Dalmanutha, across the Lake, then by the plain where so lately the five thousand had been fed, and near to Bethsaida, would the road of Christ and His disciples lead to the capital of the Tetrarch Philip, the ancient Paneas, or, as it was then called, Caesarea Philippi, the modern Banias. Two days journey would accomplish the whole distance. There would be no need of taking the route now usually followed, by Safed. Straight northwards from the Lake of Galilee, a distance of about ten miles, leads the road to the uppermost Jordan-Lake, that now called Huleh, the ancient Merom. As

we ascend from the shores of Gennesaret, we have a receding view of the whole Lake and the Jordan-valley beyond. Before us rise hills; over them, to the west, are the heights of Safed; beyond them swells the undulating plain between the two ranges of Anti-Libanus; far off is Hermon, with its twin snow-clad heads (the Hermons), and, in the dim far background, majestic Lebanon. It is scarcely likely, that Jesus and His disciples skirted the almost impenetrable marsh and jungle by Lake Merom. It was there, that Joshua had fought the last and decisive battle against Jabin and his confederates, by which Northern Palestine was gained to Israel. We turn north of the Lake, and west to Kedes, the Kedesh Naphtali of the Bible, the home of Barak. We have now passed from the limestone of Central Palestine into the dark basalt formation. How splendidly that ancient Priest-City of Refuge lay! In the rich heritage of Naphtali, 6 Kedesh was one of the fairest spots. As we climb the steep hill above the marshes of Merom, we have before us one of the richest plains of about two thousand acres. We next pass through olive-groves and up a gentle slope. On a knoll before us, at the foot of which gushes a copious spring, lies the ancient Kedesh.

The scenery is very similar, as we travel on towards Caesarea Philippi. About an hour and a half farther, we strike the ancient Roman road. We are now amidst vines and mulberry-trees. Passing through a narrow rich valley, we ascend through a rocky wilderness of hills, where the woodbine luxuriantly trails around the plane trees. On the height there is a glorious view back to Lake Merom and the Jordan-valley; forward, to the snowy peaks of Hermon; east, to height on height, and west, to peaks now only crowned with ruins. We still continued along the height, then descended a steep slope, leaving, on our left, the ancient Abel Beth Maachah, the modern Abil. Another hour, and we are in a plain where all the springs of the Jordan unite. The view from here is splendid, and the soil most rich, the wheat crops being quite ripe in the beginning of May. Half an hour more, and we cross a bridge over the bright blue waters of the Jordan, or rather of the Hasbany, which, under a very wilderness of oleanders, honeysuckle, clematis, and wild rose, rush among huge boulders, between walls of basalt. We leave aside, at a distance of about half an hour to the east, the ancient Dan (the modern Tell-Kady), even more glorious in its beauty and richness than what we have passed. Dan lies on a hill above the plain. On the western side of it, under overhanging thickets of oleander and other trees, and amidst masses of basalt boulders, rise what are called the lower springs of Jordan, issuing as a stream from a basin sixty paces wide, and from a smaller source close by. The lower springs supply the largest proportion of what forms the Jordan. And from Dan olive-groves and oak-glades slope up to Baniyas, or Caesarea Philippi.

The situation of the ancient Caesarea Philippi (1,147 feet above the sea) is, indeed, magnificent. Nestling amid three valleys on a terrace in the angle of Hermon, it is almost shut out from view by cliffs and woods. Everywhere there is a wild medley of cascades, mulberry trees, fig-trees, dashing torrents, festoons of vines, bubbling fountains, reeds, and ruins, and the mingled music of birds and waters. The vegetation and fertility all around are extraordinary. The modern village of Baniyas is within the walls of the old fortifications, and the ruins show that it must anciently have extended far southwards. But the most remarkable points remain to be described. The western side of a steep mountain, crowned by the ruins of an ancient castle, forms an abrupt rock-wall. Here, from out an immense cavern, bursts a river. These are the upper sources of the Jordan. This cave, an ancient heathen sanctuary of Pan, gave its earliest name of Paneas to the town. Here Herod, when receiving the tetrarchy from Augustus, built a temple in his honour. On the rocky wall close by, votive niches may still be traced, one of them bearing the Greek inscription, Priest of Pan. When Herod's son, Philip, received the tetrarchy, he enlarged and greatly beautified the ancient Paneas, and called it in honour of the Emperor, Caesarea Philippi. The castle-mount (about 1,000 feet above Paneas), takes nearly an hour to ascend, and is separated by a deep valley from the flank of Mount Hermon. The castle itself (about two miles from Baniyas) is one of the best preserved ruins, its immense bevelled structure resembling the ancient forts of Jerusalem, and showing its age. It followed the irregularities of the mountain, and was about 1,000 feet long by 200 wide. The eastern and higher part formed, as in Machaerus, a citadel within the castle. In some parts the rock rises higher than the walls. The

views, sheer down the precipitous sides of the mountain, into the valleys and far away, are magnificent.

