

The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah

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Book IV The Decent: From The Mount of Transfiguration into the Valley of Humiliation and Death

Chapter 1 The Transfiguration

(Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36.)

The great confession of Peter, as the representative Apostle, had laid the foundations of the Church as such. In contradistinction to the varying opinions of even those best disposed towards Christ, it openly declared that Jesus was the Very Christ of God, the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecy, the heir of Old Testament promise, the realisation of the Old Testament hope for Israel, and, in Israel, for all mankind. Without this confession, Christians might have been a Jewish sect, a religious party, or a school of thought, and Jesus a Teacher, Rabbi, Reformer, or Leader of men. But the confession which marked Jesus as the Christ, also constituted His followers the Church. It separated them, as it separated Him, from all around; it gathered them into one, even Christ; and it marked out the foundation on which the building made without hands was to rise. Never was illustrative answer so exact as this: On this Rock' bold, outstanding, well-defined, immovable will I build My Church. Without doubt this confession also marked the high-point of the Apostles faith. Never afterwards, till His Resurrection, did it reach so high. Nay, what followed seems rather a retrogression from it: beginning with their unwillingness to receive the announcement of His decease, and ending with their unreadiness to share His sufferings or to believe in His Resurrection. And if we realise the circumstances, we shall understand at least, their initial difficulties. Their highest faith had been followed by the most crushing disappointment; the confession that He was the Christ, by the announcement of His approaching sufferings and death at Jerusalem. The proclamation that He was the Divine Messiah had not been met by promises of the near glory of the Messianic Kingdom, but by announcements of certain, public rejection and seeming terrible defeat. Such possibilities had never seriously entered into their thoughts of the Messiah; and the declaration of the very worst, and that in the near future, made at such a moment, must have been a staggering blow to all their hopes. It was as if they had reached the topmost height, only to be cast thence into the lowest depth. On the other hand, it was necessary that at this stage in the History of the Christ, and immediately after His proclamation, the sufferings and the rejection of the Messiah should be prominently brought forward. It was needful for the Apostles, as the remonstrance of Peter showed; and, with reverence be it added, it was needful for the Lord Himself, as even His words to Peter seem to imply: Get thee behind Me; thou art a stumbling-block unto me. For as we have said was not the remonstrance of the disciple in measure a re-enactment of the great initial temptation by Satan after the forty days fast in the wilderness? And, in view of all this, and of what immediately afterwards followed, we venture to say, it was fitting that an interval of six days should intervene, or, as Luke puts it, including the day of Peter's confession and the night of Christ's Transfiguration, about eight days. The Chronicle of these days is significantly left blank in the Gospels, but we cannot doubt, that it was filled up with thoughts and teaching concerning that Decease, leading up to the revelation on the Mount of Transfiguration. There are other blanks in the narrative besides that just referred to. We shall try to fill them up, as best we can. Perhaps it was the Sabbath when Peter's great confession was made; and the six days

of Matthew and Mark become the about eight days of Luke, when we reckon from that Sabbath to the close of another, and suppose that at even the Saviour ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with the three Apostles: Peter, James, and John. There can scarcely be a reasonable doubt that Christ and His disciples had not left the neighborhood of Caesarea, and hence, that the mountain must have been one of the slopes of gigantic, snowy Hermon. In that quiet semi-Gentile retreat of Caesarea Philippi could He best teach them, and they best learn, without interruption or temptation from Pharisees and Scribes, that terrible mystery of His Suffering. And on that gigantic mountain barrier which divided Jewish and Gentile lands, and while surveying, as Moses of old, the land to be occupied in all its extent, amidst the solemn solitude and majestic grandeur of Hermon, did it seem most fitting that, both by anticipatory fact and declamatory word, the Divine attestation should be given to the proclamation that He was the Messiah, and to this also, that, in a world that is in the power of sin and Satan, God's Elect must suffer, in order that, by ransoming, He may conquer it to God. But what a background, here, for the Transfiguration; what surroundings for the Vision, what echoes for the Voice from heaven!

It was evening, and, as we have suggested, the evening after the Sabbath, when the Master and those three of His disciples, who were most closely linked to Him in heart and thought, climbed the path that led up to one of the heights of Hermon. In all the most solemn transactions of earth's history, there has been this selection and separation of the few to witness God's great doings. Alone with his son, as the destined sacrifice, did Abraham climb Moriah; alone did Moses behold, amid the awful loneliness of the wilderness, the burning bush, and alone on Sinai's height did he commune with God; alone was Elijah at Horeb, and with no other companion to view it than Elisha did he ascend into heaven. But Jesus, the Saviour of His people, could not be quite alone, save in those innermost transactions of His soul: in the great contest of His first Temptation, and in the solitary communings of His heart with God. These are mysteries which the outspread wings of Angels, as reverently they hide their faces, conceal from earth's, and even heaven's vision. But otherwise, in the most solemn turning-points of this history, Jesus could not be alone, and yet was alone with those three chosen ones, most receptive of Him, and most representative of the Church. It was so in the house of Jairus, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

As Luke alone informs us, it was to pray that Jesus took them apart up into that mountain. To pray no doubt in connection with those sayings; since their reception required quite as much the direct teaching of the Heavenly Father, as had the previous confession of Peter, of which it was, indeed, the complement, the other aspect, the twin height. And the Transfiguration, with its attendant glorified Ministry and Voice from heaven, was God's answer to that prayer.

What has already been stated, has convinced us that it could not have been to one of the highest peaks of Hermon, as most modern writers suppose, that Jesus led His companions. There are three such peaks: those north and south, of about equal height (9,400 feet above the sea, and nearly 11,000 above the Jordan valley), are only 500 paces distant from each other, while the third, to the west (about 100 feet lower), is separated from the others by a narrow valley. Now, to climb the top of Hermon is, even from the nearest point, an alpine ascent, trying and fatiguing, which would occupy a whole day (six hours in the ascent and four in the descent), and require provisions of food and water; while, from the keenness of the air, it would be impossible to spend the night on the top. ³ To all this there is no allusion in the text, nor slightest hint of either difficulties or preparations, such as otherwise would have been required. Indeed, a contrary impression is left on the mind.

Up into an high mountain apart to pray. The Sabbath-sun had set, and a delicious cool hung in the summer air, as Jesus and the three commenced their ascent. From all parts of the land, far as Jerusalem or Tyre, the one great object in view must always have been snow-clad Hermon. And now it stood out before them as, to the memory of the traveller in the West, Monte Rosa or Mont Blanc in all the wondrous glory of a sunset: first rose-colored, then deepening red, next the death-like pallor, and the darkness relieved by the snow, in quick succession. From high up there, as one describes it, ⁶ a deep ruby flush came over all the scene, and warm purple shadows crept slowly on. The sea of

Galilee was lit up with a delicate greenish-yellow hue, between its dim walls of hill. The flush died out in a few minutes, and a pale, steel-coloured shade succeeded. . . . A long pyramidal shadow slid down to the eastern foot of Hermon, and crept across the great plain; Damascus was swallowed up by it; and finally the pointed end of the shadow stood out distinctly against the sky a dusky cone of dull colour against the flush of the afterglow. It was the shadow of the mountain itself, stretching away for seventy miles across the plain the most marvellous shadow perhaps to be seen anywhere. The sun underwent strange changes of shape in the thick vapours now almost square, now like a domed Temple until at length it slid into the sea, and went out like a blue spark. And overhead shone out in the blue summer-sky, one by one, the stars in Eastern brilliancy. We know not the exact direction which the climbers took, nor how far their journey went. But there is only one road that leads from Caesarea Philippi to Hermon, and we cannot be mistaken in following it. First, among vine-clad hills stocked with mulberry, apricot and fig-trees; then, through corn-fields where the pear tree supplants the fig; next, through oak coppice, and up rocky ravines to where the soil is dotted with dwarf shrubs. And if we pursue the ascent, it still becomes steeper, till the first ridge of snow is crossed, after which turfy banks, gravelly slopes, and broad snow-patches alternate. The top of Hermon in summer and it can only be ascended in summer or autumn is free from snow, but broad patches run down the sides expanding as they descend. To the very summit it is well earthed; to 500 feet below it, studded with countless plants, higher up with dwarf clumps.

As they ascend in the cool of that Sabbath evening, the keen mountain air must have breathed strength into the climbers, and the scent of snow for which the parched tongue would long in summer's heat have refreshed them. We know not what part may have been open to them of the glorious panorama from Hermon embracing as it does a great part of Syria from the sea to Damascus, from the Lebanon and the gorge of the Litany to the mountains of Moab; or down the Jordan valley to the Dead Sea; or over Galilee, Samaria, and on to Jerusalem and beyond it. But such darkness as that of a summer's night would creep on. And now the moon shone out in dazzling splendour, cast long shadows over the mountain, and lit up the broad patches of snow, reflecting their brilliancy on the objects around.

On that mountain-top He prayed. Although the text does not expressly state it, we can scarcely doubt, that He prayed with them, and still less, that He prayed for them, as did the prophet for his servant, when the city was surrounded by Syrian horsemen: that his eyes might be opened to behold heaven's host the far more that are with us than they that are with them. And, with deep reverence be it said, for Himself also did Jesus pray. For, as the pale moonlight shone on the fields of snow in the deep passes of Hermon, so did the light of the coming night shine on the cold glitter of Death in the near future. He needed prayer, that in it His Soul might lie calm and still perfect, in the unruffled quiet of His self-surrender, the absolute rest of His Faith, and the victory of His sacrificial obedience. And He needed prayer also, as the introduction to, and preparation for, His Transfiguration. Truly, He stood on Hermon. It was the highest ascent, the widest prospect into the past, present, and future, in His Earthly Life. Yet was it but Hermon at night. And this is the human, or rather the Theanthropic view of this prayer, and of its consequence.

As we understand it, the prayer with them had ceased, or it had merged into silent prayer of each, or Jesus now prayed alone and apart, when what gives this scene such a truly human and truthful aspect ensued. It was but natural for these men of simple habits, at night, and after the long ascent, and in the strong mountain-air, to be heavy with sleep. And we also know it as a psychological fact, that, in quick reaction after the overpowering influence of the strongest emotions, drowsiness would creep over their limbs and senses. They were heavy weighted with sleep as afterwards at Gethsemane their eyes were weighted. Yet they struggled with it, and it is quite consistent with experience, that they should continue in that state of semi-stupor, during what passed between Moses and Elijah and Christ, and also be fully awake to see His Glory, and the two men who stood with Him. In any case this descriptive trait, so far from being (as negative critics would have it), a later embellishment could only have formed part of a primitive account, since it is impossible to conceive

any rational motive for its later addition.

What they saw was their Master, while praying, transformed. The form of God shone through the form of a servant; the appearance of His Face became other it did shine as the sun. Nay, the whole Figure seemed bathed in light, the very garments whiter far than the snow on which the moon shone so as no fuller on earth can white them glittering white as the light. And more than this they saw and heard. They saw with Him two men whom, in their heightened sensitiveness to spiritual phenomena, they could have no difficulty in recognising, by such of their conversation as they heard, as Moses and Elijah. 23 The column was now complete: the base in the Law; the shaft in that Prophetism of which Elijah was the great Representative in his first Mission, as fulfilling the primary object of the Prophets: to call Israel back to God; and, in his second Mission, this other aspect of the Prophets work, to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God; and the apex in Christ Himself a unity completely fitting together in all its parts. And they heard also, that they spake of His Exodus outgoing which He was about to fulfil at Jerusalem. Although the term Exodus outgoing occurs otherwise for death we must bear in mind its meaning as contrasted with that in which the same Evangelic writer designates the Birth of Christ, as His incoming. In truth, it implies not only His Decease, but its manner, and even His Resurrection and Ascension. In that sense we can understand the better, as on the lips of Moses and Elijah, this about His fulfilling that Exodus: accomplishing it in all its fulness, and so completing Law and Prophecy, type and prediction.

And still that night of glory had not ended. A strange peculiarity has been noticed about Hermon in the extreme rapidity of the formation of cloud on the summit. In a few minutes a thick cap forms over the top of the mountain, and as quickly disperses and entirely disappears. It almost seems as if this, like the natural position of Hermon itself, was, if not to be connected with, yet, so to speak, to form the background to what was to be enacted. Suddenly a cloud passed over the clear brow of the mountain not an ordinary, but a luminous cloud a cloud uplift, filled with light. As it laid itself between Jesus and the two Old Testament Representatives, it parted, and presently enwrapped them. Most significant is it, suggestive of the presence of God, revealing, yet concealing a cloud, yet luminous. And this cloud overshadowed the disciples: the shadow of its light fell upon them. A nameless terror seized them. Fain would they have held what seemed forever to escape their grasp. Such vision had never before been vouchsafed to mortal man as had fallen on their sight; they had already heard Heaven's converse; they had tasted Angels Food, the Bread of His Presence. Could the vision not be perpetuated at least prolonged? In the confusion of their terror they knew not how otherwise to word it, than by an expression of ecstatic longing for the continuance of what they had, of their earnest readiness to do their little best, if they could but secure it make booths for the heavenly Visitants and themselves wait in humble service and reverent attention on what their dull heaviness had prevented their enjoying and profiting by, to the full. They knew and felt it: Lord' Rabbi' Master' it is good for us to be here' and they longed to have it; yet how to secure it, their terror could not suggest, save in the language of ignorance and semi-conscious confusion. They wist not what they said. In presence of the luminous cloud that enwrapt those glorified Saints, they spake from out that darkness which compassed them about.

And now the light-cloud was spreading; presently its fringe fell upon them. Heaven's awe was upon them: for the touch of the heavenly strains, almost to breaking, the bond betwixt body and soul. And a Voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My Beloved Son: hear Him. It had needed only One other Testimony to seal it all; One other Voice, to give both meaning and music to what had been the subject of Moses and Elijah's speaking. That Voice had now come not in testimony to any fact, but to a Person that of Jesus as His Beloved Son and in gracious direction to them. They heard it, falling on their faces in awestruck worship.

How long the silence had lasted, and the last rays of the cloud had passed, we know not. Presently, it was a gentle touch that roused them. It was the Hand of Jesus, as with words of comfort He reassured them: Arise, and be not afraid. And as, startled, they looked round about them, they saw no man save Jesus only. The Heavenly Visitants had gone, the last glow of the light-cloud had faded

away, the echoes of Heaven's Voice had died out. It was night, and they were on the Mount with Jesus, and with Jesus only.

Is it truth or falsehood; was it reality or vision, or part of both, this Transfiguration-scene on Hermon? One thing, at least, must be evident: if it be a true narrative, it cannot possibly describe a merely subjective vision without objective reality. But, in that case, it would be not only difficult, but impossible, to separate one part of the narrative the appearance of Moses and Elijah from the other, the Transfiguration of the Lord, and to assign to the latter objective reality, while regarding the former as merely a vision. But is the account true? It certainly represents primitive tradition, since it is not only told by all the three Evangelists, but referred to in 2 Peter i. 16-18, and evidently implied in the words of John, both in his Gospel, and in the opening of his First Epistle. Few, if any would be so bold as to assert that the whole of this history had been invented by the three Apostles, who professed to have been its witnesses. Nor can any adequate motive be imagined for its invention. It could not have been intended to prepare the Jews for the Crucifixion of the Messiah, since it was to be kept a secret till after His Resurrection; and, after the event, it could not have been necessary for the assurance of those who believed in the Resurrection, while to others it would carry no weight. Again, the special traits of this history are inconsistent with the theory of its invention. In a legend, the witnesses of such an event would not have been represented as scarcely awake, and not knowing what they said. Manifestly, the object would have been to convey the opposite impression. Lastly, it cannot be too often repeated, that, in view of the manifold witness of the Evangelists, amply confirmed in all essentials by the Epistles preached, lived, and bloodsealed by the primitive Church, and handed down as primitive tradition the most untenable theory seems that which imputes intentional fraud to their narratives, or, to put it otherwise, non-belief on the part of the narrators of what they related.

But can we suppose, if not fraud, yet mistake on the part of these witnesses, so that an event, otherwise naturally explicable, may, through their ignorance or imaginativeness, have assumed the proportions of this narrative? The investigation will be the more easy, that, as regards all the main features of the narrative, the three Evangelists are entirely agreed. Instead of examining in detail the various rationalistic attempts made to explain this history on natural grounds, it seems sufficient for refutation to ask the intelligent reader to attempt imagining any natural event, which by any possibility could have been mistaken for what the eyewitnesses related, and the Evangelists recorded.

There still remains the mythical theory of explanation, which, if it could be supported, would be the most attractive among those of a negative character. But we cannot imagine a legend without some historical motive or basis for its origination. The legend must be in character that is, congruous to the ideas and expectancies entertained. Such a history as that of the Transfiguration could not have been a pure invention; but if such or similar expectancies had existed about the Messiah, then such a legend might, without intentional fraud, have, by gradual accretion, gathered around the Person of Him Who was regarded as the Chri And this is the rationale of the so-called mythical theory. But all such ideas vanish at the touch of history. There was absolutely no Jewish expectancy that could have bodied itself forth in a narrative like that of the Transfiguration. To begin with the accessories, the idea, that the coming of Moses was to be connected with that of the Messiah, rests not only on an exaggeration, but on a dubious and difficult passage in the Jerusalem Targum. It is quite true, that the face of Moses shone when he came down from the Mount; but, if this is to be regarded as the basis of the Transfiguration of Jesus, the presence of Elijah would not be in point. On the other hand to pass over other inconsistencies anything more un-Jewish could scarcely be imagined than a Messiah crucified, or that Moses and Elijah should appear to converse with Him on such a Death! If it be suggested, that the purpose was to represent the Law and the Prophets as bearing testimony to the Dying of the Messiah, we fully admit it. Certainly, this is the New Testament and the true idea concerning the Christ; but equally certainly, it was not and is not, that of the Jews concerning the Messiah.

If it is impossible to regard this narrative as a fraud; hopeless, to attempt explaining it as a natural

event; and utterly unaccountable, when viewed in connection with contemporary thought or expectancy in short, if all negative theories fail, let us see whether, and how on the supposition of its reality, it will fit into the general narrative. To begin with: if our previous investigations have rightly led us up to this result, that Jesus was the Very Christ of God, then this event can scarcely be described as miraculous at least in such a history. If we would not expect it, it is certainly that which might have been expected. For, first, it was (and at that particular period) a necessary stage in the Lord's History, viewed in the light in which the Gospels present Him. Secondly, it was needful for His own strengthening, even as the Ministry of the Angels after the Temptation. Thirdly, it was good for these three disciples to be there: not only for future witness, but for present help, and also with special reference to Peter's remonstrance against Christ's death-message. Lastly, the Voice from heaven, in hearing of His disciples, was of the deepest importance. Coming after the announcement of His Death and Passion, it sealed that testimony, and, in view of it, proclaimed Him as the Prophet to Whom Moses had bidden Israel hearken, while it repeated the heavenly utterance concerning Him made at His Baptism.

But, for us all, the interest of this history lies not only in the past; it is in the present also, and in the future. To all ages it is like the vision of the bush burning, in which was the Presence of God. And it points us forward to that transformation, of which that of Christ was the pledge, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption. As of old the beacon-fires, lighted from hill to hill, announced to them far away from Jerusalem the advent of solemn feast, so does the glory kindled on the Mount of Transfiguration shine through the darkness of the world, and tell of the Resurrection-Day. On Hermon the Lord and His disciples had reached the highest point in this history. Henceforth it is a descent into the Valley of Humiliation and Death!

Chapter 2 On The Morrow of the Transfiguration

(Matthew 17:9-21; Mark 9:9-29: Luke 9:37-43.)

It was the early dawn of another summer's day when the Master and His disciples turned their steps once more towards the plain. They had seen His Glory; they had had the most solemn witness which, as Jews, they could have; and they had gained a new knowledge of the Old Testament. It all bore reference to the Christ, and it spake of His Decease. Perhaps on that morning better than in the previous night did they realise the vision, and feel its calm happiness. It was to their souls like the morning-air which they breathed on that mountain.

It would be only natural, that their thoughts should also wander to the companions and fellow-disciples whom, on the previous evening, they had left in the valley beneath. How much they had to tell them, and how glad they would be of the tidings they would hear! That one night had forever answered so many questions about that most hard of all His sayings: concerning His Rejection and violent Death at Jerusalem; it had shed heavenly light into that terrible gloom! They at least these three had formerly simply submitted to the saying of Christ because it was His, without understanding it; but now they had learned to see it in quite another light. How they must have longed to impart it to those whose difficulties were at least as great, perhaps greater, who perhaps had not yet recovered from the rude shock which their Messianic thoughts and hopes had so lately received. We think here especially of those, whom, so far as individuality of thinking is concerned, we may designate as the representative three, and the counterpart of the three chosen Apostles: Philip, who ever sought firm standing-ground for faith; Thomas, who wanted evidence for believing; and Judas, whose burning Jewish zeal for a Jewish Messiah had already begun to consume his own soul, as the wind had driven back upon himself the flame that had been kindled. Every question of a Philip, every doubt of a Thomas, every despairing wild outburst of a Judas, would be met by what they had now to

tell.

But it was not to be so. Evidently, it was not an event to be made generally known, either to the people or even to the great body of the disciples. They could not have understood its real meaning; they would have misunderstood, and in their ignorance misapplied to carnal Jewish purposes, its heavenly lessons. But even the rest of the Apostles must not know of it: that they were not qualified to witness it, proved that they were not prepared to hear of it. We cannot for a moment imagine, that there was favouritism in the selection of certain Apostles to share in what the others might not witness. It was not because these were better loved, but because they were better prepared more fully receptive, more readily acquiescing, more entirely self-surrendering. Too often we commit in our estimate the error of thinking of them exclusively as Apostles, not as disciples; as our teachers, not as His learners, with all the failings of men, the prejudices of Jews, and the unbelief natural to us all, but assuming in each individual special forms, and appearing as characteristic weaknesses.

And so it was that, when the silence of that morning-descent was broken, the Master laid on them the command to tell no man of this vision, till after the Son of Man was risen from the dead. This mysterious injunction of silence affords another presumptive evidence against the invention, or the rationalistic explanations, or the mythical origin of this narrative. It also teaches two further lessons. The silence thus enjoined was the first step into the Valley of Humiliation. It was also a test, whether they had understood the spiritual teaching of the vision. And their strict obedience, not questioning even the grounds of the injunction, proved that they had learned it. So entire, indeed, was their submission, that they dared not even ask the Master about a new and seemingly greater mystery than they had yet heard: the meaning of the Son of Man rising from the Dead. Did it refer to the general Resurrection; was the Messiah to be the first to rise from the dead, and to waken the other sleepers or was it only a figurative expression for His triumph and vindication? Evidently, they knew as yet nothing of Christ's Personal Resurrection as separate from that of others, and on the third day after His Death. And yet it was so near! So ignorant were they, and so unprepared! And they dared not ask the Master of it. This much they had already learned: not to question the mysteries of the future, but simply to receive them. But in their inmost hearts they kept that saying as the Virgin Mother had kept many a like saying carrying it about with them as a precious living germ that would presently spring up and bear fruit, or as that which would kindle into light and chase all darkness. But among themselves, then and many times afterwards, in secret converse, they questioned what the rising again from the dead should mean.

There was another question, and it they might ask of Jesus, since it concerned not the mysteries of the future, but the lessons of the past. Thinking of that vision, of the appearance of Elijah and of his speaking of the Death of the Messiah, why did the Scribes say that Elijah should first come and, as was the universal teaching, for the purpose of restoring all things? If, as they had seen, Elijah had come, but only for a brief season, not to abide, along with Moses, as they had fondly wished when they proposed to rear them booths; if he had come not to the people but to Christ, in view of only them three and they were not even to tell of it; and, if it had been, not to prepare for a spiritual restoration, but to speak of what implied the opposite: the Rejection and violent Death of the Messiah then, were the Scribes right in their teaching, and what was its real meaning? The question afforded the opportunity of presenting to the disciples not only a solution of their difficulties, but another insight into the necessity of His Rejection and Death. They had failed to distinguish between the coming of Elijah and its alternative sequence. Truly Elias cometh first' and Elijah had come already in the person of John the Baptist. The divinely intended object of Elijah's coming was to restore all things. This, of course, implied a moral element in the submission of the people to God, and their willingness to receive his message. Otherwise there was this Divine alternative in the prophecy of Malachi: Lest I come to smite the land with the ban (Cherem). Elijah had come; if the people had received his message, there would have been the promised restoration of all things. As the Lord had said on a previous occasion : If ye are willing to receive him, this is Elijah, which is to come. Similarly, if Israel had received the Christ, He would have gathered them as a hen her chickens for protection; He

would not only have been, but have visibly appeared as, their King. But Israel did not know their Elijah, and did unto him whatsoever they listed; and so, in logical sequence, would the Son of Man also suffer of them. And thus has the other part of Malachi's prophecy been fulfilled: and the land of Israel been smitten with the ban.

Amidst such conversation the descent from the mountain was accomplished. Presently they found themselves in view of a scene, which only too clearly showed that unfitness of the disciples for the heavenly vision of the preceding night, to which reference has been made. For, amidst the divergence of details between the narratives of Matthew and Mark, and, so far as it goes, that of Luke, the one point in which they almost literally and emphatically accord is, when the Lord speaks of them, in language of bitter disappointment and sorrow, as a generation with whose want of faith, notwithstanding all that they had seen and learned, He had still to bear, expressly attributing their failure in restoring the lunatic, to their unbelief.

It was, indeed, a terrible contrast between the scene below and that vision of Moses and Elijah, when they had spoken of the Exodus of the Christ, and the Divine Voice had attested the Christ from out the luminous cloud. A concourse of excited people among them once more Scribes who had tracked the Lord and come upon His weakest disciples in the hour of their greatest weakness is gathered about a man who had in vain brought his lunatic son for healing. He is eagerly questioned by the multitude, and moodily answers; or, as it might almost seem from Matthew, 9 he is leaving the crowd and those from whom he had vainly sought help. This was the hour of triumph for these Scribes. The Master had refused the challenge in Dalmanutha, and the disciples, accepting it, had signally failed. There they were, questioning with them noisily, discussing this and all similar phenomena, but chiefly the power, authority, and reality of the Master. It reminds us of Israel's temptation in the wilderness, and we should scarcely wonder, if they had even questioned the return of Jesus, as they of old did that of Moses.

At that very moment, Jesus appeared with the three. We cannot wonder that, when they saw Him, they were greatly amazed, and running to Him saluted Him. He came as always, and to us also unexpectedly, most opportunely, and for the real decision of the question in hand. There was immediate calm, preceding victory. Before the Master's inquiry about the cause of this violent discussion could be answered, the man who had been its occasion came forward. With lowliest gesture (kneeling to Him) he addressed Jesus. At last he had found Him, Whom he had come to seek; and, if possibility of help there were, oh! let it be granted. Describing the symptoms of his son's distemper, which were those of epilepsy and mania although both the father and Jesus rightly attributed the disease to demoniac influence he told, how he had come in search of the Master, but only found the nine disciples, and how they had presumptuously attempted, and signally failed in the attempted cure.

Why had they failed? For the same reason, that they had not been taken into the Mount of Transfiguration because they were faithless because of their unbelief. They had that outward faith of the probatum est (it is proved); they believed because, and what, they had seen; and they were drawn closer to Christ at least almost all of them, though in varying measure as to Him Who, and Who alone, spake the words of eternal life which, with wondrous power, had swayed their souls, or laid them to heaven's rest. But that deeper, truer faith, which consisted in the spiritual view of that which was the unseen in Christ, and that higher power, which flows from such apprehension, they had not. In such faith as they had, they spake, repeated forms of exorcism, tried to imitate their Master. But they signally failed, as did those seven Jewish Priest-sons at Ephesus. And it was intended that they should fail, that so to them and to us the higher meaning of faith as contrasted with power, the inward as contrasted with the merely outward qualification, might appear. In that hour of crisis, in the presence of questioning Scribes and a wondering populace, and in the absence of the Christ, only one power could prevail, that of spiritual faith; and that kind could not come out but by prayer. It is this lesson, viewed also in organic connection with all that had happened since the great temptation at Dalmanutha, which furnishes the explanation of the whole history. For one moment we

have a glimpse into the Saviour's soul: the poignant sorrow of His disappointment at the unbelief of the faithless and perverse generation with which He had so long borne; the infinite patience and condescension, the Divine need be of His having thus to bear even with His own, together with the deep humiliation and keen pang which it involved; and the almost home-longing, as one has called it, of His soul. These are mysteries to adore. The next moment Jesus turns Him to the father. At His command the lunatic is brought to Him. In the presence of Jesus, and in view of the coming contest between Light and Darkness, one of those paroxysms of demoniac operation ensues, such as we have witnessed on all similar occasions. This was allowed to pass in view of all. But both this, and the question as to the length of time the lunatic had been afflicted, together with the answer, and the description of the dangers involved, which it elicited, were evidently intended to point the lesson of the need of a higher faith. To the father, however, who knew not the mode of treatment by the Heavenly Physician, they seemed like the questions of an earthly healer who must consider the symptoms before he could attempt to cure. If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. It was but natural and yet it was the turning-point in this whole history, alike as regarded the healing of the lunatic, the better leading of his father, the teaching of the disciples, and that of the multitude and the Scribes. There is all the calm majesty of Divine self-consciousness, yet without trace of self-assertion, when Jesus, utterly ignoring the if Thou canst turns to the man and tells him that, while with the Divine Helper there is the possibility of all help, it is conditioned by a possibility in ourselves, by man's receptiveness, by his faith. Not, if the Christ can do anything or even everything, but, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. The question is not, it can never be, as the man had put it; it must not even be answered, but ignored. It must ever be, not what He can, but what we can. When the infinite fulness is poured forth, as it ever is in Christ, it is not the oil that is stayed, but the vessels which fail. He giveth richly, inexhaustibly, but not mechanically; there is only one condition, the moral one of the presence of absolute faith our receptiveness. And so these words have to all time remained the teaching to every individual striver in the battle of the higher life, and to the Church as a whole the in hoc signo vinces over the Cross, the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

It was a lesson, of which the reality was attested by the hold which it took on the man's whole nature. While by one great outgoing of his soul he overleapt all, to lay hold on the one fact set before him, he felt all the more the dark chasm of unbelief behind him, but he also clung to that Christ, Whose teaching of faith had shown him, together with the possibility, the source of faith. Thus through he felt unbelief of faith he attained true faith by laying hold on the Divine Saviour, when he cried out and said: 20 Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. 21 These words have remained historic, marking all true faith, which, even as faith, is conscious of, nay implies, unbelief, but brings it to Christ for help. The most bold leap of faith and the timid resting at His Feet, the first beginning and the last ending of faith, have alike this as their watchword.

Such cry could not be, and never is, unheard. It was real demoniac influence which, continuing with this man from childhood onwards, had well-nigh crushed all moral individuality in him. In his many lucid intervals these many years, since he had grown from a child into a youth, he had never sought to shake off the yoke and regain his moral individuality, nor would he even now have come, if his father had not brought him. If any, this narrative shows the view which the Gospels and Jesus took of what are described as the demonised. It was a reality, and not accommodation to Jewish views, when, as He saw the multitude running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him: Dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and no more come into him.

Another and a more violent paroxysm, so that the bystanders almost thought him dead. But the unclean spirit had come out of him. And with strong gentle Hand the Saviour lifted him, and with loving gesture delivered him to his father.

All things had been possible to faith; not to that external belief of the disciples, which failed to reach that kind and ever fails to reach such kind, but to true spiritual faith in Him. And so it is to each of us individually, and to the Church, to all time. That kind' whether it be of sin, of lust, of the world, or of

science falsely so called, of temptation, or of materialism cometh not out by any of our ready-made formulas or dead dogmas. Not so are the flesh and the Devil vanquished; not so is the world overcome. It cometh out by nothing but by prayer: Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. Then, although our faith were only what in popular language was described as the smallest' like a grain of mustard-seed' and the result to be achieved the greatest, most difficult, seemingly transcending human ability to compass it what in popular language was designated as removing mountains nothing shall be impossible unto us. And these eighteen centuries of suffering in Christ, and deliverance through Christ, and work for Christ, have proved it. For all things are ours, if Christ is ours.

Chapter 3 The Last Events in Galilee

The Tribute-Money The Dispute by the Way The Forbidding of Him who could not Follow with the Disciples, and the Consequent Teaching of Christ

(Matthew 17:22-18:22; Mark 9:30-50; Luke 9:43-50.)

Now that the Lord's retreat in the utmost borders of the land, at Caesarea Philippi, was known to the Scribes, and that He was again surrounded and followed by the multitude, there could be no further object in His retirement. Indeed, the time was coming that He should meet that for which He had been, and was still, preparing the minds of His disciples His Decease at Jerusalem. Accordingly, we find Him once more with His disciples in Galilee not to abide there, nor to traverse it as formerly for Missionary purposes, but preparatory to His journey to the Feast of Tabernacles. The few events of this brief stay, and the teaching connected with it, may be summed up as follows.

1. Prominently, perhaps, as the summary of all, we have now the clear and emphatic repetition of the prediction of His Death and Resurrection. While He would keep His present stay in Galilee as private as possible, He would fain so emphasise this teaching to His disciples, that it should sink down into their ears and memories. For it was, indeed, the most needful for them in view of the immediate future. Yet the announcement only filled their loving hearts with exceeding sorrow; they comprehend it not; nay, they were perhaps not unnaturally afraid to ask Him about it. We remember, that even the three who had been with Jesus on the Mount, understood not what the rising from the dead should mean, and that, by direction of the Master, they kept the whole Vision from their fellow-disciples; and, thinking of it all, we scarcely wonder that, from their standpoint, it was hid from them, so that they might not perceive it.

2. It is to the depression caused by His insistence on this terrible future, to the constant apprehension of near danger, and the consequent desire not to offend and so provoke those at whose hands, Christ had told them, He was to suffer, that we trace the incident about the tribute-money. We can scarcely believe, that Peter would have answered as he did, without previous permission of his Master, had it not been for such thoughts and fears. It was another mode of saying, That be far from Thee' or, rather, trying to keep it as far as he could from Chri Indeed, we can scarcely repress the feeling, that there was a certain amount of secretiveness on the part of Peter, as if he had apprehended that Jesus would not have wished him to act as he did, and would fain have kept the whole transaction from the knowledge of his Master.

It is well known that, on the ground of the injunction in Exod. xxx. 13 &c., every male in Israel, from twenty years upwards, was expected annually to contribute to the Temple-Treasury the sum of one half-shekel of the Sanctuary, that is, one common shekel, or two Attic drachms, equivalent to about 1s. 2d. or 1s. 3d. of our money. Whether or not the original Biblical ordinance had been intended to institute a regular annual contribution, the Jews of the Dispersion would probably regard it in the light

of a patriotic as well as religious act.

To the particulars previously given on this subject a few others may be added. The family of the Chief of the Sanhedrin (Gamaliel) seems to have enjoyed the curious distinction of bringing their contributions to the Temple-Treasury, not like others, but to have thrown them down before him who opened the Temple-Chest, when they were immediately placed in the box from which, without delay, sacrifices were provided., the commentators explain a certain passage in the Mishnah and the Talmud as implying that, although the Jews in Palestine had to pay the tribute-money before the Passover, those from neighbouring lands might bring it before the Feast of Weeks, and those from such remote countries as Babylonia and Media as late as the Feast of Tabernacles. Lastly, although the Mishnah lays it down, that the goods of those might be distrained, who had not paid the Temple-tribute by the 25th Adar, it is scarcely credible that this obtained at the time of Christ, at any rate in Galilee. Indeed, this seems implied in the statement of the Mishnah and the Talmud, that one of the thirteen trumpets in the Temple, into which contributions were cast, was destined for the shekels of the current, and another for those of the preceding, year. Finally, these Temple-contributions were in the first place devoted to the purchase of all public sacrifices, that is, those which were offered in the name of the whole congregation of Israel, such as the morning and evening sacrifices. It will be remembered, that this was one of the points in fierce dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and that the former perpetuated their triumph by marking its anniversary as a festive day in their calendar. It seems a terrible irony of judgment when Vespasian ordered, after the destruction of the Temple, that this tribute should henceforth be paid for the rebuilding of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

It will be remembered that, shortly before the previous Passover, Jesus with His disciples had left Capernaum, That they returned to the latter city only for the Sabbath, and that, as we have suggested, they passed the first Paschal days on the borders of Tyre. We have, indeed, no means of knowing where the Master had tarried during the ten days between the 15th and the 25th Adar, supposing the Mishnic arrangements to have been in force in Capernaum. He was certainly not at Capernaum, and it must also have been known, that He had not gone up to Jerusalem for the Passover. Accordingly, when it was told in Capernaum, that the Rabbi of Nazareth had once more come to what seems to have been His Galilean home, it was only natural, that they who collected the Temple-tribute should have applied for its payment. It is quite possible, that their application may have been, if not prompted, yet quickened, by the wish to involve Him in a breach of so well-known an obligation, or else by a hostile curiosity. Would He, Who took so strangely different views of Jewish observances, and Who made such extraordinary claims, own the duty of paying the Temple-tribute? Had it been owing to His absence, or from principle, that He had not paid it last Passover-season? The question which they put to Peter implies, at least, their doubt.

We have already seen what motives prompted the hasty reply of Peter. He might, indeed, also otherwise, in his rashness, have given an affirmative answer to the inquiry, without first consulting the Master. For there seems little doubt, that Jesus had on former occasions complied with the Jewish custom. But matters were now wholly changed. Since the first Passover, which had marked His first public appearance in the Temple at Jerusalem, He had stated and quite lately in most explicit terms that He was the Christ, the Son of God. To have now paid the Temple-tribute, without explanation, might have involved a very serious misapprehension. In view of all this, the history before us seems alike simple and natural. There is no pretext for the artificial construction put upon it by commentators, any more than for the suggestion, that such was the poverty of the Master and His disciples, that the small sum requisite for the Temple-tribute had to be miraculously supplied.

We picture it to ourselves on this wise. Those who received the tribute-money had come to Peter, and perhaps met him in the court or corridor, and asked him: Your Teacher (Rabbi), does He not pay the didrachma? While Peter hastily responded in the affirmative, and then entered into the house to procure the coin, or else to report what has passed, Jesus, Who had been in another part of the house, but was cognizant of all, anticipated him. Addressing him in kindly language as Simon He

pointed out the real state of matters by an illustration which must, of course, not be too literally pressed, and of which the meaning was: Whom does a King intend to tax for the maintenance of his palace and officers? Surely not his own family, but others. The inference from this, as regarded the Temple-tribute, was obvious. As in all similar Jewish parabolic teaching, it was only indicated in general principle: Then are the children free. But even so, be it as Peter had wished, although not from the same motive. Let no needless offence be given; for, assuredly, they would not have understood the principle on which Christ would have refused the tribute money, and all misunderstanding on the part of Peter was now impossible. Yet Christ would still further vindicate His royal title. He will pay for Peter also, and pay, as heaven's King, with a Stater, or four-drachma piece, miraculously provided.

Thus viewed, there is, we submit, a moral purpose and spiritual instruction in the provision of the Stater out of the fish's mouth. The rationalistic explanation of it need not be seriously considered; for any mythical interpretation there is not the shadow of support in Biblical precedent or Jewish expectancy. But the narrative in its literality has a true and high meaning. And if we wished to mark the difference between its sober simplicity and the extravagances of legend, we would remind ourselves, not only of the well-known story of the Ring of Polycrates, but of two somewhat kindred Jewish Haggadahs. They are both intended to glorify the Jewish mode of Sabbath observance. One of them bears that one Joseph, known as the honourer of the Sabbath, had a wealthy heathen neighbour, to whom the Chaldaeans had prophesied that all his riches would come to Joseph. To render this impossible, the wealthy man converted all his property into one magnificent gem, which he carefully concealed within his head-gear. Then he took ship, so as forever to avoid the dangerous vicinity of the Jew. But the wind blew his head-gear into the sea, and the gem was swallowed by a fish. And lo! it was the holy season, and they brought to the market a splendid fish. Who would purchase it but Joseph, for none as he would prepare to honour the day by the best which he could provide. But when they opened the fish, the gem was found in it the moral being: He that borroweth for the Sabbath, the Sabbath will repay him.

The other legend is similar. It was in Rome (in the Christian world) that a poor tailor went to market to buy a fish for a festive meal. Only one was on sale, and for it there was keen competition between the servant of a Prince and the Jew, the latter at last buying it for not less than twelve dinars. At the banquet, the Prince inquired of his servants why no fish had been provided. When he ascertained the cause, he sent for the Jew with the threatening inquiry, how a poor tailor could afford to pay twelve dinars for a fish? My Lord replied the Jew, there is a day on which all our sins are remitted us, and should we not honour it? The answer satisfied the Prince. But God rewarded the Jew, for, when the fish was opened, a precious gem was found in it, which he sold, and ever afterwards lived off the proceeds.

The reader can scarcely fail to mark the absolute difference between even the most beautiful Jewish legends and any trait in the Evangelic history.

3. The event next recorded in the Gospels took place partly on the way from the Mount of Transfiguration to Capernaum, and partly in Capernaum itself, immediately after the scene connected with the tribute-money. It is recorded by the three Evangelists, and it led to explanations and admonitions, which are told by Mark and Luke, but chiefly by Matthew. This circumstance seems to indicate, that the latter was the chief actor in that which occasioned this special teaching and warning of Christ, and that it must have sunk very deeply into his heart.