It seems worth while, even at such length, to describe the scenery along this journey, and the look and situation of Caesarea, when we recall the importance of the events enacted there, or in the immediate neighbourhood. It was into this chiefly Gentile district, that the Lord now withdrew with His disciples after that last and decisive question of the Pharisees. It was here that, as His question, like Moses rod, struck their hearts, there leaped from the lips of Peter the living, life-spreading waters of his confession. It may have been, that this rock-wall below the castle, from under which sprang Jordan, or the rock on which the castle stood, supplied the material suggestion for Christ's words: Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build My Church. In Caesarea, or its immediate neighbourhood, did the Lord spend, with His disciples, six days after this confession; and here, close by, on one of the heights of snowy Hermon, was the scene of the Transfiguration, the light of which shone forever into the hearts of the disciples on their dark and tangled path; nay, far beyond that beyond life and death beyond the grave and the judgment, to the perfect brightness of the Resurrection-day.

As we think of it, there seems nothing strange in it, but all most wise and most gracious, that such events should have taken place far away from Galilee and Israel, in the lonely grandeur of the shadows of Hermon, and even amongst a chiefly Gentile population. Not in Judaea, nor even in Galilee but far away from the --Temple--, the Synagogue, the Priests, Pharisees and Scribes, was the first confession of the Church made, and on this confession its first foundations laid. Even this spoke of near judgment and doom to what had once been God's chosen congregation. And all that happened, though Divinely shaped as regards the end, followed in a natural and orderly succession of events. Let us briefly recall the circumstances, which in the previous chapters have been described in detail.

It had been needful to leave Capernaum. The Galilean Ministry of the Christ was ended, and, alike the active persecutions of the Pharisees from Jerusalem, the inquiries of Herod, whose hands, stained with the blood of the Baptist, were tremblingly searching for his greater Successor, and the growing indecision and unfitness of the people as well as the state of the disciples pointed to the need for leaving Galilee. Then followed the Last Supper to Israel on the eastern shore of Lake Gennesaret, when they would have made Him a King. He must now withdraw quite away, out of the boundaries of Israel. Then came that miraculous night-journey, the brief Sabbath-stay at Capernaum by the way, the journey through Tyrian and Sidonian territory, and round to the Decapolis, the teaching and healing there, the gathering of the multitude to Him, together with that Supper which closed His Ministry there, and, finally, the withdrawal to Tarichaea, where His Apostles, as fishermen of the Lake, may have had business-connections, since the place was the great central depot for selling and preparing the fish for export.

In that distant and obscure corner, on the boundary-line between Jew and Gentile, had that greatest crisis in the history of the world occurred, which sealed the doom of Israel, and in their place substituted the Gentiles as citizens of the Kingdom. And, in this respect also, it is most significant, that the confession of the Church likewise took place in territory chiefly inhabited by Gentiles, and the Transfiguration on Mount Hermon. That crisis had been the public challenge of the Pharisees and Sadducees, that Jesus should legitimate His claims to the Messiahship by a sign from heaven. It is not too much to assert, that neither His questioners, nor even His disciples, understood the answer of Jesus, nor yet perceived the meaning of His sign. To the Pharisees Jesus would seem to have been defeated, and to stand self-convicted of having made Divine claims which, when challenged, He could not substantiate. He had hitherto elected (as they, who understood not His teaching, would judge) to prove Himself the Messiah by the miracles which He had wrought and now, when met on His own ground, He had publicly declined, or at least evaded, the challenge. He had conspicuously almost self-confessedly failed! At least, so it would appear to those who could not understand His reply and sigh. We note that a similar final challenge was addressed to Jesus by the High-Priest, when he adjured Him to say, whether He was what He claimed. His answer then was an assertion not