As we look at it, in the light of the then mental and spiritual state of the Apostles, not in that in which, perhaps naturally, we regard them, what happened seems not difficult to understand. As Mark puts it, by the way they had disputed among themselves which of them would be the greatest as Matthew explains, in the Messianic Kingdom of Heaven. They might now the more confidently expect its near Advent from the mysterious announcement of the Resurrection on the third day, which they would probably connect with the commencement of the last Judgment, following upon the violent Death of the Messiah. Of a dispute, serious and even violent, among the disciples, we have evidence

in the exhortation of the Master, as reported by Mark, in the direction of the Lord how to deal with an offending brother, and in the answering inquiry of Peter. Nor can we be at a loss to perceive its occasion. The distinction just bestowed on the three, in being taken up the Mount, may have roused feelings of jealousy in the others perhaps of self-exaltation in the three. Alike the spirit which John displayed in his harsh prohibition of the man that did not follow with the disciples, and the self-righteous bargaining of Peter about forgiving the supposed or real offences of a brother, give evidence of anything but the frame of mind which we would have expected after the Vision on the Mount.

In truth, most incongruous as it may appear to us, looking back on it in the light of the Resurrection, day, nay, almost incredible evidently, the Apostles were still greatly under the influence of the old spirit. It was the common Jewish view, that there would be distinctions of rank in the Kingdom of Heaven. It can scarcely be necessary to prove this by Rabbinic quotations, since the whole system of Rabbinism and Pharisaism, with its separation from the vulgar and ignorant, rests upon it. But even within the charmed circle of Rabbinism, there would be distinctions, due to learning, merit, and even to favouritism. In this world there were His special favourites, who could command anything at His hand, to use the Rabbinic illustration, like a spoilt child from its father. And in the Messianic age God would assign booths to each according to his rank. On the other hand, many passages could be quoted bearing on the duty of humility and self-abasement. But the stress laid on the merit attaching to this shows too clearly, that it was the pride that apes humility. One instance, previously referred to, will suffice by way of illustration. When the child of the great Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai was dangerously ill, he was restored through the prayer of one Chanina ben Dosa. On this the father of the child remarked to his wife: If the son of Zakkai had all day long put his head between his knees, no heed would have been given to him. How is that? asked his wife; is Chanina greater than thou? No was the reply, he is like a servant before the King, while I am like a prince before the King (he is always there, and has thus opportunities which I, as a lord, do not enjoy).

How deep-rooted were such thoughts and feelings, appears not only from the dispute of the disciples by the way, but from the request proffered by the mother of Zebedee's children and her sons at a later period, in terrible contrast to the near Passion of our Lord. It does, indeed come upon us as a most painful surprise, and as sadly incongruous, this constant self-obtrusion, self-assertion, and low, carnal self-seeking; this Judaistic trifling in face of the utter self-abnegation and self-sacrifice of the Son of Man. Surely, the contrast between Christ and His disciples seems at times almost as great as between Him and the other Jews. If we would measure His Stature, or comprehend the infinite distance between His aims and teaching and those of His contemporaries, let it be by comparison with even the best of His disciples. It must have been part of His humiliation and self-examination to bear with them. And is it not, in a sense, still so as regards us all?

We have already seen, that there was quite sufficient occasion and material for such a dispute on the way from the Mount of Transfiguration to Capernaum. We suppose Peter to have been only at the first with the others. To judge by the later question, how often he was to forgive the brother who had sinned against him, he may have been so deeply hurt, that he left the other disciples, and hastened on with the Master, Who would, at any rate, sojourn in his house. For, neither he nor Christ seem to have been present when John and the others forbade the man, who would not follow with them, to cast out demons in Christ's name. Again, the other disciples only came into Capernaum, and entered the house, just as Peter had gone for the Stater, with which to pay the Temple-tribute for the Master and himself. And, if speculation be permissible, we would suggest that the brother, whose offences Peter found it so difficult to forgive, may have been none other than Judas. In such a dispute by the way, he, with his Judaistic views, would be specially interested; perhaps he may have been its chief instigator; certainly, he, whose natural character, amidst its sharp contrasts to that of Peter, presented so many points of resemblance to it, would, on many grounds, be specially jealous of, and antagonistic to him.

Quite natural in view of this dispute by the way is another incident of the journey, which is afterwards

related. As we judge, John seems to have been the principal actor in it; perhaps, in the absence of Peter, he claimed the leadership. They had met one who was casting out demons in the name of Christ whether successfully or not, we need scarcely inquire. So widely had faith in the power of Jesus extended; so real was the belief in the subjection of the demons to Him; so reverent was the acknowledgment of Him. A man, who, thus forsaking the methods of Jewish exorcists, owned Jesus in the face of the Jewish world, could not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven; at any rate, he could not quickly speak evil of Him. John had, in name of the disciples, forbidden him, because he had not cast in his lot wholly with them. It was quite in the spirit of their ideas about the Messianic Kingdom, and of their dispute, which of His close followers would be greatest there. And yet, they might deceive themselves as to the motives of their conduct. If it were not almost impertinence to use such terms, we would have said that there was infinite wisdom and kindness in the answer which the Saviour gave, when referred to on the subject. To forbid a man, in such circumstances, would be either prompted by the spirit of the dispute by the way or else must be grounded on evidence that the motive was, or the effect would ultimately be (as in the case of the sons of Sceva) to lead men to speak evil of Christ, or to hinder the work of His disciples. Assuredly, such could not have been the case with a man, who invoked His name, and perhaps experienced its efficacy. More than this and here is an eternal principle: He that is not against us is for us; he that opposeth not the disciples, really is for them a saying still more clear, when we adopt the better reading in Luke, He that is not against you is for you.

There was reproof in this, as well as instruction, deeply consistent with that other, though seemingly different, saying: He that is not with Me is against Me. The distinction between them is twofold. In the one case it is not against in the other it is not with; but chiefly it lies in this: in the one case it is not against the disciples in their work, while in the other it is not with Christ. A man who did what he could with such knowledge of Christ as he possessed, even although he did not absolutely follow with them, was not against them. Such an one should be regarded as thus far with them; at least be let alone, left to Him Who knew all things. Such a man would not lightly speak evil of Christ and that was all the disciples should care for, unless, indeed, they sought their own. Quite other was it as regarded the relation of a person to the Christ Himself. There neutrality was impossible and that which was not with Christ, by this very fact was against Him. The lesson is of the most deep-reaching character, and the distinction, alas! still overlooked perhaps, because ours is too often the spirit of those who journeyed to Capernaum. Not, that it is unimportant to follow with the disciples, but that it is not ours to forbid any work done, however imperfectly, in His name, and that only one question is really vital whether or not a man is decidedly with Christ.

Such were the incidents by the way. And now, while withholding from Christ their dispute, and, indeed, anything that might seem personal in the question, the disciples, on entering the house where He was in Capernaum, addressed to Him this inquiry (which should be inserted from the opening words of Matthew's narrative): Who, then, is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? It was a general question but Jesus perceived the thought of their hearts; He knew about what they had disputed by the way, and now asked them concerning it. The account of Mark is most graphic. We almost see the scene. Conscience-stricken they held their peace. As we read the further words: And He sat down it seems as if the Master had at first gone to welcome the disciples on their arrival, and they, full of their dispute had, without delay, addressed their inquiry to him in the court or antechamber, where they met Him, when, reading their thoughts, He had first put the searching counter-question, what had been the subject of their dispute. Then, leading the way into the house, He sat down not only to answer their inquiry, which was not a real inquiry, but to teach them what so much they needed to learn. He called a little child perhaps Peter's little son and put him in the midst of them. Not to strive who was to be greatest, but to be utterly without self-consciousness, like a child thus, to become turned and entirely changed in mind: converted was the condition for entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Then, as to the question of greatness there, it was really one of greatness of service and that was greatest service which implied most self-denial. Suiting the action to the teaching, the

Blessed Saviour took the happy child in His arms. Not, to teach, to preach, to work miracles, nor to do great things, but to do the humblest service for Christ's sake lovingly, earnestly, wholly, self-forgetfully, simply for Christ, was to receive Christ nay, to receive the Father. And the smallest service, as it might seem even the giving a cup of cold water in such spirit, would not lose its reward. Blessed teaching this to the disciples and to us; blessed lesson, which, these many centuries of scorching heat, has been of unspeakable refreshing, alike to the giver and the receiver of the cup of water in the name of Christ, in the love of Christ, and for the sake of Christ.

These words about receiving Christ, and receiving in the name of Christ had stirred the memory and conscience of John, and made him half wonder, half fear, whether what they had done by the way, in forbidding the man to do what he could in the name of Christ, had been right. And so he told it, and received the further and higher teaching on the subject. And, more than this, Mark and, more fully, Matthew, record some further instruction in connection with it, to which Luke refers, in a slightly different form, at a somewhat later period. But it seems so congruous to the present occasion, that we conclude it was then spoken, although, like other sayings, it may have been afterwards repeated under similar circumstances. Certainly, no more effective continuation, and application to Jewish minds, of the teaching of our Lord could be conceived than that which follows. For, the love of Christ goes deeper than the condescension of receiving a child, utterly un-Pharisaic and un-Rabbinic as this is. To have regard to the weaknesses of such a child to its mental and moral ignorance and folly, to adapt ourselves to it, to restrain our fuller knowledge and forego our felt liberty, so as not to offend' not to give occasion for stumbling to one of these little ones that so through our knowledge the weak brother for whom Christ died should not perish: this is a lesson which reaches even deeper than the question, what is the condition of entrance into the Kingdom, or what service constitutes real greatness in it. A man may enter into the Kingdom and do service yet, if in so doing he disregard the law of love to the little ones, far better his work should be abruptly cut short; better, one of those large millstones, turned by an ass, were hung about his neck and he cast into the sea! We pause to note, once more, the Judaic, and, therefore, evidential, setting of the Evangelic narrative. The Talmud also speaks of two kinds of millstones the one turned by hand (dyd Myyxr), referred to in Luke xvii. 35; the other turned by an ass (muloV oniloV), just as the Talmud also speaks of the ass of the millstone (yxyrd `ymx). Similarly, the figure about a millstone hung round the neck occurs also in the Talmud although there as figurative of almost insuperable difficulties. Again, the expression, it were better for him is a well-known Rabbinic expression (Mutabh hayah lo). Lastly, according to Jerome, the punishment which seems alluded to in the words of Christ, and which we know to have been inflicted by Augustus, was actually practised by the Romans in Galilee on some of the leaders of the insurrection under Judas of Galilee.

And yet greater guilt would only too surely be incurred! Woe unto the world! Occasions of stumbling and offence will surely come, but woe to the man through whom such havoc was wrought. What then is the alternative? If it be a question as between offence and some part of ourselves, a limb or member, however useful the hand, the foot, the eye then let it rather be severed from the body, however painful, or however seemingly great the loss. It cannot be so great as that of the whole being in the eternal fire of Gehenna, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. It hand, foot, or eye practice, pursuit, or research which consciously leads us to occasions of stumbling, it must be resolutely put aside in view of the incomparably greater loss of eternal remorse and anguish. Here Mark abruptly breaks off with a saying in which the Saviour makes general application, although the narrative is further continued by Matthew. The words reported by Mark are so remarkable, so brief, we had almost said truncated, as to require special consideration. It seems to us that, turning from this thought that even members which are intended for useful service may, in certain circumstances, have to be cut off to avoid the greatest loss, the Lord gave to His disciples this as the final summary and explanation of all: For every one shall be salted for the fire or, as a very early gloss, which has strangely crept into the text, paraphrased and explained it, Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. No one is fit for the sacrificial fire, no one can himself be, nor offer anything as a

sacrifice, unless it have been first, according to the Levitical Law, covered with salt, symbolic of the incorruptible. Salt is good; but if the salt with which the spiritual sacrifice is to be salted for the fire, have lost its savour, wherewith will ye season it? Hence, have salt in yourselves but do not let that salt be corrupted by making it an occasion of offence to others, or among yourselves, as in the dispute by the way, or in the disposition of mind that led to it, or in forbidding others to work who follow not with you, but be at peace among yourselves.

To this explanation of the words of Christ it may, perhaps, be added that, from their form, they must have conveyed a special meaning to the disciples. It is well-known law, that every sacrifice burned on the Altar must be salted with salt. Indeed, according to the Talmud, not only every such offering, but even the wood with which the sacrificial fire was kindled, was sprinkled with salt. Salt symbolised to the Jews of that time the incorruptible and the higher. Thus, the soul was compared to the salt, and it was said concerning the dead: Shake off the salt, and throw the flesh to the dogs. The Bible was compared to salt; so was acuteness of intellect. Lastly, the question: If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith will ye season it? seems to have been proverbial, and occurs in exactly the same words in the Talmud, apparently to denote a thing that is impossible.

Most thoroughly anti-Pharisaic and anti-Rabbinic as all this was, what Matthew further reports leads still farther in the same direction. We seem to see Jesus still holding this child, and, with evident reference to the Jewish contempt for that which is small, point to him and apply, in quite other manner than they had ever heard, the Rabbinic teaching about the Angels. In the Jewish view, only the chiefest of the Angels were before the Face of God within the curtained Veil, or Pargod, while the others, ranged in different classes, stood outside and awaited his behest. The distinction which the former enjoyed was always to behold His Face, and to hear and know directly the Divine counsels and commands. This distinction was, therefore, one of knowledge; Christ taught that it was one of love. Not the more exalted in knowledge, and merit, or worth, but the simpler, the more unconscious of self, the more receptive and clinging the nearer to God. Look up from earth to heaven; those representative, it may be, guardian, Angels nearest to God, are not those of deepest knowledge of God's counsel and commands, but those of simple, humble grace and faith and so learn, not only not to despise one of these little ones, but who is truly greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven!

Viewed in this light, there is nothing incongruous in the transition: For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. This, His greatest condescension when He became the Babe of Bethlehem, is also His greatest exaltation. He Who is nearest the Father, and, in the most special and unique sense, always beholds His Face, is He that became a Child, and, as the Son of Man, stoops lowest, to save that which was lost. The words are, indeed, regarded as spurious by most critics, because certain leading manuscripts omit them, and they are supposed to have been imported from Luke xix. 10. But such a transference from a context wholly unconnected with this section seems unaccountable, while, on the other hand, the verse in question forms, not only an apt, but almost necessary, transition to the Parable of the Lost Sheep. It seems, therefore, difficult to eliminate it without also striking out that Parable; and yet it fits most beautifully into the whole context. Suffice it for the present to note this. The Parable itself is more fully repeated in another connection, in which it will be more convenient to consider it.

Yet a further depth of Christian love remained to be shown, which, all self-forgetful, sought not its own, but the things of others. This also bore on the circumstances of the time, and the dispute between the disciples, but went far beyond it, and set forth eternal principles. Hitherto it had been a question of not seeking self, nor minding great things, but Christ-like and God-like, to condescend to the little ones. What if actual wrong had been done, and just offence given by a brother? In such case, also, the principle of the Kingdom which, negatively, is that of self-forgetfulness, positively, that of service of love would first seek the good of the offending brother. We mark, here, the contrast to Rabbinism, which directs that the first overtures must be made by the offender, not the offended; and even prescribes this to be done in the presence of numerous witnesses, and, if needful, repeated three times. As regards the duty of showing to a brother his fault, and the delicate tenderness of doing

this in private, so as not to put him to shame, Rabbinism speaks the same as the Master of Nazareth. In fact, according to Jewish criminal law, punishment could not be inflicted unless the offender (even the woman suspected of adultery) had previously been warned before witnesses. Yet, in practice, matters were very different: and neither could those be found who would take reproof, nor yet such as were worthy to administer it.

Quite other was it in the Kingdom of Christ, where the theory was left undefined, but the practice clearly marked. Here, by loving dealing, to convince of his wrong, him who had done it, was not humiliation nor loss of dignity or of right, but real gain: the gain of our brother to us, and eventually to Christ Himself. But even if this should fail, the offended must not desist from his service of love, but conjoin in it others with himself so as to give weight and authority to his remonstrances, as not being the outcome of personal feeling or prejudice perhaps, also, to be witnesses before the Divine tribunal. If this failed, a final appeal should be made on the part of the Church as a whole, which, of course, could only be done through her representatives and rulers, to whom Divine authority had been committed. And if that were rejected, the offer of love would, as always in the Gospel, pass into danger of judgment. Not, indeed, that such was to be executed by man, but that such an offender, after the first and second admonition, was to be rejected. He was to be treated as was the custom in regard to a heathen or a publican not persecuted, despised, or avoided, but not received in Church-fellowship (a heathen), nor admitted to close familiar intercourse (a publican). And this, as we understand it, marks out the mode of what is called Church discipline in general, and specifically as regards wrongs done to a brother. Discipline so exercised (which may God restore to us) has the highest Divine sanction, and the most earnest reality attaches to it. For, in virtue of the authority which Christ has committed to the Church in the persons of her rulers and representatives, what they bound or loosed declared obligatory or non-obligatory was ratified in heaven. Nor was this to be wondered at. The incarnation of Christ was the link which bound earth to heaven: through it whatever was agreed upon in the fellowship of Christ, as that which was to be asked, would be done for them of his Father Which was in heaven. Thus, the power of the Church reached up to heaven through the power of prayer in His Name Who made God our Father. And so, beyond the exercise of discipline and authority, there was the omnipotence of prayer 'if two of you shall agree . . . as touching anything . . . it shall be done for them' and, with it, also the infinite possibility of a higher service of love. For, in the smallest gathering in the Name of Christ, His Presence would be, and with it the certainty of nearness to, and acceptance with, God.

It is bitterly disappointing that, after such teaching, even a Peter could either immediately afterwards, or perhaps after he had had time to think it over, and apply it come to the Master with the question, how often he was to forgive an offending brother, imagining that he had more than satisfied the new requirements, if he extended it to seven times. Such traits show better than elaborate discussions the need of the mission and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. And yet there is something touching in the simplicity and honesty with which Peter goes to the Master with such a misapprehension of His teaching, as if he had fully entered into its spirit. Surely, the new wine was bursting the old bottles. It was a principle of Rabbinism that, even if the wrongdoer had made full restoration, he would not obtain forgiveness till he had asked it of him whom he had wronged, but that it was cruelty in such circumstances to refuse pardon. The Jerusalem Talmud 80 adds the beautiful remark: Let this be a token in thine hand each time that thou showest mercy, God will show mercy on thee; and if thou showest not mercy, neither will God show mercy on thee. And yet it was a settled rule, that forgiveness should not be extended more than three times. Even so, the practice was terribly different. The Talmud relates, without blame, the conduct of a Rabbi, who would not forgive a very small slight of his dignity, though asked by the offender for thirteen successive years, and that on the Day of Atonement the reason being, that the offended Rabbi had learned by a dream that his offending brother would attain the highest dignity, whereupon he feigned himself irreconcilable, to force the other to migrate from Palestine to Babylon, where, unenvied by him, he might occupy the chief place!

And so it must have seemed to Peter, in his ignorance, quite a stretch of charity to extend forgiveness to seven, instead of three offences. It did not occur to him, that the very act of numbering offences marked an externalism which had never entered into, nor comprehended the spirit of Christ. Until seven times? Nay, until seventy times seven! The evident purport of these words was to efface all such landmarks. Peter had yet to learn, what we, alas! too often forget: that as Christ's forgiveness, so that of the Christian, must not be computed by numbers. It is qualitative, not quantitative: Christ forgives sin, not sins and he who has experienced it, follows in His footsteps.

Chapter 4 The Journey to Jerusalem

Chronological Arrangement of the Last Part of the Gospel-Narratives First Incidents by the Way

(John 7:1-16; Luke 9:1-56, 57-62; Matthew 8:19-22.)

The part in the Evangelic History which we have now reached has this peculiarity and difficulty, that the events are now recorded by only one of the Evangelists. The section in Luke's Gospel from chapter ix. 51 to chapter xviii. 14 stands absolutely alone. From the circumstance that Luke omits throughout his narrative all notation of time or place, the difficulty of arranging here the chronological succession of events is so great, that we can only suggest what seems most probable, without feeling certain of the details. Happily, the period embraced is a short one, while at the same time the narrative of Luke remarkably fits into that of John. John mentions three appearances of Christ in Jerusalem at that period: at the Feast of Tabernacles, at that of the Dedication, and His final entry, which is referred to by all the other Evangelists. But, while the narrative of John confines itself exclusively to what happened in Jerusalem or its immediate neighborhood, it also either mentions or gives sufficient indication that on two out of these three occasions Jesus left Jerusalem for the country east of the Jordan (John x. 19-21; John x. 39-43, where the words in ver. 39, they sought again to take Him point to a previous similar attempt and flight). Besides these, John also records a journey to Bethany though not to Jerusalem for the raising of Lazarus, and after that a council against Christ in Jerusalem, in consequence of which He withdrew out of Judæan territory into a district near the wilderness as we infer, that in the north, where John had been baptizing and Christ been tempted, and whither He had afterwards withdrawn. We regard this wilderness as on the western bank of the Jordan', and extending northward towards the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee .

If John relates three appearances of Jesus at this time in Jerusalem, Luke records three journeys to Jerusalem, the last of which agrees, in regard to its starting point, with the notices of the other Evangelists, always supposing that we have correctly indicated the locality of the wilderness whither, according to John xi. 54, Christ retired previous to His last journey to Jerusalem . In this respect, although it is impossible with our present information to localise the City of Ephraim the statement that it was near the wilderness affords us sufficient general notice of its situation. For, the New Testament speaks of only two wilderness that of Judæa in the far South, and that in the far North of Peraea, or perhaps in the Decapolis, to which Luke refers as the scene of the Baptist's labours, where Jesus was tempted, and whither He afterwards withdrew. We can, therefore, have little doubt that John refers to this district. And this entirely accords with the notices by the other Evangelists of Christ's last journey to Jerusalem', as through the borders of Galilee and Samaria', and then across the Jordan', and by Bethany to Jerusalem .

It follows (as previously stated) that Luke's account of the three journeys to Jerusalem fits into the narrative of Christ's three appearances in Jerusalem as described by John . And the unique section in Luke 12:38-39 supplies the record of what took place before, during, and after those journeys, of

which the upshot is told by John. This much seems certain; the exact chronological succession must be, in part, matter of suggestion. But we have now some insight into the plan of Luke's Gospel, as compared with that of the others. We see that Luke forms a kind of transition, is a sort of connecting link between the other two Synoptists and John. This is admitted even by negative critics. The Gospel by Matthew has for its main object the Discourses or teaching of the Lord, around which the History groups itself. It is intended as a demonstration, primarily addressed to the Jews, and in a form peculiarly suited to them, that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. The Gospel by Mark is a rapid survey of the History of the Christ as such. It deals mainly with the Galilean Ministry. The Gospel by John, which gives the highest, the reflective, view of the Eternal Son as the Word, deals almost exclusively with the Jerusalem Ministry. And the Gospel by Luke complements the narratives in the other two Gospels (Matthew and Mark), and it supplements them by tracing, what is not done otherwise: the Ministry in Peraea. Thus, it also forms a transition to the Fourth Gospel of the Judaeian Ministry. If we may venture a step further: The Gospel by Mark gives the general view of the Christ; that by Matthew the Jewish, that by Luke the Gentile, and that by John the Church's view. Imagination might, indeed, go still further, and see the impress of the number five—that of the Pentateuch and the Book of Psalms—in the First Gospel; the numeral four (that of the world) in the Second Gospel ($4 \times 4 = 16$ chapters); that of three in the Third ($8 \times 3 = 24$ chapters); and that of seven, the sacred Church number, in the Fourth Gospel ($7 \times 3 = 21$ chapters). And perhaps we might even succeed in arranging the Gospels into corresponding sections. But this would lead, not only beyond our present task, but from solid history and exegesis into the regions of speculation.

The subject, then, primarily before us, is the journeying of Jesus to Jerusalem. In that wider view which Luke takes of this whole history, he presents what really were three separate journeys as one that towards the great end. In its conscious aim and object, all from the moment of His finally quitting Galilee to His final Entry into Jerusalem formed, in the highest sense, only one journey. And this Luke designates in a peculiar manner. Just as he had spoken, not of Christ's Death but of His Exodus or outgoing, which included His Resurrection and Ascension, so he now tells us that, when the days of His uptaking' including and pointing to His Ascension were being fulfilled, He also steadfastly set His Face to go to Jerusalem.

John, indeed, goes farther back, and speaks of the circumstances which preceded His journey to Jerusalem. There is an interval, or, as we might term it, a blank, of more than half a year between the last narrative in the Fourth Gospel and this. For, the events chronicled in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel took place immediately before the Passover, which was on the fifteenth day of the first ecclesiastical month (Nisan), while the Feast of Tabernacle began on the same day of the seventh ecclesiastical month (Tishri). But, except in regard to the commencement of Christ's Ministry, that sixth chapter is the only one in the Gospel of John which refers to the Galilean Ministry of Christ. We would suggest, that what it records is partly intended to exhibit, by the side of Christ's fully developed teaching, the fully developed enmity of the Jerusalem Scribes, which led even to the defection of many former disciples. Thus, chapter vi. would be a connecting-link (both as regards the teaching of Christ and the opposition to Him) between chapter v., which tells of His visit at the Unknown Feast and chapter vii., which records that at the Feast of Tabernacles. The six or seven months between the Feast of Passover and that of Tabernacles, and all that passed within them, are covered by this brief remark: After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews [the leaders of the people] sought to kill Him.

But now the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. The pilgrims would probably arrive in Jerusalem before the opening day of the Festival. For, besides the needful preparations which would require time, especially on this Feast, when booths had to be constructed in which to live during the festive week it was (as we remember) the common practice to offer such sacrifices as might have previously become due at any of the great Feasts to which the people might go up. Remembering that five months had elapsed since the last great Feast (that of Weeks), many such sacrifices must have been due. Accordingly, the ordinary festive companies of pilgrims, which would travel slowly, must have

started from Galilee some time before the beginning of the Feast. These circumstances fully explain the details of the narrative. They also afford another most painful illustration of the loneliness of Christ in His work. His disciples had failed to understand, they misapprehended His teaching. In the near prospect of His Death they either displayed gross ignorance, or else disputed about their future rank. And His own brethren did not believe in Him. The whole course of late events, especially the unmet challenge of the Scribes for a sign from heaven had deeply shaken them. What was the purpose of works if done in the privacy of the circle of Christ's Apostles, in a house, a remote district, or even before an ignorant multitude? If, claiming to be the Messiah, He wished to be openly known as such, He must use other means. If He really did these things, let Him manifest Himself before the world in Jerusalem, the capital of their world, and before those who could test the reality of His Works. Let Him come forward, at one of Israel's great Feasts, in the Temple, and especially at this Feast which pointed to the Messianic ingathering of all nations. Let Him now go up with them in the festive company into Judaea, that so His disciples not the Galileans only but all, might have the opportunity of gazing on His Works.

As the challenge was not new, so, from the worldly point of view, it can scarcely be called unreasonable. It is, in fact, the same in principle as that to which the world would now submit the claims of Christianity to men's acceptance. It has only this one fault, that it ignores the world's enmity to the Christ. Discipleship is not the result of any outward manifestation by evidences or demonstration. It requires the conversion of a child-like spirit. To manifest Himself! This truly would He do, though not in their way. For this the season had not yet come, though it would soon arrive. Their season that for such Messianic manifestations as they contemplated was always ready. And this naturally, for the world could not hate them; they and their demonstrations were quite in accordance with the world and its views. But towards Him the world cherished personal hatred, because of their contrariety of principle, because Christ was manifested, not to restore an earthly kingdom to Israel, but to bring the Heavenly Kingdom upon earth to destroy the works of the Devil. Hence, He must provoke the enmity of that world which lay in the Wicked One. Another manifestation than that which they sought would He make, when His season was fulfilled; soon, beginning at this very Feast, continued at the next, and completed at the last Passover; such manifestation of Himself as the Christ, as could alone be made in view of the essential enmity of the world.

And so He let them go up in the festive company, while Himself tarried. When the noise and publicity (which He wished to avoid) were no longer to be apprehended, He also went up, but privately, not publicly, as they had suggested. Here Luke's account begins. It almost reads like a commentary on what the Lord had just said to His brethren, about the enmity of the world, and His mode of manifestation who would not, and who would receive Him, and why. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become children of God . . . which were born . . . of God.

The first purpose of Christ seems to have been to take the more direct road to Jerusalem, through Samaria, and not to follow that of the festive pilgrim-bands, which travelled to Jerusalem through Peraea, in order to avoid the band of their hated rivals. But His intention was soon frustrated. In the very first Samaritan village to which the Christ had sent beforehand to prepare for Himself and His company, 34 His messengers were told that the Rabbi could not be received; that neither hospitality nor friendly treatment could be extended to One who was going up to the Feast at Jerusalem. The messengers who brought back this strangely un-Oriental answer met the Master and His followers on the road. It was not only an outrage on common manners, but an act of open hostility to Israel, as well as to Christ, and the Sons of Thunder whose feelings for their Master were, perhaps, the more deeply stirred as opposition to Him grew more fierce, proposed to vindicate the cause, alike of Israel and its Messiah-King, by the open and Divine judgment of fire called down from heaven to destroy that village. Did they in this connection think of the vision of Elijah, ministering to Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration and was this their application of it? Truly, they knew not of what Spirit they were to be the children and messengers. He who had come, not to destroy, but to save, turned and rebuked

them, and passed from Samaritan into Jewish territory to pursue His journey. 35 Perhaps, indeed, He had only passed into Samaria to teach His disciples this needful lesson. The view of this event just presented seems confirmed by the circumstance, that Matthew lays the scene immediately following on the other side' that is, in the Decapolis .

It was a journey of deepest interest and importance. For, it was decisive not only as regarded the Master, but those who followed Him. Henceforth it must not be, as in former times, but wholly and exclusively, as into suffering and death. It is thus that we view the next three incidents of the way. Two of them find, also, a place in the Gospel by Matthew, although in a different connection, in accordance with the plan of that Gospel, which groups together the Teaching of Christ, with but secondary attention to chronological succession.

It seems that, as, after the rebuff of these Samaritans, they were going towards another, and a Jewish village, one of the company, and, as we learn from Matthew, a Scribe in the generous enthusiasm of the moment perhaps, stimulated by the wrong of the Samaritans, perhaps, touched by the love which would rebuke the zeal of the disciples, but had no word of blame for the unkindness of others broke into a spontaneous declaration of readiness to follow Him absolutely and everywhere. Like the benediction of the woman who heard Him, 39 it was one of these outbursts of an enthusiasm which His Presence awakened in every susceptible heart. But there was one eventuality which that Scribe, and all of like enthusiasm, reckoned not with the utter homelessness of the Christ in this world and this, not from accidental circumstances, but because He was the Son of Man. And there is here also material for still deeper thought in the fact that this man was a Scribe and yet had not gone up to the Feast, but tarried near Christ was one of those that followed Him now, and was capable of such feelings! How many whom we regard as Scribes, may be in analogous relation to the Christ, and yet how much of fair promise has failed to ripen into reality in view of the homelessness of Christ and Christianity in this world the stranger ship of suffering which it involves to those who would follow, not somewhere, but absolutely, and everywhere?

The intenseness of the self-denial involved in following Christ, and its contrariety to all that was commonly received among men, was, purposely, immediately further brought out. This Scribe had proffered to follow Jesus. Another of his disciples He asked to follow Him, and that in circumstances of peculiar trial and difficulty. The expression to follow a Teacher would, in those days be universally understood as implying discipleship. Again, no other duty would be regarded as more sacred than that they, on whom the obligation naturally devolved, should bury the dead. To this everything must give way even prayer, and the study of the Law. Lastly, we feel morally certain, that, when Christ called this disciple to follow Him, He was fully aware that at that very moment his father lay dead. Thus, He called him not only to homelessness for this he might have been prepared but to set aside what alike natural feeling and the Jewish Law seemed to impose on him as the most sacred duty. In the seemingly strange reply, which Christ made to the request to be allowed first to bury his father, we pass over the consideration that, according to Jewish law, the burial and mourning for a dead father, and the subsequent purifications, would have occupied many days, so that it might have been difficult, perhaps impossible, to overtake Christ. We would rather abide by the simple words of Christ. They teach us this very solemn and searching lesson, that there are higher duties than either those of the Jewish Law, or even of natural reverence, and a higher call than that of man. No doubt Christ had here in view the near call to the Seventy of whom this disciple was to be one to go and preach the Kingdom of God . When the direct call of Christ to any work comes that is, if we are sure of it from His own words, and not (as, alas! too often we do) only infer it by our own reasoning on His words then every other call must give way. For, duties can never be in conflict and this duty about the living and life must take precedence of that about death and the dead. Nor must we hesitate, because we know not in what form this work for Christ may come. There are critical moments in our inner history, when to postpone the immediate call, is really to reject it; when to go and bury the dead even though it were a dead father were to die ourselves!

Yet another hindrance to following Christ was to be faced. Another in the company that followed

Christ would go with Him, but he asked permission first to go and bid farewell to those whom he had left in his home. It almost seems as if this request had been one of those tempting questions, addressed to Christ. But, even if otherwise, the farewell proposed was not like that of Elisha, nor like the supper of Levi-Matthew. It was rather like the year which Jephtha's daughter would have with her companions, ere fulfilling the vow. It shows, that to follow Christ was regarded as a duty, and to leave those in the earthly home as a trial; and it betokens, not merely a divided heart, but one not fit for the Kingdom of God. For, how can he draw a straight furrow in which to cast the seed, who, as he puts his hand to the plough, looks around or behind him?

Thus, these are the three vital conditions of following Christ: absolute self-denial and homelessness in the world; immediate and entire self-surrender to Christ and His Work, and a heart and affections simple, undivided, and set on Christ and His Work, to which there is no other trial of parting like that which would involve parting from Him, no other or higher joy than that of following Him. In such spirit let them now go after Christ in His last journey and to such work as He will appoint them!

Chapter 5 Further Incidents of the Journey to Jerusalem

The Mission and Return of the Seventy The Home at Bethany Martha and Mary

(Luke 10:1-16; Matthew 9:36-38, 11:20-24; Luke 10:17-24; Matthew 11:25-30, 13:16; Luke 10:25,38-42)

Although, for the reasons explained in the previous chapter, the exact succession of events cannot be absolutely determined, it seems most likely, that it was on His progress southwards at this time that Jesus designated those seventy others who were to herald His arrival in every town and village. Even the circumstance, that the instructions to them are so similar to, and yet distinct from, those formerly given to the Twelve, seems to point to them as those from whom the Seventy are to be distinguished as other. We judge, that they were sent forth at this time, first, from the Gospel of Luke, where this whole section appears as a distinct and separate record, presumably, chronologically arranged; secondly, from the fitness of such a mission at that particular period, when Jesus made His last Missionary progress towards Jerusalem; and, thirdly, from the unlikelihood, if not impossibility, of taking such a public step after the persecution which broke out after His appearance at Jerusalem on the Feast of Tabernacles. At any rate, it could not have taken place later than in the period between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of the Dedication of the Temple, since, after that, Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews.

With all their similarity, there are notable differences between the Mission of the Twelve and this of the other Seventy. Let it be noted, that the former is recorded by the three Evangelists, so that there could have been no confusion on the part of Luke. But the mission of the Twelve was on their appointment to the Apostolate; it was evangelistic and missionary; and it was in confirmation and manifestation of the power and authority given to them. We regard it, therefore, as symbolical of the Apostolate just instituted, with its work and authority. On the other hand, no power or authority was formally conferred on the Seventy, their mission being only temporary, and, indeed, for one definite purpose; its primary object was to prepare for the coming of the Master in the places to which they were sent; and their selection was from the wider circle of disciples, the number being now Seventy instead of Twelve. Even these two numbers, as well as the difference in the functions of the two classes of messengers, seem to indicate that the Twelve symbolised the princes of the tribes of Israel, while the Seventy were the symbolical representatives of these tribes, like the seventy elders appointed to assist Moses. This symbolical meaning of the number Seventy continued among the Jews. We can trace it in the LXX. (supposed) translators of the Bible into Greek, and in the seventy

members of the Sanhedrin, or supreme court.

There was something very significant in this appearance of Christ's messengers, by two and two, in every place He was about to visit. As John the Baptist had, at the first, heralded the Coming of Christ, so now two heralds appeared to solemnly announce His Advent at the close of His Ministry; as John had sought, as the representative of the Old Testament Church, to prepare His Way, so they, as the representatives of the New Testament Church. In both cases the preparation sought was a moral one. It was the national summons to open the gates to the rightful King, and accept His rule. Only, the need was now the greater for the failure of John's mission, through the misunderstanding and disbelief of the nation. This conjunction with John the Baptist and the failure of his mission, as regarded national results, accounts for the insertion in Matthew's Gospel of part of the address delivered on the Mission of the Seventy, immediately after the record of Christ's rebuke of the national rejection of the Baptist. For Matthew, who (as well as Mark) records not the Mission of the Seventy simply because (as before explained) the whole section, of which it forms part, is peculiar to Luke's Gospel reports the Discourses connected with it in other, and to them congruous, connections. We mark, that, what may be termed the Preface to the Mission of the Seventy, is given by Matthew (in a somewhat fuller form) as that to the appointment and mission of the Twelve Apostles; and it may have been, that kindred words had preceded both. Partially, indeed, the expressions reported in Luke x. 2 had been employed long before. Those multitudes throughout Israel nay, those also which are not of that flock' appeared to His view like sheep without a true shepherd's care, distressed and prostrate and their mute misery and only partly conscious longing appealed, and not in vain, to His Divine compassion. This constituted the ultimate ground of the Mission of the Apostles, and now of the Seventy, into a harvest that was truly great. Compared with the extent of the field, and the urgency of the work, how few were the labourers! Yet, as the field was God's, so also could He alone thrust forth labourers willing and able to do His work, while it must be ours to pray that He would be pleased to do so.

On these introductory words, which ever since have formed the bidding prayer of the Church in her work for Christ, followed the commission and special directions to the thirty-five pairs of disciples who went on this embassy. In almost every particular they are the same as those formerly given to the Twelve. We mark, however, that both the introductory and the concluding words addressed to the Apostles are wanting in what was said to the Seventy. It was not necessary to warn them against going to the Samaritans, since the direction of the Seventy was to those cities of Peraea and Judaea, on the road to Jerusalem, through which Christ was about to pass. Nor were they armed with precisely the same supernatural powers as the Twelve. Naturally, the personal directions as to their conduct were in both cases substantially the same. We mark only three peculiarities in those addressed to the Seventy. The direction to salute no man by the way was suitable to a temporary and rapid mission, which might have been sadly interrupted by making or renewing acquaintances. Both the Mishnah and the Talmud lay it down, that prayer was not to be interrupted to salute even a king, nay, to uncoil a serpent that had wound round the foot. On the other hand, the Rabbis discussed the question, whether the reading of the Shema and of the portion of the Psalms called the Hallel might be interrupted at the close of a paragraph, from respect for a person, or interrupted in the middle, from motives of fear. All agreed, that immediately before prayer no one should be saluted, to prevent distraction, and it was advised rather to summarise or to cut short than to break into prayer, though the latter might be admissible in case of absolute necessity. None of these provisions, however, seems to have been in the mind of Christ. If any parallel is to be sought, it would be found in the similar direction of Elisha to Gehazi, when sent to lay the prophet's staff on the dead child of the Shunammite.

The other two peculiarities in the address to the Seventy seem verbal rather than real. The expression, if the Son of Peace be there is a Hebraism, equivalent to if the house be worthy and refers to the character of the head of the house and the tone of the household. Lastly, the direction to eat and drink such things as were set before them is only a further explanation of the command to

abide in the house which had received them, without seeking for better entertainment. On the other hand, the whole most important close of the address to the Twelve which, indeed, forms by far the largest part of it is wanting in the commission to the Seventy, thus clearly marking its merely temporary character.

In Luke's Gospel, the address to the Seventy is followed by a denunciation of Chorazin and Bethsaida. This is evidently in its right place there, after the Ministry of Christ in Galilee had been completed and finally rejected. In Matthew's Gospel, it stands (for a reason already indicated) immediately after the Lord's rebuke of the popular rejection of the Baptist's message. The woe pronounced on those cities, in which most of His mighty works were done is in proportion to the greatness of their privileges. The denunciation of Chorazin and Bethsaida is the more remarkable, that Chorazin is not otherwise mentioned in the Gospels, nor yet any miracles recorded as having taken place in (the western) Bethsaida. From this two inferences seem inevitable. First, this history must be real. If the whole were legendary, Jesus would not be represented as selecting the names of places, which the writer had not connected with the legend. Again, apparently no record has been preserved in the Gospels of most of Christ's miracles only those being narrated which were necessary in order to present Jesus as the Christ, in accordance with the respective plans on which each of the Gospels was constructed.

As already stated, the denunciations were in proportion to the privileges, and hence to the guilt, of the unbelieving cities. Chorazin and Bethsaida are compared with Tyre and Sidon, which under similar admonitions would have repented, while Capernaum, which, as for so long the home of Jesus, had truly been exalted to heaven is compared with Sodom. And such guilt involved greater punishment. The very site of Bethsaida and Chorazin cannot be fixed with certainty. The former probably represents the Fisherton of Capernaum', the latter seems to have almost disappeared from the shore of the Lake. Jerome places it two miles from Capernaum. If so, it may be represented by the modern Kerâzeh, somewhat to the north-west of Capernaum. The site would correspond with the name. For Kerâzeh is at present a spring with an insignificant ruin above it and the name Chorazin may well be derived from Keroz a water-jar Cherozin, or Chorazin the water-jars. If so, we can readily understand that the Fisherton on the south side of Capernaum, and the well-known springs, Chorazin on the other side of it, may have been the frequent scene of Christ's miracles. This explains also, in part, why the miracles there wrought had not been told as well as those done in Capernaum itself. In the Talmud a Chorazin, or rather Chorzim, is mentioned as celebrated for its wheat. But as for Capernaum itself standing on that vast field of ruins and upturned stones which marks the site of the modern Tell Hûm, we feel that no description of it could be more pictorially true than that in which Christ prophetically likened the city in its downfall to the desolateness of death and Hades. Whether or not the Seventy actually returned to Jesus before the Feast of Tabernacles, it is convenient to consider in this connection the result of their Mission. It had filled them with the joy of assurance; nay, the result had exceeded their expectations, just as their faith had gone beyond the mere letter unto the spirit of His Words. As they reported it to Him, even the demons had been subject to them through His Name. In this they had exceeded the letter of Christ's commission; but as they made experiment of it, their faith had grown, and they had applied His command to heal the sick to the worst of all sufferers, those grievously vexed by demons. And, as always, their faith was not disappointed. Nor could it be otherwise. The great contest had been long decided; it only remained for the faith of the Church to gather the fruits of that victory. The Prince of Light and Life had vanquished the Prince of Darkness and Death. The Prince of this world must be cast out. In spirit, Christ gazed on Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. As one has aptly paraphrased it: While you cast out his subjects, I saw the prince himself fall. It has been asked, whether the words of Christ referred to any particular event, such as His victory in the Temptation. But any such limitation would imply grievous misunderstanding of the whole. So to speak, the fall of Satan is to the bottomless pit; ever going on to the final triumph of Christ. As the Lord beholds him, he is fallen from heaven from the seat of power and of worship; for, his mastery is broken by the Stronger than he. And he is fallen like

lightning, in its rapidity, dazzling splendour, and destructiveness. Yet as we perceive it, it is only demons cast out in His name. For still is this fight and sight continued, and to all ages of the present dispensation. Each time the faith of the Church casts out demons whether as formerly, or as they presently vex men, whether in the lighter combat about possession of the body, or in the sorer fight about possession of the soul as Christ beholds it, it is ever Satan fallen. For, he sees of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. And so also is there joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth.

The authority and power over the demons attained by faith, was not to pass away with the occasion that had called it forth. The Seventy were the representatives of the Church in her work of preparing for the Advent of Chri As already indicated, the sight of Satan fallen from heaven is the continuous history of the Church. What the faith of the Seventy had attained was now to be made permanent to the Church, whose representatives they were. For, the words in which Christ now gave authority and power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the Enemy, and the promise that nothing should hurt them, could not have been addressed to the Seventy for a Mission which had now come to an end, except in so far as they represented the Church Universal. It is almost needless to add, that those serpents and scorpions are not to be literally but symbolically understood. Yet it is not this power or authority which is to be the main joy either of the Church or the individual, but the fact that our names are written in heaven. And so Christ brings us back to His great teaching about the need of becoming children, and wherein lies the secret of true greatness in the Kingdom.

It is beautifully in the spirit of all this, when we read that the joy of the disciples was met by that of the Master, and that His teaching presently merged into a prayer of thanksgiving. Throughout the occurrences since the Transfiguration, we have noticed an increasing antithesis to the teaching of the Rabbis. But it almost reached its climax in the thanksgiving, that the Father in heaven had hid these things from the wise and the understanding, and revealed them unto babes. As we view it in the light of those times, we know that the wise and understanding' the Rabbi and the Scribe could not, from their standpoint, have perceived them; nay, that it is matter of never-ending thanks that, not what they, but what the babes understood, was as alone it could be the subject of the Heavenly Father's revelation. We even tremble to think how it would have fared with the babes if the wise and understanding had had part with them in the knowledge revealed. And so it must ever be, not only the Law of the kingdom and the fundamental principle of Divine Revelation, but matter for thanksgiving, that, not as wise and understanding but only as babes' as converted like children' we can share in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. And this truly is the Gospel, and the Father's good pleasure.

The words, with which Christ turned from this Address to the Seventy and thanksgiving to God, seem almost like the Father's answer to the prayer of the Son. They refer to, and explain, the authority which Jesus had bestowed on His Church: All things were delivered to Me of My Father; and they afford the highest rationale for the fact, that these things had been hid from the wise and revealed unto babes. For, as no man, only the Father, could have full knowledge of the Son, and, conversely, no man, only the Son, had true knowledge of the Father, it followed, that this knowledge came to us, not of wisdom or learning, but only through the Revelation of Christ: No one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.

Matthew, who also records this although in a different connection, immediately after the denunciation of the unbelief of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum concludes this section by words which have ever since been the grand text of those who following in the wake of the Seventy, have been ambassadors for Chri On the other hand, Luke concludes this part of his narrative by adducing words equally congruous to the occasion, which, indeed, are not new in the mouth of the Lord. From their suitableness to what had preceded, we can have little doubt that both that which Matthew, and that which Luke, reports was spoken on this occasion. Because knowledge of the Father came only through the Son, and because these things were hidden from the wise and revealed to babes did the gracious Lord open His arms so wide, and bid all 51 that laboured and were

heavy laden come to HIM. These were the sheep, distressed and prostrate, whom to gather, that He might give them rest, He had sent forth the Seventy on a work, for which He had prayed the Father to thrust forth labourers, and which He has since entrusted to the faith and service of love of the Church. And the true wisdom, which qualified for the Kingdom, was to take up His yoke, which would be found easy, and a lightsome burden, not like that unbearable yoke of Rabbinic conditions; and the true understanding to be sought, was by learning of Him. In that wisdom of entering the Kingdom by taking up its yoke, and in that knowledge which came by learning of Him, Christ was Himself alike the true lesson and the best Teacher for those babes. For He is meek and lowly in heart. He had done what He taught, and He taught what He had done; and so, by coming unto Him, would true rest be found for the soul.

These words, as recorded by Matthew the Evangelist of the Jews must have sunk the deeper into the hearts of Christ's Jewish hearers, that they came in their own old familiar form of speech, yet with such contrast of spirit. One of the most common figurative expressions of the time was that of the yoke (lwto indicate submission to an occupation or obligation. Thus, we read not only of the yoke of the Law but of that to earthly governments and ordinary civil obligations. Very instructive for the understanding of the figure is this paraphrase of Cant. i. 10: How beautiful is their neck for bearing the yoke of Thy statues; and it shall be upon them like the yoke on the neck of the ox that plougheth in the field, and provideth food for himself and his master. This yoke might be cast off as the ten tribes had cast off that of God and thus brought on themselves their exile. On the other hand, to take upon oneself the yoke (lw(lbq) meant to submit to it of free choice and deliberate resolution. Thus, in the allegorism of the Midrash, in the inscription, Prov. xxx. 1, concerning Agur, the son of Jakeh' which is viewed as a symbolical designation of Solomon the word Massa rendered in the Authorized Version prophecy is thus explained in reference to Solomon: Massa, because he lifted on himself (Nasa) the yoke of the Holy One, blessed be He. And of Isaiah it was said, that he had been privileged to prophesy of so many blessings, because he had taken upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven with joy. And, as previously stated, it was set forth that in the Shema or Creed which was repeated every day the words, Deut. vi. 4-9, were recited before those in xi. 13-21, so as first generally to take upon ourselves the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and only afterwards that of the commandments. And this yoke all Israel had taken upon itself, thereby gaining the merit ever afterwards imputed to them.

Yet, practically, the yoke of the Kingdom was none other than that of the Law and of the commandments; one of laborious performances and of impossible self-righteousness. It was unbearable not the easy and lightsome yoke of Christ, in which the Kingdom of God was of faith, not of works. And, as if themselves to bear witness to this, we have this saying of theirs, terribly significant in this connection: Not like those formerly (the first), who made for themselves the yoke of the Law easy and light; but like those after them (those afterwards), who made the yoke of the Law upon them heavy! And, indeed, this voluntary making of the yoke as heavy as possible, the taking on themselves as many obligations as possible, was the ideal of Rabbinic piety. There was, therefore, peculiar teaching and comfort in the words of Christ; and well might He add, as Luke reports, that blessed were they who saw and heard these things. For, that Messianic Kingdom, which had been the object of rapt vision and earnest longing to prophets and kings of old had now become reality. Abounding as this history is in contrasts, it seems not unlikely, that the scene next recorded by Luke 66 stands in its right place. Such an inquiry on the part of a certain lawyer as to what he should do to inherit eternal life, together with Christ's Parabolic teaching about the Good Samaritan, is evidently congruous to the previous teaching of Christ about entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Possibly, this Scribe may have understood the words of the Master about these things being hid from the wise, and the need of taking up the yoke of the Kingdom, as enforcing the views of those Rabbinic teachers, who laid more stress upon good works than upon study. Perhaps himself belonged to that minority, although his question was intended to tempt to try whether the Master would stand the Rabbinic test, alike morally and dialectically. And, without at present entering on the Parable which

gives Christ's final answer (and which will best be considered together with the others belonging to that period), it will be seen how peculiarly suited it was to the state of mind just supposed. From this interruption, which, but for the teaching of Christ connected with it, would have formed a terrible discord in the heavenly harmony of this journey, we turn to a far other scene. It follows in the course of Luke's narrative, and we have no reason to consider it out of its proper place. If so, it must mark the close of Christ's journey to the Feast of Tabernacles, since the home of Martha and Mary, to which it introduces us, was in Bethany', close to Jerusalem, almost one of its suburbs. Other indications, confirmatory of this note of time, are not wanting. Thus, the history which follows that of the home of Bethany, when one of His disciples asks Him to teach them to pray, as the Baptist had similarly taught his followers, seems to indicate, that they were then on the scene of John's former labours north-east of Bethany; and, hence, that it occurred on Christ's return from Jerusalem. Again, from the narrative of Christ's reception in the house of Martha, we gather that Jesus had arrived in Bethany with His disciples, but that He alone was the guest of the two sisters. 67 We infer that Christ had dismissed His disciples to go into the neighbouring City for the Feast, while Himself tarried in Bethany. Lastly, with all this agrees the notice in John vii. 14, that it was not at the beginning, but about the midst of the feast that Jesus went up into the Temple. Although travelling on the two first festive days was not actually unlawful, yet we can scarcely conceive that Jesus would have done so especially on the Feast of Tabernacles; and the inference is obvious, that Jesus had tarried in the immediate neighbourhood, as we know He did at Bethany in the house of Martha and Mary. 68 Other things, also, do so explain themselves notably, the absence of the brother of Martha and Mary, who probably spent the festive days in the City itself. It was the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the scene recorded by Luke 69 would take place in the open leafy booth which served as the sitting apartment during the festive week. For, according to law, it was duty during the festive week to eat, sleep, pray, study in short, to live in these booths, which were to be constructed of the boughs of living trees. And, although this was not absolutely obligatory on women, yet, the rule which bade all make the booth the principal, and the house only the secondary dwelling would induce them to make this leafy tent at least the sitting apartment alike for men and women. And, indeed, those autumn days were just the season when it would be joy to sit in these delightful cool retreats the memorials of Israel's pilgrim-days! They were high enough, and yet not too high; chiefly open in front; close enough to be shady, and yet not so close as to exclude sunlight and air. Such would be the apartment in which what is recorded passed; and, if we add that this booth stood probably in the court, we can picture to ourselves Martha moving forwards and backwards on her busy errands, and seeing, as she passed again and again, Mary still sitting a rapt listener, not heeding what passed around; and, lastly, how the elder sister could, as the language of verse 40 implies, enter so suddenly the Master's presence, bringing her complaint.

To understand this history, we must dismiss from our minds preconceived, though, perhaps, attractive thoughts. There is no evidence that the household of Bethany had previously belonged to the circle of Christ's professed disciples. It was, as the whole history shows, a wealthy home. It consisted of two sisters the elder, Martha (a not uncommon Jewish name, being the feminine of Mar, and equivalent to our word mistress); the younger, Mary; and their brother Lazarus, or, Laazar. Although we know not how it came, yet, evidently, the house was Martha's, and into it she received Jesus on His arrival in Bethany. It would have been no uncommon occurrence in Israel for a pious, wealthy lady to receive a great Rabbi into her house. But the present was not an ordinary case. Martha must have heard of Him, even if she had not seen Him. But, indeed, the whole narrative implies, 76 that Jesus had come to Bethany with the view of accepting the hospitality of Martha, which probably had been proffered when some of those Seventy sojourning in the worthiest house at Bethany, had announced the near arrival of the Master. Still, her bearing affords only indication of being drawn towards Christ at most, of a sincere desire to learn the good news, not of actual discipleship.

And so Jesus came and, with Him and in Him, Heaven's own Light and Peace. He was to lodge in one of the booths, the sisters in the house, and the great booth in the middle of the courtyard would

be the common living apartment of all. It could not have been long after His arrival it must have been almost immediately, that the sisters felt they had received more than an Angel unawares. How best to do Him honour, was equally the thought of both. To Martha it seemed, as if she could not do enough in showing Him all hospitality. And, indeed, this festive season was a busy time for the mistress of a wealthy household, especially in the near neighbourhood of Jerusalem, whence her brother might, after the first two festive days, bring with him, any time that week, honoured guests from the City. To these cares was now added that of doing sufficient honour to such a Guest for she, also, deeply felt His greatness. And so she hurried to and fro through the courtyard, literally, distracted about much serving.

Her younger sister, also, would do Him all highest honour; but, not as Martha. Her homage consisted in forgetting all else but Him, who spake as none had ever done. As truest courtesy or affection consists, nor in its demonstrations, but in being so absorbed in the object of it as to forget its demonstration, so with Mary in the Presence of Chri And then a new Light, another Day had risen upon her; a fresh life had sprung up within her soul: She sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his Word. We dare not inquire, and yet we well know, of what it would be. And so, time after time perhaps, hour after hour as Martha passed on her busy way, she still sat listening and living. At last, the sister who, in her impatience, could not think that a woman could, in such manner, fulfill her duty, or show forth her religious profiting, broke in with what sounds like a querulous complaint: Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Mary had served with her, but she had now left her to do the work alone. Would the Master bid her resume her neglected work? But, with tone of gentle reproof and admonition, the affectionateness of which appeared even in the repetition of her name, Martha, Martha as, similarly, on a later occasion, Simon, Simon did He teach her in words which, however simple in their primary meaning, are so full, that they have ever since borne the most many-sided application: Thou art careful and anxious about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

It was, as we imagine, perhaps the first day of, or else the preparation for, the Fea More than that one day did Jesus tarry in the home of Bethany. Whether Lazarus came then to see Him and, still more, what both Martha and Mary learned, either then, or afterwards, we reverently forbear to search into. Suffice it, that though the natural disposition of the sisters remained what it had been, yet henceforth, Jesus loved Martha and her sister.

Chapter 6 At The Feast of Tabernacles

First Discourse in the Temple

(John 7:11-36.)

It was Chol ha Moed as the non-sacred part of the festive week, the half-holy days were called. Jerusalem, the City of Solemnities, the City of Palaces, the City of beauty and glory, wore quite another than its usual aspect; other, even, than when its streets were thronged by festive pilgrims during the Passover-week, or at Penteco For this was pre-eminently the Feast for foreign pilgrims, coming from the farthest distance, whose Temple-contributions were then received and counted. Despite the strange costumes of Media, Arabia, Persia, or India, and even further; or the Western speech and bearing of the pilgrims from Italy, Spain, the modern Crimea, and the banks of the Danube, if not from yet more strange and barbarous lands, it would not be difficult to recognise the lineaments of the Jew, nor to perceive that to change one's clime was not to change one's mind. As the Jerusalemite would look with proud self-consciousness, not unmingled with kindly patronage, on the swarthy strangers, yet fellow-countrymen, or the eager-eyed Galilean curiously stare after them,

the pilgrims would, in turn, gaze with mingled awe and wonderment on the novel scene. Here was the realisation of their fondest dreams ever since childhood, the home and spring of their holiest thoughts and best hopes that which gave inward victory to the vanquished, and converted persecution into anticipated triumph.

They could come at this season of the year not during the winter for the Passover, nor yet quite so readily in summer's heat for Penteco But now, in the delicious cool of early autumn, when all harvest-operations, the gathering in of luscious fruit and the vintage were past, and the first streaks of gold were tinting the foliage, strangers from afar off, and countrymen from Judaea, Peraea, and Galilee, would mingle in the streets of Jerusalem, under the ever-present shadow of that glorious Sanctuary of marble, cedarwood, and gold, up there on high Moriah, symbol of the infinitely more glorious overshadowing Presence of Him, Who was the Holy One in the midst of Israel. How all day long, even till the stars lit up the deep blue canopy over head, the smoke of the burning, smouldering sacrifices rose in slowly-widening column, and hung between the Mount of Olives and Zion; how the chant of Levites, and the solemn responses of the Hallel were borne on the breeze, or the clear blast of the Priests silver trumpets seemed to waken the echoes far away! And then, at night, how all these vast Temple-buildings stood out, illuminated by the great Candelabras that burned in the Court of the Women, and by the glare of torches, when strange sound of mystic hymns and dances came floating over the intervening darkness! Truly, well might Israel designate the Feast of Tabernacles as the Feast (haChag), and the Jewish historian describe it as the holiest and greate

Early on the 14th Tishri (corresponding to our September or early October), all the festive pilgrims had arrived. Then it was, indeed, a scene of bustle and activity. Hospitality had to be sought and found; guests to be welcomed and entertained; all things required for the feast to be got ready. Above all, booths must be erected everywhere in court and on housetop, in street and square, for the lodgment and entertainment of that vast multitude; leafy dwellings everywhere, to remind of the wilderness-journey, and now of the goodly land. Only that fierce castle, Antonia, which frowned above the Temple, was undecked by the festive spring into which the land had bur To the Jew it must have been a hateful sight, that castle, which guarded and dominated his own City and Temple hateful sight and sounds, that Roman garrison, with its foreign, heathen, ribald speech and manners. Yet, for all this, Israel could not read on the lowering sky the signs of the times, nor yet knew the day of their merciful visitation. And this, although of all festivals, that of Tabernacles should have most clearly pointed them to the future.

Indeed, the whole symbolism of the Feast, beginning with the completed harvest, for which it was a thanksgiving, pointed to the future. The Rabbis themselves admitted this. The strange number of sacrificial bullocks seventy in all they regarded as referring to the seventy nations of heathendom. The ceremony of the outpouring of water, which was considered of such vital importance as to give to the whole festival the name of House of Outpouring 6 was symbolical of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As the brief night of the great Temple illumination closed, there was solemn testimony made before Jehovah against heathenism. It must have been a stirring scene, when from out of the mass of Levites, with their musical instruments, who crowded the fifteen steps that led from the Court of Israel to that of the Women, stepped two priests with their silver trumpets. As the first cockcrowing intimated the dawn of morn, they blew a threefold blast; another on the tenth step, and yet another threefold blast as they entered the Court of the Women. And still sounding their trumpets, they marched through the Court of the Women to the Beautiful Gate. Here, turning round and facing westwards to the Holy Place, they repeated: Our fathers, who were in this place, they turned their backs on the Sanctuary of Jehovah, and their faces eastward, for they worshipped eastward, the sun; but we, our eyes are towards Jehovah. We are Jehovah's our eyes are towards Jehovah. Nay, the whole of this night- and morning-scene was symbolical: the Temple illumination, of the light which was to shine from out the Temple into the dark night of heathendom; then, at the first dawn of morn the blast of the priests silver trumpets, of the army of God, as it advanced, with festive trumpet-sound and call, to awaken the sleepers, marching on to quite the utmost bounds of the Sanctuary, to the Beautiful Gate,

which opened upon the Court of the Gentiles and, then again, facing round to utter solemn protest against heathenism, and make solemn confession of Jehovah!