a proof; and, unsupported as it seemed, His questioners would only regard it as blasphemy. But what of the disciples, who (as we have seen) would probably understand the sign of Christ little better than the Pharisees? That what might seem Christ's failure, in not daring to meet the challenge of His questioners, must have left some impression on them, is not only natural, but appears even from Christ's warning of the leaven that is, of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Indeed, that this unmet challenge and virtual defeat of Jesus did make lasting and deepest impression in His disfavour, is evident from the later challenge of His own relatives to go and meet the Pharisees at headquarters in Judaea, and to show openly, if He could, by His works, that He was the Messiah. All the more remarkable appears Christ's dealing with His disciples, His demand on, and training of their faith. It must be remembered, that His last hard sayings at Capernaum had led to the defection of many, who till then had been His disciples. Undoubtedly this had already tried their faith, as appears from the question of Christ: Will ye also go away? It was this wise and gracious dealing with them this putting the one disappointment of doubt, engendered by what they could not understand, against their whole past experience in following Him, which enabled them to overcome. And it is this which also enables us to answer the doubt, perhaps engendered by inability to understand seemingly unintelligible, hard sayings of Christ, such as that to the disciples about giving them His Flesh to eat, or about His being the Living Bread from heaven. And, this alternative being put to them: would they, could they, after their experience of Him, go away from Him, they overcame, as we overcome, through what almost sounds like a cry of despair, yet is a shout of victory: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

And all that followed only renewed and deepened the trial of faith, which had commenced at Capernaum. We shall, perhaps, best understand it when following the progress of this trial in him who, at last, made shipwreck of his faith: Judas Iscariot. Without attempting to gaze into the mysterious abyss of the Satanic element in his apostasy, we may trace his course in its psychological development. We must not regard Judas as a monster, but as one with passions like ourselves. True, there was one terrible master-passion in his soul covetousness; but that was only the downward, lower aspect of what seems, and to many really is, that which leads to the higher and better ambition. It had been thoughts of Israel's King which had first set his imagination on fire, and brought him to follow the Messiah. Gradually, increasingly, came the disenchantment. It was quite another Kingdom, that of Christ; quite another Kingship than what had set Judas aglow. This feeling was deepened as events proceeded. His confidence must have been terribly shaken when the Baptist was beheaded. What a contrast to the time when his voice had bent the thousands of Israel, as trees in the wind! So this had been nothing and the Baptist must be written off, not as for, but as really against, Christ. Then came the next disappointment, when Jesus would not be made King. Why not if He were King? And so on, step by step, till the final depth was reached, when Jesus would not, or could not which was it? meet the public challenge of the Pharisees. We take it, that it was then that the leaven pervaded and leavened Judas in heart and soul.

We repeat it, that what so, and permanently, penetrated Judas, could not (as Christ's warning shows) have left the others wholly unaffected. The very presence of Judas with them must have had its influence. And how did Christ deal with it? There was, first, the silent sail across the Lake, and then the warning which put them on their guard, lest the little leaven should corrupt the bread of the Sanctuary, on which they had learned to live. The littleness of their faith must be corrected; it must grow and become strong. And so we can understand what follows. It was after solitary prayer no doubt for them that, with reference to the challenge of the Pharisees, the leaven that threatened them, He now gathered up all their experience of the past by putting to them the question, what men, the people who had watched His Works and heard His Words, regarded Him as being. Even on them some conviction had been wrought by their observance of Him. It marked Him out (as the disciples said) as different from all around, nay, from all ordinary men: like the Baptist, or Elijah, or as if He were one of the old prophets alive again. But, if even the multitude had gathered such knowledge of Him, what was their experience, who had always been with Him? Answered he, who most truly

represented the Church, because he combined with the most advanced experience of the three most intimate disciples the utmost boldness of confession: Thou art the Christ!’

And so in part was this leaven of the Pharisees purged! Yet not wholly. For then it was, that Christ spake to them of His sufferings and death, and that the resistance of Peter showed how deeply that leaven had penetrated. And then followed the grand contrast presented by Christ, between minding the things of men and those of God, with the warning which it implied, and the monition as to the necessity of bearing the cross of contempt, and the absolute call to do so, as addressed to those who would be His disciples. Here, then, the contest about the sign or rather the challenge about the Messiahship, was carried from the mental into the moral sphere, and so decided. Six days more of quiet waiting and growth of faith, and it was met, rewarded, crowned, and perfected by the sight on the Mount of Transfiguration; yet, even so, perceived only as through the heaviness of sleep.