But Jesus did not appear in the Temple during the first two festive days. The pilgrims from all parts of the country perhaps, they from abroad also had expected Him there, for everyone would now speak of Him not openly in Jerusalem, for they were afraid of their rulers. It was hardly safe to speak of Him without reserve. But they sought Him, and inquired after Him and they did speak of Him, though there was only a murmuring a low, confused discussion of the pro and con, in this great controversy among the multitudes or festive bands from various parts. Some said: He is a good man, while others declared that He only led astray the common, ignorant populace. And now, all at once, in Chol ha Moed, Jesus Himself appeared in the Temple, and taught. We know that, on a later occasion, He walked and taught in Solomon's Porch and, from the circumstance that the early disciples made this their common meeting-place, ¹³ we may draw the inference that it was here the people now found Him. Although neither Josephus nor the Mishnah mention this Porch by name, we have every reason for believing that it was the eastern colonnade, which abutted against the Mount of Olives and faced the Beautiful Gate that formed the principal entrance into the Court of the Women and so into the Sanctuary. For, all along the inside of the great wall which formed the Temple-enclosure ran a double colonnade each column a monolith of white marble, cubits high, covered with cedar-beams. That on the south side (leading from the western entrance to Solomon's Porch), known as the Royal Porch was a threefold colonnade, consisting of four rows of columns, each cubits high, and surmounted by Corinthian capitals. We infer that the eastern was Solomon's Porch from the circumstance that it was the only relic left of Solomon's Temple. These colonnades, which, from their ample space, formed alike places for quiet walk and for larger gatherings, had benches in them and, from the liberty of speaking and teaching in Israel, Jesus might here address the people in the very face of His enemies. We know not what was the subject of Christ's teaching on this occasion. But the effect on the people was one of general astonishment. They knew what common unlettered Galilean tradesmen were but this, whence came it? How does this one know literature (letters, learning), never having learned? To the Jews there was only one kind of learning that of Theology; and only one road to it the Schools of the Rabbis. Their major was true, but their minor false and Jesus hastened to correct it. He had, indeed, learned but in a School quite other than those which alone they recognised. Yet, on their own showing, it claimed the most absolute submission. Among the Jews a Rabbi's teaching derived authority from the fact of its accordance with tradition that it accurately represented what had been received from a previous great teacher, and so on upwards to Moses, and to God Himself. On this ground Christ claimed the highest authority. His doctrine was not His own invention it was the teaching of Him that sent Him. The doctrine was God-received, and Christ was sent direct from God to bring it. He was God's messenger of it to them. Of this twofold claim there was also twofold evidence. Did He assert that what He taught was God-received? Let trial be made of it. Everyone who in his soul felt drawn towards God; each one who really willeth to do His will would know concerning this teaching, whether it is of God or whether it was of man. It was this felt, though unrealised influence which had drawn all men after Him, so that they hung on His lips. It was this which, in the hour of greatest temptation and mental difficulty, had led Peter, in name of the others, to end the sore inner contest by laying hold on this fact: To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life and we have believed and know, that Thou art the Holy One of God. Marking, as we pass, that this inward connection between that teaching and learning and the present occasion, may be the deeper reason why, in the Gospel by John, the one narrative is immediately followed by the other, we pause to say, how real it hath proved in all ages and to all stages of Christian learning that the heart makes the truly God-taught (*pectus facit Theologum*), and that inward, true aspiration after the Divine prepares the eye to behold the Divine Reality in the Chri But, if it be so is there not evidence here, that He is the God-sent that He is a real, true Ambassador of God? If Jesus teaching meets and satisfies our moral nature, if it leads up to God, is He not the Christ?

And this brings us to the second claim which Christ made, that of being sent by God. There is yet

another logical link in His reasoning. He had said: He shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself. From Myself? Why, there is this other test of it: Who speaketh from himself, seeketh his own glory' there can be no doubt or question of this, but do I seek My own glory? But He Who seeketh the glory of Him who sent Him, He is true (a faithful messenger), and unrighteousness is not in Him. Thus did Christ appeal and prove it: My doctrine is of God, and I am sent of God!

Sent of God, no unrighteousness in Him! And yet at that very moment there hung over Him the charge of defiance of the Law of Moses, nay, of that of God, in an open breach of the Sabbath-commandment there, in that very City, the last time He had been in Jerusalem; for which, as well as for His Divine claims, the Jews were even then seeking to kill Him. And this forms the transition to what may be called the second part of Christ's address. If, in the first part, the Jewish form of ratiocination was already apparent, it seems almost impossible for any one acquainted with those forms to understand how it can be overlooked in what follows. It is exactly the mode in which a Jew would argue with Jews, only the substance of the reasoning is to all times and people. Christ is defending Himself against a charge which naturally came up, when He claimed that His teaching was of God and Himself God's real and faithful Messenger. In His reply the two threads of the former argument are taken up. Doing is the condition of knowledge and a messenger had been sent from God! Admittedly, Moses was such, and yet every one of them was breaking the Law which he had given them; for, were they not seeking to kill Him without right or justice? This, put in the form of a double question, represents a peculiarly Jewish mode of argumentation, behind which lay the terrible truth, that those, whose hearts were so little longing to do the Will of God, not only must remain ignorant of His teaching as that of God, but had also rejected that of Moses.

A general disclaimer, a cry Thou hast a demon (art possessed), who seeks to kill Thee? here broke in upon the Speaker. But He would not be interrupted, and continued: One work I did, and all you wonder on account of it referring to His healing on the Sabbath, and their utter inability to understand His conduct. Well, then, Moses was a messenger of God, and I am sent of God. Moses gave the law of circumcision not, indeed, that it was of his authority, but had long before been God-given and, to observe this law, no one hesitated to break the Sabbath, since, according to Rabbinic principle, a positive ordinance superseded a negative. And yet, when Christ, as sent from God, made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath (made a whole man sound) they were angry with Him! Every argument which might have been urged in favour of the postponement of Christ's healing to a week-day, would equally apply to that of circumcision; while every reason that could be urged in favour of Sabbath-circumcision, would tell an hundredfold in favour of the act of Christ. Oh, then, let them not judge after the mere outward appearance, but judge the right judgment. And, indeed, had it not been to convince them of the externalism of their views, that Jesus had on that Sabbath opened the great controversy between the letter that killeth and the spirit that maketh alive, when He directed the impotent man to carry home the bed on which he had lain?

If any doubt could obtain, how truly Jesus had gauged the existing state of things, when He contrasted heart-willingness to do the Will of God, as the necessary preparation for the reception of His God-sent teaching, with their murderous designs, springing from blind literalism and ignorance of the spirit of their Law, the reported remarks of some Jerusalemites in the crowd would suffice to convince us. The fact that He, whom they sought to kill, was suffered to speak openly, seemed to them incomprehensible. Could it be that the authorities were shaken in their former idea about Him, and now regarded Him as the Messiah? But it could not be. It was a settled popular belief, and, in a sense, not quite unfounded, that the appearance of the Messiah would be sudden and unexpected. He might be there, and not be known; or He might come, and be again hidden for a time. As they put it, when Messiah came, no one would know whence He was; but they all knew whence this One was. And with this rough and ready argument of a coarse realism, they, like so many among us, settled off-hand and once for all the great question. But Jesus could not, even for the sake of His poor weak disciples, let it rest there. Therefore He lifted up His voice, that it reached the dispersing, receding

multitude. Yes, they thought they knew both Him and whence He came. It would have been so had He come from Himself. But He had been sent, and He that sent Him was real; it was a real Mission, and Him, who had thus sent the Christ, they knew not. And so, with a reaffirmation of His twofold claim, His Discourse closed. But they had understood His allusions, and in their anger would fain have laid hands on Him, but His hour had not come. Yet others were deeply stirred to faith. As they parted they spoke of it among themselves, and the sum of it all was: The Christ, when He cometh, will He do more miracles (signs) than this One did?

So ended the first teaching of that day in the Temple. And as the people dispersed, the leaders of the Pharisees who, no doubt aware of the presence of Christ in the Temple, yet unwilling to be in the number of His hearers, had watched the effect of His teaching overheard the low, furtive, half-outspoken remarks (the murmuring) of the people about Him. Presently they conferred with the heads of the priesthood and the chief Temple-officials. Although there was neither meeting, nor decree of the Sanhedrin about it, nor, indeed, could be, orders were given to the Temple-guard on the first possible occasion to seize Him. Jesus was aware of it, and as, either on this or another day, He was moving in the Temple, watched by the spies of the rulers and followed by a mingled crowd of disciples and enemies, deep sadness in view of the end filled His heart. Jesus therefore said 'no doubt to His disciples, though in the hearing of all yet a little while am I with you, then I go away to Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and not find Me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Mournful words, these, which were only too soon to become true. But those who heard them naturally failed to comprehend their meaning. Was He about to leave Palestine, and go to the Diaspora of the Greeks, among the dispersed who lived in heathen lands, to teach the Greeks? Or what could be His meaning? But we, who hear it across these centuries, feel as if their question, like the suggestion of the High-Priest at a later period, nay like so many suggestions of men, had been, all unconsciously, prophetic of the future.

Chapter 7 In the Last, the Great Day of the Feast'

(John 7:37, 8:11.)

It was the last, the great day of the Feast and Jesus was once more in the Temple. We can scarcely doubt that it was the concluding day of the Feast, and not, as most modern writers suppose, its Octave, which, in Rabbinic language, was regarded as a festival by itself. But such solemn interest attaches to the Feast, and this occurrence on its last day, that we must try to realise the scene. We have here the only Old Testament type yet unfulfilled; the only Jewish festival which has no counterpart in the cycle of the Christian year, just because it points forward to that great, yet unfulfilled hope of the Church: the ingathering of Earth's nations to the Chri

The celebration of the Feast corresponded to its great meaning. Not only did all the priestly families minister during that week, but it has been calculated that not fewer than 446 Priests, with, of course, a corresponding number of Levites, were required for its sacrificial worship. In general, the services were the same every day, except that the number of bullocks offered decreased daily from thirteen on the first, to seven on the seventh day. Only during the first two, and on the last festive day (as also on the Octave of the Feast), was strict Sabbatic rest enjoined. On the intervening half-holidays (Chol haMoed), although no new labour was to be undertaken, unless in the public service, the ordinary and necessary avocations of the home and of life were carried on, and especially all done that was required for the festive season. But the last, the Great Day of the Feast was marked by special observances.

Let us suppose ourselves in the number of worshippers, who on the last, the Great Day of the Feast are leaving their booths at daybreak to take part in the service. The pilgrims are all in festive array. In

his right hand each carries what is called the Lulabh, which, although properly meaning a branch or palm-branch consisted of a myrtle and willow-branch tied together with a palm-branch between them. This was supposed to be in fulfilment of the command, Lev. xxiii. 40. The fruit (A.V. boughs) of the goodly trees mentioned in the same verse of Scripture, was supposed to be the Ethrog, the so-called Paradise-apple (according to Ber. R. 15, the fruit of the forbidden tree), a species of citron. This Ethrog each worshipper carries in his left hand. It is scarcely necessary to add, that this interpretation of Lev. xxiii. 40 was given by the Rabbis; 6 perhaps more interesting to know, that this was one of the points in controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Thus armed with Lulabh in their right, and Ethrog in their left hands, the festive multitude would divide into three bands. Some would remain in the Temple to attend the preparation of the Morning Sacrifice. Another band would go in procession below Jerusalem to a place called Moza, the Kolonia of the Jerusalem Talmud, which some have sought to identify with the Emmaus of the Resurrection-Evening. At Moza they cut down willow-branches, with which, amidst the blasts of the Priests trumpets, they adorned the altar, forming a leafy canopy about it. Yet a third company were taking part in a still more interesting service. To the sound of music a procession started from the Temple. It followed a Priest who bore a golden pitcher, capable of holding three log. Onwards it passed, probably, through Ophel, which recent investigations have shown to have been covered with buildings to the very verge of Siloam, down the edge of the Tyropoeon Valley, where it merges into that of the Kedron. To this day terraces mark where the gardens, watered by the living spring, extended from the King's Gardens by the spring Rogel down to the entrance into the Tyropoeon. Here was the so-called Fountain-Gate and still within the City-wall the Pool of Siloam the overflow of which fed a lower pool. As already stated it was at the merging of the Tyropoeon into the Kedron Valley, in the south-eastern angle of Jerusalem. The Pool of Siloam was fed by the living spring farther up in the narrowest part of the Kedron Valley, which presently bears the name of the Virgin's Fountain but represents the ancient En-Rogel and Gihon. Indeed, the very canal which led from the one to the other, with the inscription of the workmen upon it, has lately been excavated. Though chiefly of historical interest, a sentence may be added. The Pool of Siloam is the same as the King's Pool of Neh. ii. 14. It was made by King Hezekiah, in order both to divert from a besieging army the spring of Gihon, which could not be brought within the City-wall, and yet to bring its waters within the City. This explains the origin of the name Siloam, sent' a conduit or Siloah as Josephus calls it. Lastly, we remember that it was down in the valley at Gihon (or En-Rogel), that Solomon was proclaimed, while the opposite faction held revel, and would have made Adonijah king, on the cliff Zohelath (the modern Zahweileh) right over against it, not a hundred yards distant, where they must, of course, have distinctly heard the sound of the trumpets and the shouts of the people as Solomon was proclaimed king.

But to return. When the Temple-procession had reached the Pool of Siloam, the Priest filled his golden pitcher from its waters. Then they went back to the Temple, so timing it, that they should arrive just as they were laying the pieces of the sacrifice on the great Altar of Burnt-offering, towards the close of the ordinary Morning-Sacrifice service. A threefold blast of the Priests trumpets welcomed the arrival of the Priest, as he entered through the Water-gate which obtained its name from this ceremony, and passed straight into the Court of the Priests. Here he was joined by another Priest, who carried the wine for the drink-offering. The two Priests ascended the rise of the altar, and turned to the left. There were two silver funnels here, with narrow openings, leading down to the base of the altar. Into that at the east, which was somewhat wider, the wine was poured, and, at the same time, the water into the western and narrower opening, the people shouting to the Priest to raise his hand, so as to make sure that he poured the water into the funnel. For, although it was held, that the water-pouring was an ordinance instituted by Moses, a Halakhah of Moses from Sinai this was another of the points disputed by the Sadducees. And, indeed, to give practical effect to their views, the High-Priest Alexander Jannaeus had on one occasion poured the water on the ground, when he was nearly murdered, and in the riot, that ensued, six thousand persons were killed in the Temple. Immediately after the pouring of water the great Hallel consisting of Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. (inclusive),

was chanted antiphonally, or rather, with responses, to the accompaniment of the flute. As the Levites intoned the first line of each Psalm, the people repeated it; while to each of the other lines they responded by Hallelu Yah (Praise ye the Lord). But in Psalm cxviii. the people not only repeated the first line, O give thanks to the Lord but also these, O then, work now salvation, Jehovah O Lord, send now prosperity; and again, at the close of the Psalm, O give thanks to the Lord. As they repeated these lines, they shook towards the altar the Lulabh which they held in their hands as if with this token of the past to express the reality and cause of their praise, and to remind God of His promises. It is this moment which should be chiefly kept in view.

The festive morning-service was followed by the offering of the special sacrifices for the day, with their drink-offerings, and by the Psalm for the day, which, on the last, the Great Day of the Feast was Psalm lxxii. from verse 5. The Psalm was, of course, chanted, as always, to instrumental accompaniment, and at the end of each of its three sections the Priests blew a threefold blast, while the people bowed down in worship. In further symbolism of this Feast, as pointing to the ingathering of the heathen nations, the public services closed with a procession round the Altar by the Priests, who chanted O then, work now salvation, Jehovah! O Jehovah, send now prosperity. But on the last, the Great Day of the Feast this procession of Priests made the circuit of the altar, not only once, but seven times, as if they were again compassing, but now with prayer, the Gentile Jericho which barred their possession of the promised land. Hence the seventh or last day of the Feast was also called that of the Great Hosannah. As the people left the Temple, they saluted the altar with words of thanks, and on the last day of the Feast they shook off the leaves on the willow-branches round the altar, and beat their palm-branches to pieces. On the same afternoon the booths were dismantled, and the Feast ended.

We can have little difficulty in determining at what part of the services of the last, the Great Day of the Feast Jesus stood and cried, If any one thirst, let Him come unto Me and drink! It must have been with special reference to the ceremony of the outpouring of the water, which, as we have seen, was considered the central part of the service. Moreover, all would understand that His words must refer to the Holy Spirit, since the rite was universally regarded as symbolical of His outpouring. The forthpouring of the water was immediately followed by the chanting of the Hallel. But after that there must have been a short pause to prepare for the festive sacrifices (the Musaph). It was then, immediately after the symbolic rite of water-pouring, immediately after the people had responded by repeating those lines from Psalm cxviii. given thanks, and prayed that Jehovah would send salvation and prosperity, and had shaken their Lulabh towards the altar, thus praising with heart, and mouth, and hands and then silence had fallen upon them that there rose, so loud as to be heard throughout the Temple, the Voice of Jesus. He interrupted not the services, for they had for the moment ceased: He interpreted, and He fulfilled them.

Whether we realise it in connection with the deeply-stirring rites just concluded, and the song of praise that had scarcely died out of the air; or think of it as a vast step in advance in the history of Christ's Manifestation, the scene is equally wondrous. But yesterday they had been divided about Him, and the authorities had given directions to take Him; to-day He is not only in the Temple, but, at the close of the most solemn rites of the Feast, asserting, within the hearing of all, His claim to be regarded as the fulfilment of all, and the true Messiah! And yet there is neither harshness of command nor violence of threat in His proclamation. It is the King, meek, gentle, and loving; the Messiah, who will not break the bruised reed, who will not lift up His voice in tone of anger, but speak in accents of loving, condescending compassion, who now bids, whosoever thirsteth, come unto Him and drink. And so the words have to all time remained the call of Christ to all that thirst, whence- or what-soever their need and longing of soul may be. But, as we listen to these words as originally spoken, we feel how they mark that Christ's hour was indeed coming: the preparation past; the manifestation in the present, unmistakable, urgent, and loving; and the final conflict at hand. Of those who had heard Him, none but must have understood that, if the invitation were indeed real, and Christ the fulfilment of all, then the promise also had its deepest meaning, that he who believed

on Him would not only receive the promised fulness of the Spirit, but give it forth to the fertilising of the barren waste around. It was, truly, the fulfilment of the Scripture-promise, not of one but of all: that in Messianic times the Nabhi, prophet literally the weller forth, viz., of the Divine, should not be one or another select individual, but that He would pour out on all His handmaidens and servants of His Holy Spirit, and thus the moral wilderness of this world be changed into a fruitful garden. Indeed, this is expressly stated in the Targum which thus paraphrases Is. xlv. 3: Behold, as the waters are poured on arid ground and spread over the dry soil, so will I give the Spirit of My Holiness on thy sons, and My blessing on thy children's children. What was new to them was, that all this was treasured up in the Christ, that out of His fulness men might receive, and grace for grace. And yet even this was not quite new. For, was it not the fulfilment of that old prophetic cry: The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon Me: therefore has He Messiahed (anointed) Me to preach good tidings unto the poor'? So then, it was nothing new, only the happy fulfilment of the old, when He thus spake of the Holy Spirit, which they who believed on Him should receive not then, but upon His Messianic exaltation.

And so we scarcely wonder that many, on hearing Him, said, though not with that heart-conviction which would have led to self-surrender, that He was the Prophet promised of old, even the Christ, while others, by their side, regarding Him as a Galilean, the Son of Joseph, raised the ignorant objection that He could not be the Messiah, since the latter must be of the seed of David and come from Bethlehem. Nay, such was the anger of some against what they regarded a dangerous seducer of the poor people, that they would fain have laid violent hands on Him. But amidst all this, the strongest testimony to His Person and Mission remains to be told. It came, as so often, from a quarter whence it could least have been expected. Those Temple-officers, whom the authorities had commissioned to watch an opportunity for seizing Jesus, came back without having done their behest, and that, when, manifestly, the scene in the Temple might have offered the desired ground for His imprisonment. To the question of the Pharisees, they could only give this reply, which has ever since remained unquestionable fact of history, admitted alike by friend and foe: Never man so spake as this man. For, as all spiritual longing and all upward tending, not only of men but even of systems, consciously or unconsciously tends towards Christ, so can we measure and judge all systems by this, which no sober student of history will gainsay, that no man or system ever so spake.

It was not this which the Pharisees now gainsaid, but rather the obvious, and, we may add, logical, inference from it. The scene which followed is so thoroughly Jewish, that it alone would suffice to prove the Jewish, and hence Johannine, authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The harsh sneer: Are ye also led astray? is succeeded by pointing to the authority of the learned and great, who with one accord were rejecting Jesus. But this people' the country-people (Am ha-arez), the ignorant, unlettered rabble are cursed. Sufficient has been shown in previous parts of this book to explain alike the Pharisaic claim of authority and their almost unutterable contempt of the unlettered. So far did the latter go, that it would refuse, not only all family connection and friendly intercourse, but even the bread of charity, to the unlettered; nay, that, in theory at least, it would have regarded their murder as no sin, and even cut them off from the hope of the Resurrection. But is it not true, that, even in our days, this double sneer, rather than argument, of the Pharisees is the main reason of the disbelief of so many: Which of the learned believe on Him? but the ignorant multitude are led by superstition to ruin.

There was one standing among the Temple-authorities, whom an uneasy conscience would not allow to remain quite silent. It was the Sanhedrist Nicodemus, still a night-disciple, even in brightest noon-tide. He could not hold his peace, and yet he dared not speak for Christ. So he made compromise of both by taking the part of, and speaking as, a righteous, rigid Sanhedrist. Does our Law judge (pronounce sentence upon) a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth? From the Rabbinic point of view, no sounder judicial saying could have been uttered. Yet such common-places impose not on any one, nor even serve any good purpose. It helped not the cause of Jesus, and it disguised not the advocacy of Nicodemus. We know what was thought of Galilee in the Rabbinic world. Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

And so ended this incident, which, to all concerned, might have been so fruitful of good. Once more Nicodemus was left alone, as every one who had dared and yet not dared for Christ is after all such bootless compromises; alone with sore heart, stricken conscience, and a great longing.

Chapter 8 Teaching in the Temple on the Feast of Tabernacles

(John 8:12-59.)

The startling teaching on the last, the Great Day of the Feast was not the only one delivered at that season. The impression left on the mind is, that after silencing, as they thought, Nicodemus, the leaders of the Pharisees had dispersed. The addresses of Jesus which followed must, therefore, have been delivered, either later on that day, or, what on every account seems more likely, chiefly, or all, on the next day, which was the Octave of the Feast, when the Temple would be once more thronged by worshippers.

On this occasion we find Christ, first in The Treasury and then in some unnamed part of the sacred building, in all probabilities one of the Porches Greater freedom could be here enjoyed, since these Porches which enclosed the Court of the Gentiles, did not form part of the Sanctuary in the stricter sense. Discussions might take place, in which not, as in the Treasury only the Pharisees but the people generally, might propound questions, answer, or assent. Again, as regards the requirements of the present narrative, since the Porches opened upon the Court, the Jews might there pick up stones to cast at Him (which would have been impossible in any part of the Sanctuary itself), while lastly, Jesus might easily pass out of the Temple in the crowd that moved through the Porches to the outer gates.

But the narrative first transports us into the Treasury where the Pharisees' or leaders would alone venture to speak. It ought to be specially marked, that if they laid not hands on Jesus when He dared to teach in this sacred locality, and that such unwelcome doctrine, His immunity must be ascribed to the higher appointment of God: because His hour had not yet come. An archaeological question may here be raised as to the exact localisation of the Treasury whether it was the colonnade around the Court of the Women in which the receptacles for charitable contributions the so-called Shopharoth, or trumpets' were placed, or one of the two chambers in which, respectively, secret gifts and votive offerings were deposited. The former seems the most likely. In any case, it would be within the Court of the Women the common meeting-place of the worshippers, and, as we may say, the most generally attended part of the Sanctuary. Here, in the hearing of the leaders of the people, took place the first Dialogue between Christ and the Pharisees.

It opened with what probably was an allusion alike to one of the great ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles, to its symbolic meaning, and to an express Messianic expectation of the Rabbis. As the Mishnah states: On the first, or, as the Talmud would have it, on every night of the festive week, the Court of the Women was brilliantly illuminated, and the night spent in the demonstrations already described. This was called the joy of the feast. This festive joy of which the origin is obscure, was no doubt connected with the hope of earth's great harvest-joy in the conversion of the heathen world, and so pointed to the days of the Messiah. In connection with this we mark, that the term light was specially applied to the Messiah. In a very interesting passage of the Midrash we are told, that, while commonly windows were made wide within and narrow without, it was the opposite in the Temple of Solomon, because the light issuing from the Sanctuary was to lighten that which was without. This reminds us of the language of devout old Simeon in regard to the Messiah, as a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. The Midrash further explains, that, if the light in the Sanctuary was to be always burning before Jehovah, the reason was, not that He needed such light, but that He honoured Israel with this as a symbolic command. In Messianic times God would, in

fulfilment of the prophetic meaning of this rite, kindle for them the Great Light and the nations of the world would point to them, who had lit the light for Him who lightened the whole world. But even this is not all. The Rabbis speak of the original light in which God had wrapped Himself as in a garment, and which could not shine by day, because it would have dimmed the light of the sun. From this light that of the sun, moon, and stars had been kindled. It was now reserved under the throne of God for the Messiah, in whose days it would shine forth once more. Lastly, we ought to refer to a passage in another Midrash, where, after a remarkable discussion on such names of the Messiah as the Lord our Righteousness the Branch the Comforter Shiloh Compassion His Birth is connected with the destruction, and His return with the restoration of the Temple. But in that very passage the Messiah is also specially designated as the Enlightener the words: the light dwelleth with Him being applied to Him.

What has just been stated shows, that the Messianic hope of the aged Simeon most truly expressed the Messianic thoughts of the time. It also proves, that the Pharisees could not have mistaken the Messianic meaning in the words of Jesus, in their reference to the past festivity: I am the Light of the world. This circumstance is itself evidential as regards this Discourse of Christ, the truth of this narrative, and even the Jewish authorship of the Fourth Gospel. But, indeed, the whole Address, the argumentation with the Pharisees which follows, as well as the subsequent Discourse to, and argumentation with, the Jews, are peculiarly Jewish in their form of reasoning. Substantially, these Discourses are a continuation of those previously delivered at this Feast. But they carry the argument one important step both backwards and forwards. The situation had now become quite clear, and neither party cared to conceal it. What Jesus had gradually communicated to the disciples, who were so unwilling to receive it, had now become an acknowledged fact. It was no longer a secret that the leaders of Israel and Jerusalem were compassing the Death of Jesus. This underlies all His Words. And He sought to turn them from their purpose, not by appealing to their pity nor to any lower motive, but by claiming as His right that, for which they would condemn Him. He was the Sent of God, the Messiah; although, to know Him and His Mission, it needed moral kinship with Him that had sent Him. But this led to the very root of the matter. It needed moral kinship with God: did Israel, as such, possess it? They did not; nay, no man possessed it, till given him of God. This was not exactly new in these Discourses of Christ, but it was now far more clearly stated and developed, and in that sense new.

We also are too apt to overlook this teaching of Christ perhaps have overlooked it. It is concerning the corruption of our whole nature by sin, and hence the need of God-teaching, if we are to receive the Christ, or understand His doctrine. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; wherefore, marvel not that I said, Ye must be born again. That had been Christ's initial teaching to Nicodemus, and it became, with growing emphasis, His final teaching to the teachers of Israel. It is not Paul who first sets forth the doctrine of our entire moral ruin: he had learned it from the Christ. It forms the very basis of Christianity; it is the ultimate reason of the need of a Redeemer, and the rationale of the work which Christ came to do. The Priesthood and the Sacrificial Work of Christ, as well as the higher aspect of His Prophetic Office, and the true meaning of His Kingship, as not of this world, are based upon it. Very markedly, it constitutes the starting-point in the fundamental divergence between the leaders of the Synagogue and Christ we might say, to all time between Christians and non-Christians. The teachers of Israel knew not, nor believed in the total corruption of man Jew as well as Gentile and, therefore, felt not the need of a Saviour. They could not understand it how Except a man' at least a Jew were born again and, from above he could not enter, nor even see, the Kingdom of God. They understood not their own Bible: the story of the Fall not Moses and the Prophets; and how could they understand Christ? They believed not them, and how could they believe Him? And yet, from this point of view, but only from this, does all seem clear: the Incarnation, the History of the Temptation and Victory in the Wilderness, and even the Cross. Only he who has, in some measure, himself felt the agony of the first garden, can understand that of the second garden. Had they understood, by that personal experience which we must all have of it, the

Proto-Evangel of the great contest, and of the great conquest by suffering, they would have followed its lines to their final goal in the Christ as the fulfilment of all. And so, here also, were the words of Christ true, that it needed heavenly teaching, and kinship to the Divine, to understand His doctrine. This underlies, and is the main object of these Discourses of Christ. As a corollary He would teach, that Satan was not a merely malicious, impish being, working outward destruction, but that there was a moral power of evil which held us all not the Gentile world only, but even the most favoured, learned, and exalted among the Jews. Of this power Satan was the concentration and impersonation; the prince of the power of darkness. This opens up the reasoning of Christ, alike as expressed and implied. He presented Himself to them as the Messiah, and hence as the Light of the World. It resulted, that only in following Him would a man not walk in the darkness but have the light and that, be it marked, not the light of knowledge, but of life. On the other hand, it also followed, that all, who were not within this light, were in darkness and in death.

It was an appeal to the moral in His hearers. The Pharisees sought to turn it aside by an appeal to the external and visible. They asked for some witness, or palpable evidence, of what they called His testimony about Himself, well knowing that such could only be through some external, visible, miraculous manifestation, just as they had formerly asked for a sign from heaven. The Bible, and especially the Evangelic history, is full of what men ordinarily, and often thoughtlessly, call the miraculous. But, in this case, the miraculous would have become the magical, which it never is. If Christ had yielded to their appeal, and transferred the question from the moral to the coarsely external sphere, He would have ceased to be the Messiah of the Incarnation, Temptation, and Cross, the Messiah-Saviour. It would have been to un-Messiah the Messiah of the Gospel, for it was only, in another form, a repetition of the Temptation. A miracle or sign would at that moment have been a moral anachronism as much as any miracle would be in our days, when the Christ makes His appeal to the moral, and is met by a demand for the external and material evidence of His Witness.

The interruption of the Pharisees was thoroughly Jewish, and so was their objection. It had to be met, and that in the Jewish form in which it had been raised, while the Christ must at the same time continue His former teaching to them concerning God and their own distance from Him. Their objection had proceeded on this fundamental judicial principle A person is not accredited about himself. Harsh and unjust as this principle sometimes was, it evidently applied only in judicial cases, and hence implied that these Pharisees sat in judgment on Him as one suspected, and charged with guilt. The reply of Jesus was plain. Even if His testimony about Himself were unsupported, it would still be true, and He was competent to bear it, for He knew, as a matter of fact, whence He came and whither He went His own part in this Mission, and its goal, as well as God's whereas they knew not either. But, more than this: their demand for a witness had proceeded on the assumption of their being the judges, and He the panel a relation which only arose from their judging after the flesh. Spiritual judgment upon that which was within belonged only to Him, that searcheth all secrets. Christ, while on earth, judged no man; and, even if He did so, it must be remembered that He did it not alone, but with, and as the Representative of, the Father. Hence, such judgment would be true. But, as for their main charge, was it either true, or good in law? In accordance with the Law of God, there were two witnesses to the fact of His Mission: His own, and the frequently-shown attestation of His Father. And, if it were objected that a man could not bear witness in his own cause, the same Rabbinic canon laid it down, that this only applied if his testimony stood alone. But if it were corroborated (even in a matter of greatest delicacy), although by only one male or female slave who ordinarily were unfit for testimony it would be credited.

The reasoning of Christ, without for a moment quitting the higher ground of His teaching, was quite unanswerable from the Jewish standpoint. The Pharisees felt it, and, though well knowing to whom He referred, tried to evade it by the sneer where (not Who) His Father was? This gave occasion for Christ to return to the main subject of His Address, that the reason of their ignorance of Him was, that they knew not the Father, and, in turn, that only acknowledgment of Him would bring true knowledge of the Father.

Such words would only ripen in the hearts of such men the murderous resolve against Jesus. Yet, not till His, not their, hour had come! Presently, we find Him again, now in one of the Porches probably that of Solomon teaching, this time, the Jews. We imagine they were chiefly, if not all, Judaeans perhaps Jerusalemites, aware of the murderous intent of their leaders not His own Galileans, whom He addressed. It was in continuation of what had gone before alike of what He had said to them and of what they felt towards Him. The words are intensely sad Christ's farewell to His rebellious people, His tear-words over lost Israel; abrupt also, as if they were torn sentences, or, else, headings for special discourses: 'I go My way' 'Ye shall seek Me, and in your sin shall ye die' 'Whither I go, ye cannot come! And is it not all most true? These many centuries has Israel sought its Christ, and perished in its great sin of rejecting Him; and whither Christ and His kingdom tended, the Synagogue and Judaism never came. They thought that He spoke of His dying, and not, as He did, of that which came after it. But, how could His dying establish such separation between them? This was the next question which rose in their minds. Would there be anything so peculiar about His dying, or, did His expression about going indicate a purpose of taking away His Own life?

It was this misunderstanding which Jesus briefly but emphatically corrected by telling them, that the ground of their separation was the difference of their nature: they were from beneath, He from above; they of this world, He not of this world. Hence they could not come where He would be, since they must die in their sin, as He had told them if ye believe not that I am.

The words were intentionally mysteriously spoken, as to a Jewish audience. Believe not that Thou art! But Who art Thou? Whether or not the words were spoken in scorn, their question condemned themselves. In His broken sentence, Jesus had tried them to see how they would complete it. Then it was so! All this time they had not yet learned who He was; had not even a conviction on that point, either for or against Him, but were ready to be swayed by their leaders! Who I am? am I not telling you it even from the beginning; has My testimony by word or deed ever swerved on this point? I am what all along, from the beginning, I tell you. Then, putting aside this interruption, He resumed His argument. Many other things had He to say and to judge concerning them, besides the bitter truth of their perishing if they believed not that it was He but He that had sent Him was true, and He must ever speak into the world the message which He had received. When Christ referred to it as that which He heard from Him He evidently wished thereby to emphasise the fact of His Mission from God, as constituting His claim on their obedience of faith. But it was this very point which, even at that moment, they were not understanding. And they would only learn it, not by His Words, but by the event, when they had lifted Him up as they thought, to the Cross, but really on the way to His Glory. Then would they perceive the meaning of the designation He had given of Himself, and the claim founded on it: Then shall ye perceive that I am. Meantime: And of Myself do I nothing, but as the Father taught Me, these things do I speak. And He that sent Me is with Me. He hath not left Me alone, because what pleases Him I do always.

If the Jews failed to understand the expression lifting up which might mean His Exaltation, though it did mean, in the first place, His Cross, there was that in His Appeal to His Words and Deeds as bearing witness to His Mission and to the Divine Help and Presence in it, which by its sincerity, earnestness, and reality, found its way to the hearts of many. Instinctively they felt and believed that His Mission must be Divine. Whether or not this found articulate expression, Jesus now addressed Himself to those who thus far at least for the moment believed on Him. They were at the crisis of their spiritual history, and He must press home on them what He had sought to teach at the fir By nature far from Him, they were bondsmen. Only if they abode in His Word would they know the truth, and the truth would make them free. The result of this knowledge would be moral, and hence that knowledge consisted not in merely believing on Him, but in making His Word and teaching their dwelling abiding in it. But it was this very moral application which they resisted. In this also Jesus had used their own forms of thinking and teaching, only in a much higher sense. For their own tradition had it, that he only was free who laboured in the study of the Law. Yet the liberty of which He spoke came not through study of the Law, but from abiding in the Word of Jesus. But it was this very thing

which they resisted. And so they ignored the spiritual, and fell back upon the national, application of the words of Chri. As this is once more evidential of the Jewish authorship of this Gospel, so also the characteristically Jewish boast, that as the children of Abraham they had never been, and never could be, in real servitude. It would take too long to enumerate all the benefits supposed to be derived from descent from Abraham. Suffice here the almost fundamental principle: All Israel are the children of Kings and its application even to common life, that as the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not even Solomon's feast could be too good for them.

Not so, however, would the Lord allow them to pass it by. He pointed them to another servitude which they knew not, that of sin, and, entering at the same time also on their own ideas, He told them that continuance in this servitude would also lead to national bondage and rejection: For the servant abideth not in the house for ever. On the other hand, the Son abode there for ever; whom He made free by adoption into His family, they would be free in reality and essentially. Then for their very dulness, He would turn to their favourite conceit of being Abraham's seed. There was, indeed, an obvious sense in which, by their natural descent, they were such. But there was a moral descent and that alone was of real value. Another, and to them wholly new, and heavenly teaching this, which our Lord presently applied in a manner they could neither misunderstand nor gainsay, while He at the same time connected it with the general drift of His teaching. Abraham's seed? But they entertained purposes of murder, and that, because the Word of Christ had not free course, made not way in them. His Word was what He had seen with (before) the Father, not heard for His presence was there Eternal. Their deeds were what they had heard from their father the word seen in our common text depending on a wrong reading. And thus He showed them in answer to their interpellation that their father could not have been Abraham, so far as spiritual descent was concerned. They had now a glimpse of His meaning, but only to misapply it, according to their Jewish prejudice. Their spiritual descent, they urged, must be of God, since their descent from Abraham was legitimate. But the Lord dispelled even this conceit by showing, that if theirs were spiritual descent from God, then would they not reject His Message, nor seek to kill Him, but recognise and love him.

But whence this misunderstanding of His speech? Because they are morally incapable of hearing it and this because of the sinfulness of their nature: an element which Judaism had never taken into account. And so, with infinite Wisdom, Christ once more brought back His Discourse to what He would teach them concerning man's need, whether he be Jew or Gentile, of a Saviour and of renewing by the Holy Gho. If the Jews were morally unable to hear His Word and cherished murderous designs, it was because, morally speaking, their descent was of the Devil. Very differently from Jewish ideas did He speak concerning the moral evil of Satan, as both a murderer and a liar a murderer from the beginning of the history of our race, and one who stood not in the truth, because truth is not in him. Hence whenever he speaketh a lie' whether to our first parents, or now concerning the Christ he speaketh from out his own (things), for he (Satan) is a liar, and the father of such an one (who telleth or believeth lies). Which of them could convict Him of sin? If therefore He spake truth, and they believed Him not, it was because they were not of God, but, as He had shown them, of their father, the Devil.

The argument was unanswerable, and there seemed only one way to turn it aside a Jewish Tu quoque, an adaptation of the Physician, heal thyself: Do we not say rightly, that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon? It is strange that the first clause of this reproach should have been so misunderstood and yet its direct explanation lies on the surface. We have only to translate it into the language which the Jews had used. By no strain of ingenuity is it possible to account for the designation Samaritan as given by the Jews to Jesus, if it is regarded as referring to nationality. Even at the very Feast they had made it an objection to His Messianic claims, that He was (as they supposed) a Galilean. Nor had He come to Jerusalem from Samaria; nor could He be so called (as Commentators suggest) because He was a foe to Israel, or a breaker of the Law or unfit to bear witness for neither of these circumstances would have led the Jews to designate Him by the term Samaritan. But, in the language which they spoke, what is rendered into Greek by Samaritan would

have been either Kuthi (ytwk), which, while literally meaning a Samaritan, is almost as often used in the sense of heretic or else Shomroni (ynwrm). The latter word deserves special attention. Literally, it also means, Samaritan; but, the name Shomron (perhaps from its connection with Samaria), is also sometimes used as the equivalent of Ashmedai, the Prince of the demons. According to the Kabbalists, Shomron was the father of Ashmedai, and hence the same as Sammael, or Satan. That this was a wide-spread Jewish belief, appears from the circumstance that in the Koran (which, in such matters, would reproduce popular Jewish tradition), Israel is said to have been seduced into idolatry by Shomron, while, in Jewish tradition, this is attributed to Sammael. If, therefore, the term applied by the Jews to Jesus was Shomroni and not Kuthi, heretic' it would literally mean, Child of the Devil. This would also explain why Christ only replied to the charge of having a demon, since the two charges meant substantially the same: Thou art a child of the devil and hast a demon. In wondrous patience and mercy He almost passed it by, dwelling rather, for their teaching, on the fact that, while they dishonoured Him, He honoured His Father. He heeded not their charges. His concern was the glory of His Father; the vindication of His own honour would be brought about by the Father though, alas! in judgment on those who were casting such dishonour on the Sent of God. 82 Then, as if lingering in deep compassion on the terrible issue, He once more pressed home the great subject of His Discourse, that only if a man keep' both have regard to, and observe His Word he shall not gaze at death [intently behold it] 83 unto eternity' forever shall he not come within close and terrible gaze of what is really death, of what became such to Adam in the hour of his Fall.

It was, as repeatedly observed, this death as the consequence of the Fall, of which the Jews knew nothing. And so they once more misunderstood it as of physical death, and, since Abraham and the prophets had died, regarded Christ as setting up a claim higher than theirs. The Discourse had contained all that He had wished to bring before them, and their objections were degenerating into wrangling. It was time to break it off by a general application. The question, He added, was not of what He said, but of what God said of Him that God, Whom they claimed as theirs, and yet knew not, but whom He knew, and whose Word He kept. But, as for Abraham he had exulted in the thought of the coming day of the Christ, and, seeing its glory, he was glad. Even Jewish tradition could scarcely gainsay this, since there were two parties in the Synagogue, of which one believed that, when that horror of great darkness fell on him, Abraham had, in vision, been shown not only this, but the coming world and not only all events in the present age but also those in Messianic times. 88 89 And now, theirs was not misunderstanding, but wilful misinterpretation. He had spoken of Abraham seeing His day; they took it of His seeing Abraham's day, and challenged its possibility. Whether or not they intended thus to elicit an avowal of His claim to eternal duration, and hence to Divinity, it was not time any longer to forbear the full statement, and, with Divine emphasis, He spake the words which could not be mistaken: Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM.

Note on the differences between the Feast of Tabernacles and that of its Octave (see p. 156, note 1). The six points of difference which mark the Octave as a separate feast are indicated by the memorial words and letters are as follows: (1) During the seven days of Tabernacles the Priests of all the courses officiated, while on the Octave the sacrificial services were appointed, as usually, by lot (Myyp)(2) The benediction at the beginning of a feast was spoken again at the Octave. (3) The Octave was designated in prayer, and by special ordinances, as a separate feast (lgr)(4) Difference in the sacrifices (Nbrq)(5) Difference in the Psalms on the Octave probably Ps. xii. According to 1 Kings viii., difference as to the blessing (hkrb)

It was as if they had only waited for this. Furiously they rushed from the Porch into the Court of the Gentiles with symbolic significance, even in this to pick up stones, and to cast them at Him. But, once more, His hour had not yet come, and their fury proved impotent. Hiding Himself for the moment, as might so easily be done, in one of the many chambers, passages, or gateways of the Temple, He presently passed out.