Thus far for the general arrangement of these events. We shall now be prepared better to understand the details. It was certainly not for personal reasons, but to call attention to the impression made even on the popular mind, to correct its defects, and to raise the minds of the Apostles to far higher thoughts, that He asked them about the opinions of men concerning Himself. Their difference proved not only their incompetence to form a right view, but also how many-sided Christ’s teaching must have been. We are probably correct in supposing, that popular opinion did not point to Christ as literally the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets who had long been dead. For, although the literal reappearance of Elijah, and probably also of Jeremiah, was expected, the Pharisees did not teach, nor the Jews believe in, a transmigration of souls. Besides, no one looked for the return of any of the other old prophets, nor could any one have seriously imagined, that Jesus was, literally, John the Baptist, since all knew them to have been contemporaries. Rather would it mean, that some saw in Him the continuation of the work of John, as heralding and preparing the way of the Messiah, or, if they did not believe in John, of that of Elijah; while to others He seemed a second Jeremiah, denouncing woe on Israel, and calling to tardy repentance; or else one of those old prophets, who had spoken either of the near judgment or of the coming glory. But, however men differed on these points, in this all agreed, that they regarded Him not as an ordinary man or teacher, but His Mission as straight from heaven; and, alas, in this also, that they did not view Him as the Messiah. Thus far, then, there was already retrogression in popular opinion, and thus far had the Pharisees already succeeded.

There is a significant emphasis in the words, with which Jesus turned from the opinion of the multitudes to elicit the faith of the disciples: But you, whom do you say that I am? It is the more marked, as the former question was equally emphasised by the use of the article (in the original): Who do the men say that I am? In that moment it leaped, by the power of God, to the lips of Peter: Thou art the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of the Living God. Chrysostom has beautifully designated Peter as the mouth of the Apostles’ and we recall, in this connection, the words of Paul as casting light on the representative character of Peter’s confession as that of the Church, and hence on the meaning of Christ’s reply, and its equally representative application: With the mouth confession is made unto salvation. The words of the confession are given somewhat differently by the three Evangelists. From our standpoint, the briefest form (that of Mark): Thou art the Christ means quite as much as the fullest (that of Matthew): Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. We can thus understand, how the latter might be truthfully adopted, and, indeed, would be the most truthful, accurate, and suitable in a Gospel primarily written for the Jews. And here we notice, that the most exact form of the words seems that in the Gospel of Luke: The Christ of God.

In saying this, so far from weakening, we strengthen the import of this glorious confession. For first, we must keep in view, that the confession: Thou art the Messiah is also that: Thou art the Son of the Living God. If, according to the Gospels, we believe that Jesus was the true Messiah, promised to the fathers ‘the Messiah of God’ we cannot but believe that He is the Son of the Living God. Scripture and reason equally point to this conclusion from the premisses. But, further, we must view such a confession, even though made in the power of God, in its historical connection. The words must have

been such as Peter could have uttered, and the disciples acquiesced in, at the time. Moreover, they should mark a distinct connection with, and yet progress upon, the past. All these conditions are fulfilled by the view here taken. The full knowledge, in the sense of really understanding, that He was the Son of the Living God, came to the disciples only after the Resurrection. Previously to the confession of Peter, the ship's company, that had witnessed His walking on the water, had owned: Of a truth Thou art the Son of God but not in the sense in which a well-informed, believing Jew would hail Him as the Messiah, and the Son of the Living God designating both His Office and His Nature and these two in their combination. Again, Peter himself had made a confession of Christ, when, after his discourse at Capernaum, so many of His disciples had forsaken Him. It had been: We have believed, and know that Thou art the Holy One of God. The mere mention of these words shows both their internal connection with those of his last and crowning confession: Thou art the Christ of God and the immense progress made.

The more closely we view it, the loftier appears the height of this confession. We think of it as an advance on Peter's past; we think of it in its remembered contrast to the late challenge of the Pharisees, and as so soon following on the felt danger of their leaven. And we think of it, also, in its almost immeasurable distance from the appreciative opinion of the better disposed among the people. In the words of this confession Peter has consciously reached the firm ground of Messianic acknowledgment. All else is implied in this, and would follow from it. It is the first real confession of the Church. We can understand, how it followed after solitary prayer by Christ we can scarcely doubt, for that very revelation by the Father, which He afterwards joyously recognised in the words of Peter. The reply of the Saviour is only recorded by Matthew. Its omission by Mark might be explained on the ground that Peter himself had furnished the information. But its absence there and in the Gospel of Luke proves (as Beza remarks), that it could never have been intended as the foundation of so important a doctrine as that of the permanent supremacy of Peter. But even if it were such, it would not follow that this supremacy devolved on the successors of Peter, nor yet that the Pope of Rome is the successor of Peter; nor is there even solid evidence that Peter ever was Bishop of Rome. The dogmatic inferences from a certain interpretation of the words of Christ to Peter being therefore utterly untenable, we can, with less fear of bias, examine their meaning. The whole form here is Hebraistic. The blessed art thou is Jewish in spirit and form; the address, Simon bar Jona proves that the Lord spake in Aramaic. Indeed, a Jewish Messiah responding, in the hour of his Messianic acknowledgment, in Greek to His Jewish confessor, seems utterly incongruous. Lastly, the expression flesh and blood as contrasted with God, occurs not only in that Apocryphon of strictly Jewish authorship, the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, and in the letters of Paul, but in almost innumerable passages in Jewish writings, as denoting man in opposition to God; while the revelation of such a truth by the Father Which is in Heaven represents not only both Old and New Testament Teaching, but is clothed in language familiar to Jewish ears

Not less Jewish in form are the succeeding words of Christ, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church. We notice in the original the change from the masculine gender, Peter (Petros), to the feminine, Petra (Rock), which seems the more significant, that Petros is used in Greek for stone and also sometimes for rock while Petra always means a rock. The change of gender must therefore have a definite object which will presently be more fully explained. Meantime we recall that, when Peter first came to Christ, the Lord had said unto him: Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, Peter [Petros, a Stone, or else a Rock] the Aramaic word Kepha meaning, like Peter, both stone and rock. But both the Greek Petros and Petra have (as already stated) passed into Rabbinic language. Thus, the name Peter, or rather Petros, is Jewish, and occurs, for example, as that of the father of a certain Rabbi (Jose bar Petros). When the Lord, therefore, prophetically gave the name Cephas, it may have been that by that term He gave only a prophetic interpretation to what had been his previous name Peter. This seems the more likely, since, as we have previously seen, it was the practice in Galilee to have two names, especially when the strictly Jewish name, such as Simon, had no equivalent among the Gentiles. Again, the Greek word Petra Rock (on this Petra

[Rock] will I build my Church) was used in the same sense in Rabbinic language. It occurs twice in a passage, which so fully illustrates the Jewish use, not only of the word, but of the whole figure, that it deserves a place here. According to Jewish ideas, the world would not have been created, unless it had rested, as it were, on some solid foundation of piety and acceptance of God's Law in other words, it required a moral, before it could receive a physical foundation. Rabbinism here contrasts the Gentile world with --Israel--. It is, so runs the comment, as if a king were going to build a city. One and another site is tried for a foundation, but in digging they always come upon water. At last they come upon a Rock. So, when God was about to build his world, He could not rear it on the generation of Enos nor on that of the flood, who brought destruction on the world; but when He beheld that Abraham would arise in the future, He said: Behold I have found a Rock to build on it, and to found the world whence also Abraham is called a Rock as it is said: Look unto the Rock whence ye are hewn. The parallel between Abraham and Peter might be carried even further. If, from a misunderstanding of the Lord's promise to Peter, later Christian legend represented the Apostle as sitting at the gate of heaven, Jewish legend represents Abraham as sitting at the gate of Gehenna, so as to prevent all who had the seal of circumcision from falling into its abyss. To complete this sketch, in the curious Jewish legend about the Apostle Peter, which is outlined in an Appendix to this volume, 39 Peter is always designated as Simon Kepha, there being, however, some reminiscence of the meaning attached to his name in the statement made, that, after his death, they built a church and tower, and called it Peter which is the name for stone, because he sat there upon a stone till his death. But to return. Believing, that Jesus spoke to Peter in the Aramic, we can now understand how the words Petros and Petra would be purposely used by Christ to mark the difference, which their choice would suggest. Perhaps it might be expressed in this somewhat clumsy paraphrase: Thou art Peter (Petros) a Stone or Rock and upon this --Petra-- the Rock, the Petrine will I found My Church. If, therefore, we would not certainly apply them to the words of Peter's confession, we would certainly apply them to that which was the Petrine in Peter: the heaven-given faith which manifested itself in his confession. And we can further understand how, just as Christ's contemporaries may have regarded the world as reared on the rock of faithful Abraham, so Christ promised, that He would build His Church on the Petrine in Peter on his faith and confession. Nor would the term Church sound strange in Jewish ears. The same Greek word (ekklhsia), as the equivalent of the Hebrew Qahal, convocation the called occurs in the LXX. rendering of the Old Testament, and in the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach and was apparently in familiar use at the time. In Hebrew use it referred to Israel, not in their national but in their religious unity. As here employed, it would convey the prophecy, that His disciples would in the future be joined together in a religious unity; that this religious unity or Church would be a building of which Christ was the Builder; that it would be founded on the Petrine of heaven-taught faith and confession; and that this religious unity, this Church, was not only intended for a time, like a school of thought, but would last beyond death and the disembodied state: that, alike as regarded Christ and His Church the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Viewing the Church as a building founded upon the Petrine it was not to vary, but to carry on the same metaphor, when Christ promised to give to him who had spoken as representative of the Apostles the stewards of the mysteries of God' the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven . For, as the religious unity of His disciples, or the Church, represented the royal rule of heaven so, figuratively, entrance into the gates of this building, submission to the rule of God to that Kingdom of which Christ was the King. And we remember how, in a special sense, this promise was fulfilled to Peter. Even as he had been the first to utter the confession of the Church, so was he also privileged to be the first to open its hitherto closed gates to the Gentiles, when God made choice of him, that, through his mouth, the Gentiles should first hear the words of the Gospel, and at his bidding first be baptized.

If hitherto it has appeared that what Christ said to Peter, though infinitely transcending Jewish ideas, was yet, in its expression and even cast of thought, such as to be quite intelligible to Jewish minds, nay, so familiar to them, that, as by well-marked steps, they might ascend to the higher Sanctuary, the difficult words with which our Lord closed must be read in the same light. For, assuredly, in

interpreting such a saying of Christ to Peter, our first inquiry must be, what it would convey to the person to whom the promise was addressed. And here we recall, that no other terms were in more constant use in Rabbinic Canon-Law than those of binding and loosing. The words are the literal translation of the Hebrew equivalents *Asar*, which means to bind in the sense of prohibiting, and *Hittir* which means to loose in the sense of permitting. For the latter the term *Shera* or *Sheri* is also used. But this expression is, both in Targumic and Talmudic diction, not merely the equivalent of permitting, but passes into that of remitting or pardoning. On the other hand, binding and loosing referred simply to things or acts prohibiting or else permitting them, declaring them lawful or unlawful. This was one of the powers claimed by the Rabbis. As regards their laws (not decisions as to things or acts), it was a principle, that while in Scripture there were some that bound and some that loosed, all the laws of the Rabbis were in reference to binding. If this then represented the legislative, another pretension of the Rabbis, that of declaring free or else liable i.e., guilty (*Patur* or *Chayyabh*), expressed their claim to the judicial power. By the first of these they bound or loosed acts or things; by the second they remitted or retained declared a person free from, or liable to punishment, to compensation, or to sacrifice. These two powers the legislative and judicial which belonged to the Rabbinic office, Christ now transferred, and that not in their pretension, but in their reality, to His Apostles: the first here to Peter as their Representative, the second after His Resurrection to the Church.

On the second of these powers we need not at present dwell. That of binding and loosing included all the legislative functions for the new Church. And it was a reality. In the view of the Rabbis heaven was like earth, and questions were discussed and settled by a heavenly Sanhedrin. Now, in regard to some of their earthly decrees, they were wont to say that the Sanhedrin above confirmed what the Sanhedrin beneath had done. But the words of Christ, as they avoided the foolish conceit of His contemporaries, left it not doubtful, but conveyed the assurance that, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, whatsoever they bound or loosed on earth would be bound or loosed in heaven.

But all this that had passed between them could not be matter of common talk least of all, at that crisis in His History, and in that locality. Accordingly, all the three Evangelists record each with distinctive emphasis that the open confession of his Messiahship, which was virtually its proclamation, was not to be made public. Among the people it could only have led to results the opposite of those to be desired. How unprepared even that Apostle was, who had made proclamation of the Messiah, for what his confession implied, and how ignorant of the real meaning of Israel's Messiah, appeared only too soon. For, His proclamation as the Christ imposed on the Lord, so to speak, the necessity of setting forth the mode of His contest and victory the Cross and the Crown. Such teaching was the needed sequence of Peter's confession needed, not only for the correction of misunderstanding, but for direction. And yet significantly it is only said, that He began to teach them these things no doubt, as regarded the manner, as well as the time of this teaching. The Evangelists, indeed, write it down in plain language, as fully taught them by later experience, that He was to be rejected by the rulers of Israel, slain, and to rise again the third day. And there can be as little doubt, that Christ's language (as afterwards they looked back upon it) must have clearly implied all this, as that at the time they did not fully understand it. He was so constantly in the habit of using symbolic language, and had only lately reproved them for taking that about the leaven in a literal, which He had meant in a figurative sense, that it was but natural, they should have regarded in the same light announcements which, in their strict literality, would seem to them well nigh incredible. They could well understand His rejection by the Scribes a sort of figurative death, or violent suppression of His claims and doctrines, and then, after briefest period, their resurrection, as it were but not these terrible details in their full literality.

But, even so, there was enough of terrible realism in the words of Jesus to alarm Peter. His very affection, intensely human, to the Human Personality of his Master would lead him astray. That He, Whom he verily believed to be the Messiah, Whom he loved with all the intenseness of such an intense nature that he should pass through such an ordeal No! Never! He put it in the very strongest language, although the Evangelist gives only a literal translation of the Rabbinic expression God

forbid it, God be merciful to Thee: no, such never could, nor should be to the Christ! It was an appeal to the Human in Christ, just as Satan had, in the great Temptation after the forty days fast, appealed to the purely Human in Jesus. Temptations these, with which we cannot reason, but which we must put behind us as behind, or else they will be a stumbling-block before us; temptations, which come to us often through the love and care of others, Satan transforming himself into an Angel of light; temptations, all the more dangerous, that they appeal to the purely human, not the sinful, element in us, but which arise from the circumstance, that they who so become our stumbling-block, so long as they are before us, are prompted by an affection which has regard to the purely human, and, in its one-sided human intenseness, minds the things of man, and not those of God.

Yet Peter's words were to be made useful, by affording to the Master the opportunity of correcting what was amiss in the hearts of all His disciples, and teaching them such general principles about His Kingdom, and about that implied in true discipleship, as would, if received in the heart, enable them in due time victoriously to bear those trials connected with that rejection and Death of the Christ, which at the time they could not understand. Not a Messianic Kingdom, with glory to its heralds and chieftains but self-denial, and the voluntary bearing of that cross on which the powers of this world would nail the followers of Christ. They knew the torture which their masters the power of the world the Romans, were wont to inflict: such must they, and similar must we all, be prepared to bear, and, in so doing, begin by denying self. In such a contest, to lose life would be to gain it, to gain would be to lose life. And, if the issue lay between these two, who could hesitate what to choose, even if it were ours to gain or lose a whole world? For behind it all there was a reality a Messianic triumph and Kingdom not, indeed, such as they imagined, but far higher, holier: the Coming of the Son of Man in the glory of His Father, and with His Angels, and then eternal gain or loss, according to our deeds. But why speak of the future and distant? A sign' a terrible sign of it from heaven a vindication of Christ's rejected claims, a vindication of the Christ, Whom they had slain, invoking His Blood on their City and Nation, a vindication, such as alone these men could understand, of the reality of His Resurrection and Ascension, was in the near future. The flames of the City and Temple would be the light in that nation's darkness, by which to read the inscription on the Cross. All this not afar off. Some of those who stood there would not taste death till in those judgments they would see that the Son of Man had come in His Kingdom.

Then only then at the burning of the City! Why not now, visibly, and immediately on their terrible sin? Because God shows not signs from heaven such as man seeks; because His long-suffering waiteth long; because, all unnoticed, the finger moves on the dial-plate of time till the hour strikes; because there is Divine grandeur and majesty in the slow, unheard, certain nigh-march of events under His direction. God is content to wait, because He reigneth; man must be content to wait, because he believeth.