It had been the first plain disclosure and avowal of His Divinity, and it was in the midst of His enemies and when most contempt was cast upon Him. Presently would that avowal be renewed both in Word

and by Deed; for the end of mercy and judgment had not yet come, but was drawing terribly nigh.

Chapter 9 The Healing of the Man Born Blind

(John 9.)

After the scene in the Temple described in the last chapter, and Christ's consequent withdrawal from His enemies, we can scarcely suppose any other great event to have taken place on that day within or near the precincts of the Sanctuary. And yet, from the close connection of the narratives, we are led to infer that no long interval of time can have elapsed before the healing of the man born blind. Probably it happened the day after the events just recorded. We know that it was a Sabbath, and this fresh mark of time, as well as the multiplicity of things done, and the whole style of the narrative, confirm our belief that it was not on the evening of the day when He had spoken to them first in the Treasury and then in the Porch.

On two other points there is strong presumption, though we cannot offer actual proof. Remembering, that the entrance to the Temple or its Courts was then as that of churches is on the Continent the chosen spot for those who, as objects of pity, solicited charity; remembering, also, how rapidly the healing of the blind man became known, and how soon both his parents and the healed man himself appeared before the Pharisees presumably, in the Temple; lastly, how readily the Saviour knew where again to find him we can scarcely doubt that the miracle took place at the entering to the Temple, or on the Temple-Mount. Secondly, both the Work, and especially the Words of Christ, seem in such close connection with what had preceded, that we can scarcely be mistaken in regarding them as intended to form a continuation of it.

It is not difficult to realise the scene, nor to understand the remarks of all who had part in it. It was the Sabbath the day after the Octave of the Feast, and Christ with His disciples was passing presumably when going into the Temple, where this blind beggar was wont to sit, probably soliciting alms, perhaps in some such terms as these, which were common at the time: Gain merit by me; or, O tenderhearted, by me gain merit, to thine own benefit. But on the Sabbath he would, of course, neither ask nor receive alms, though his presence in the wonted place would secure wider notice and perhaps lead to many private gifts. Indeed, the blind were regarded as specially entitled to charity; and the Jerusalem Talmud relates some touching instances of the delicacy displayed towards them. As the Master and His disciples passed the blind beggar, Jesus saw him, with that look which they who followed Him knew to be full of meaning. Yet, so thoroughly Judaised were they by their late contact with the Pharisees, that no thought of possible mercy came to them, only a truly and characteristically Jewish question, addressed to Him expressly, and as Rabbi: through whose guilt this blindness had befallen him through his own, or that of his parents.

For, thoroughly Jewish the question was. Many instances could be adduced, in which one or another sin is said to have been punished by some immediate stroke, disease, or even by death; and we constantly find Rabbis, when meeting such unfortunate persons, asking them, how or by what sin this had come to them. But, as this man was blind from his birth the possibility of some actual sin before birth would suggest itself, at least as a speculative question, since the evil impulse (Yetser haRa), might even then be called into activity. At the same time, both the Talmud and the later charge of the Pharisees, In sins wast thou born altogether imply that in such cases the alternative explanation would be considered, that the blindness might be caused by the sin of his parents. It was a common Jewish view, that the merits or demerits of the parents would appear in the children. In fact, up to thirteen years of age a child was considered, as it were, part of his father, and as suffering for his guilt. More than that, the thoughts of a mother might affect the moral state of her unborn offspring, and the terrible apostasy of one of the greatest Rabbis had, in popular belief, been caused by the

sinful delight his mother had taken when passing through an idol-grove. Lastly, certain special sins in the parents would result in specific diseases in their offspring, and one is mentioned as causing blindness in the children. But the impression left on our minds is, that the disciples felt not sure as to either of these solutions of the difficulty. It seemed a mystery, inexplicable on the supposition of God's infinite goodness, and to which they sought to apply the common Jewish solution. Many similar mysteries meet us in the administration of God's Providence questions, which seem unanswerable, but to which we try to give answers, perhaps, not much wiser than the explanations suggested by disciples.

But why seek to answer them at all, since we possess not all, perhaps very few of, the data requisite for it? There is one aspect, however, of adversity, and of a strange dispensation of evil, on which the light of Christ's Words here shines with the brightness of a new morning. There is a physical, natural reason for them. God has not specially sent them, in the sense of His interference or primary causation, although He has sent them in the sense of His knowledge, will, and reign. They have come in the ordinary course of things, and are traceable to causes which, if we only knew them, would appear to us the sequence of the laws which God has imposed on His creation, and which are necessary for its orderly continuance. And, further, all such evil consequences, from the operation of God's laws, are in the last instance to be traced back to the curse which sin has brought upon man and on earth. With these His Laws, and with their evil sequences to us through the curse of sin, God does not interfere in the ordinary course of His Providence; although he would be daring, who would negative the possibility of what may seem, though it is not, interference, since the natural causes which lead to these evil consequences may so easily, naturally, and rationally be affected. But there is another and a higher aspect of it, since Christ has come, and is really the Healer of all disease and evil by being the Remover of its ultimate moral cause. This is indicated in His words, when, putting aside the clumsy alternative suggested by the disciples, He told them that it was so in order that the works of God might be made manifest in him. They wanted to know the why He told them the in order to of the man's calamity; they wished to understand its reason as regarded its origin, He told them its reasonableness in regard to the purpose which it, and all similar suffering, should serve, since Christ has come, the Healer of evil because the Saviour from sin. Thus He transferred the question from intellectual ground to that of the moral purpose which suffering might serve. And this not in itself, nor by any destiny or appointment, but because the Coming and Work of the Christ has made it possible to us all. Sin and its sequences are still the same, for the world is established that it cannot move. But over it all has risen the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings; and, if we but open ourselves to His influence, these evils may serve this purpose, and so have this for their reason, not as, regards their genesis, but their continuance, that the works of God may be made manife

To make this the reality to us, was the work of Him Who sent, and for which He sent, the Chri And rapidly now must He work it, for perpetual example, during the few hours still left of His brief working-day. This figure was not unfamiliar to the Jews, though it may well be that, by thus emphasising the briefness of the time, He may also have anticipated any objection to His healing on the Sabbath. But it is of even more importance to notice, how the two leading thoughts of the previous day's Discourse were now again taken up and set forth in the miracle that followed. These were, that He did the Work which God had sent Him to do, and that He was the Light of the world. As its Light He could not but shine so long as He was in it. And this He presently symbolised (and is not every miracle a symbol?) in the healing of the blind.

Once more we notice, how in His Deeds, as in His Words, the Lord adopted the forms known and used by His contemporaries, while He filled them with quite other substance. It has already been stated, that saliva was commonly regarded as a remedy for diseases of the eye, although, of course, not for the removal of blindness. With this He made clay, which He now used, adding to it the direction to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam, a term which literally meant sent. A symbolism, this, of Him Who was the Sent of the Father. For, all is here symbolical: the cure and its means. If we ask ourselves why means were used in this instance, we can only suggest, that it was partly for the sake

of him who was to be healed, partly for theirs who afterwards heard of it. For, the blind man seems to have been ignorant of the character of his Healer, and it needed the use of some means to make him, so to speak, receptive. On the other hand, not only the use of means, but their inadequacy to the object, must have impressed all. Symbolical, also, were these means. Sight was restored by clay, made out of the ground with the spittle of Him, whose breath had at the first breathed life into clay; and this was then washed away in the Pool of Siloam, from whose waters had been drawn on the Feast of Tabernacles that which symbolised the forthpouring of the new life by the Spirit. Lastly, if it be asked why such miracle should have been wrought on one who had not previous faith, who does not even seem to have known about the Christ, we can only repeat, that the man himself was intended to be a symbol, that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

And so, what the Pharisees had sought in vain, was freely vouch-safed when there was need for it. With inimitable simplicity, itself evidence that no legend is told, the man's obedience and healing are recorded. We judge, that his first impulse when healed must have been to seek for Jesus, naturally, where he had first met Him. On his way, probably past his own house to tell his parents, and again on the spot where he had so long sat begging, all who had known him must have noticed the great change that had passed over him. So marvellous, indeed, did it appear, that, while part of the crowd that gathered would, of course, acknowledge his identity, others would say: No, but he is like him; in their suspiciousness looking for some imposture. For there can be little doubt, that on his way he must have learned more about Jesus than merely His Name, and in turn have communicated to his informants the story of his healing. Similarly, the formal question now put to him by the Jews was as much, if not more, a preparatory inquisition than the outcome of a wish to learn the circumstances of his healing. And so we notice in his answer the cautious desire not to say anything that could incriminate his Benefactor. He tells the facts truthfully, plainly; he accentuates by what means he had recovered not received, sight; but otherwise gives no clue by which either to discover or to incriminate Jesus.

Presently they bring him to the Pharisees, not to take notice of his healing, but to found on it a charge against Christ. Such must have been their motive, since it was universally known that the leaders of the people had, of course informally, agreed to take the strictest measures, not only against the Christ, but against any one who professed to be His disciple. The ground on which the present charge against Jesus would rest was plain: the healing involved a manifold breach of the Sabbath-Law. The first of these was that He had made clay. Next, it would be a question whether any remedy might be applied on the holy day. Such could only be done in diseases of the internal organs (from the throat downwards), except when danger to life or the loss of an organ was involved. It was, indeed, declared lawful to apply, for example, wine to the outside of the eyelid, on the ground that this might be treated as washing; but it was sinful to apply it to the inside of the eye. And as regards saliva, its application to the eye is expressly forbidden, on the ground that it was evidently intended as a remedy.

There was, therefore, abundant legal ground for a criminal charge. And, although on the Sabbath the Sanhedrin would not hold any formal meeting, and, even had there been such, the testimony of one man would not have sufficed, yet the Pharisees set the inquiry regularly on foot. First, as if not satisfied with the report of those who had brought the man, they made him repeat it. The simplicity of the man's language left no room for evasion or subterfuge. Rabbinism was on its great trial. The wondrous fact could neither be denied nor explained, and the only ground for resisting the legitimate inference as to the character of Him Who had done it, was its inconsistency with their traditional law. The alternative was: whether their traditional law of Sabbath-observance, or else He who had done such miracles, was Divine? Was Christ not of God, because He did not keep the Sabbath in their way? But, then; could an open transgressor of God's Law do such miracles? In this dilemma they turned to the simple man before them. Seeing that He opened his eyes, what did he say of Him? what was the impression left on his mind, who had the best opportunity for judging?

There is something very peculiar, and, in one sense, most instructive, as to the general opinion entertained even by the best-disposed, who had not yet been taught the higher truth, in his reply, so

simple and solemn, so comprehensive in its sequences, and yet so utterly inadequate by itself: He is a Prophet. One possibility still remained. After all, the man might not have been really blind; and they might, by cross-examining the parents, elicit that about his original condition which would explain the pretended cure. But on this most important point, the parents, with all their fear of the anger of the Pharisees, remained unshaken. He had been born blind; but as to the manner of his cure, they declined to offer any opinion. Thus, as so often, the machinations of the enemies of Christ led to results the opposite of those wished for. For, the evidential value of their attestation of their son's blindness was manifestly proportional to their fear of committing themselves to any testimony for Christ, well knowing what it would entail.

For to persons so wretchedly poor as to allow their son to live by begging, the consequence of being un-Synagogued or put outside the congregation which was to be the punishment of any who confessed Jesus as the Messiah would have been dreadful. Talmudic writings speak of two, or rather, we should say, of three, kinds of excommunication of which the two first were chiefly disciplinary, while the third was the real casting out un-Synagoguing cutting off from the congregation. The general designation for excommunication was Shammatta, although, according to its literal meaning, the term would only apply to the severest form of it. The first and lightest degree was the so-called Neziphah or Neziphutha; properly, a rebuke and inveighing. Ordinarily, its duration extended over seven days; but, if pronounced by the Nasi, or Head of the Sanhedrin, it lasted for thirty days. In later times, however, it only rested for one day on the guilty person. Perhaps Paul referred to this rebuke in the expression which he used about an offending Elder. He certainly adopted the practice in Palestine, when he would not have an Elder rebuked although he went far beyond it when he would have such entreated. In Palestine it was ordered, that an offending Rabbi should be scourged instead of being excommunicated. Yet another direction of Paul's is evidently derived from these arrangements of the Synagogue, although applied in a far different spirit. When the Apostle wrote: An heretic after the first and second admonition reject; there must have been in his mind the second degree of Jewish excommunication, the so-called Niddui (from the verb to thrust, thrust out, cast out). This lasted for thirty days at the least, although among the Babylonians only for seven days. 39 At the end of that term there was a second admonition which lasted other thirty days. If still unrepentant, the third, or real excommunication, was pronounced, which was called the Cherem, or ban, and of which the duration was indefinite. Any three persons, or even one duly authorised, could pronounce the lowest sentence. The greater excommunication (Niddui) which, happily, could only be pronounced in an assembly of ten must have been terrible, being accompanied by curses, and, at a later period, sometimes proclaimed with the blast of the horn. If the person so visited occupied an honourable position, it was the custom to intimate his sentence in a euphemistic manner, such as: It seems to me that thy companions are separating themselves from thee. He who was so, or similarly addressed, would only too well understand its meaning. Henceforth he would sit on the ground, and bear himself like one in deep mourning. He would allow his beard and hair to grow wild and shaggy; he would not bathe, nor anoint himself; he would not be admitted into an assembly of ten men, neither to public prayer, nor to the Academy; though he might either teach, or be taught by, single individuals. Nay, as if he were a leper, people would keep at a distance of four cubits from him. If he died, stones were cast on his coffin, nor was he allowed the honour of the ordinary funeral, nor were they to mourn for him. Still more terrible was the final excommunication, or Cherem, when a ban of indefinite duration was laid on a man. Henceforth he was like one dead. He was not allowed to study with others, no intercourse was to be held with him, he was not even to be shown the road. He might, indeed, buy the necessities of life, but it was forbidden to eat or drink with such an one.

We can understand, how everyone would dread such an anathema. But when we remember, what it would involve to persons in the rank of life, and so miserably poor as the parents of that blind man, we no longer wonder at their evasion of the question put by the Sanhedrin. And if we ask ourselves, on what ground so terrible a punishment could be inflicted to all time and in every place for the ban once pronounced applied everywhere simply for the confession of Jesus as the Christ, the answer is

not difficult. The Rabbinists enumerate twenty-four grounds for excommunication, of which more than one might serve the purpose of the Pharisees. But in general, to resist the authority of the Scribes, or any of their decrees, or to lead others either away from the commandments or to what was regarded as profanation of the Divine Name, was sufficient to incur the ban, while it must be borne in mind that excommunication by the President of the Sanhedrin extended to all places and persons.

As nothing could be elicited from his parents, the man who had been blind was once more summoned before the Pharisees. It was no longer to inquire into the reality of his alleged blindness, nor to ask about the cure, but simply to demand of him recantation, though this was put in the most specious manner. Thou hast been healed: own that it was only by God's Hand miraculously stretched forth, and that this man had nothing to do with it, save that the coincidence may have been allowed to try the faith of Israel. It could not have been Jesus Who had done it, for they knew Him to be a sinner. Of the two alternatives they had chosen that of the absolute rightness of their own Sabbath-traditions as against the evidence of His Miracles. Virtually, then, this was the condemnation of Christ and the apotheosis of traditionalism. And yet, false as their conclusion was, there was this truth in their premisses, that they judged of miracles by the moral evidence in regard to Him, Who was represented as working them.

But he who had been healed of his blindness was not to be so betrayed into a denunciation of his great Physician. The simplicity and earnestness of his convictions enabled him to gain even a logical victory. It was his turn now to bring back the question to the issue which they had originally raised; and we admire it all the more, as we remember the consequences to this poor man of thus daring the Pharisees. As against their opinion about Jesus, as to the correctness of which neither he nor others could have direct knowledge, there was the unquestionable fact of his healing of which he had personal knowledge. The renewed inquiry now by the Pharisees, as to the manner in which Jesus had healed him, might have had for its object to betray the man into a positive confession, or to elicit something demoniacal in the mode of the cure. The blind man had now fully the advantage. He had already told them; why the renewed inquiry? As he put it half ironically: Was it because they felt the wrongness of their own position, and that they should become His disciples? It stung them to the quick; they lost all self-possession, and with this their moral defeat became complete. Thou art the disciple of that man, but we (according to the favourite phrase) are the disciples of Moses. Of the Divine Mission of Moses they knew, but of the Mission of Jesus they knew nothing. The unlettered man had now the full advantage in the controversy. In this, indeed there was the marvellous that the leaders of Israel should confess themselves ignorant of the authority of One, who had power to open the eyes of the blind a marvel which had never before been witnessed. If He had that power, whence had He obtained it, and why? It could only have been from God. They said, He was a sinner' and yet there was no principle more frequently repeated by the Rabbis, than that answers to prayer depended on a man being devout and doing the Will of God. There could therefore be only one inference: If Jesus had not Divine Authority, He could not have had Divine Power.

The argument was unanswerable, and in its unanswerableness shows us, not indeed the purpose, but the evidential force of Christ's Miracles. In one sense they had no purpose, or rather were purpose to themselves, being the forthbursting of His Power and the manifestation of His Being and Mission, of which latter, as applied to things physical, they were part. But the truthful reasoning of that untutored man, which confounded the acuteness of the sages, shows the effect of these manifestations on all whose hearts were open to the truth. The Pharisees had nothing to answer, and, as not unfrequently in analogous cases, could only, in their fury, cast him out with bitter reproaches. Would he teach them he, whose very disease showed him to have been a child conceived and born in sin, and who, ever since his birth, had been among ignorant, Law-neglecting sinners'?

But there was Another, who watched and knew him: He whom, so far as he knew, he had dared to confess, and for whom he was content to suffer. Let him now have the reward of his faith, even its completion; and so shall it become manifest to all time, how, as we follow and cherish the better light, it riseth upon us in all its brightness, and that faithfulness in little bringeth the greater stewardship.

Tenderly did Jesus seek him out, wherever it may have been: and, as He found him, this one question did He ask, whether the conviction of his experience was not growing into the higher faith of the yet unseen: Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He had had personal experience of Him was not that such as to lead up to the higher faith? And is it not always so, that the higher faith is based on the conviction of personal experience that we believe on Him as the Son of God, because we have experience of Him as the God-sent, who has Divine Power, and has opened the eyes of the blind-born and who has done to us what had never been done by any other in the world? Thus is faith always the child of experience, and yet its father also; faith not without experience, and yet beyond experience; faith not superseded by experience, but made reasonable by it.

To such a soul it needed only the directing Word of Chri And Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him? It seems as if the question of Jesus had kindled in him the conviction of what was the right answer. We almost see how, like a well of living water, the words sprang gladsome from his inmost heart, and how he looked up expectant on Jesus. To such readiness of faith there could be only one answer. In language more plain than He had ever before used, Jesus answered, and with immediate confession of implicit faith the man lowly worshipped. And so it was, that the first time he saw his Deliverer, it was to worship Him. It was the highest stage yet attained. What contrast this faith and worship of the poor unlettered man, once blind, now in every sense seeing, to the blindness of judgment which had fallen on those who were the leaders of Israel! The cause alike of the one and the other was the Person of the Chri For our relationship to Him determines sight or blindness, as we either receive the evidence of what He is from what He indubitably does, or reject it, because we hold by our own false conceptions of God, and of what His will to us is. And so is Christ also for judgment. There were those who still followed Him not convinced by, nor as yet decided against Him Pharisees, who well understood the application of His Words. Formally, it had been a contest between traditionalism and the Work of Chri They also were traditionalists were they also blind? But, nay, they had misunderstood Him by leaving out the moral element, thus showing themselves blind indeed. It was not the calamity of blindness; but it was a blindness in which they were guilty, and for which they were responsible, which indeed was the result of their deliberate choice: therefore their sin not their blindness only remained!

Chapter 10 The Good Shepherd and His One Flock'

Last Discourse at the Feast of Tabernacles

(John 10:1-21.)

The closing words which Jesus had spoken to those Pharisees who followed Him breathe the sadness of expected near judgment, rather than the hopefulness of expostulation. And the Discourse which followed, ere He once more left Jerusalem, is of the same character. It seems, as if Jesus could not part from the City in holy anger, but ever, and only, with tears. All the topics of the former Discourses are now resumed and applied. They are not in any way softened or modified, but uttered in accents of loving sadness rather than of reproof monition. This connection with the past proves, that the Discourse was spoken immediately after, and in connection with, the events recorded in the previous chapters. At the same time, the tone adopted by Christ prepares us for His Peraean Ministry, which may be described as that of the last and fullest outgoing of His most intense pity. This, in contrast to what was exhibited by the rulers of Israel, and which would so soon bring terrible judgment on them. For, if such things were done in the green tree of Israel's Messiah-King, what would the end be in the dry wood of Israel's commonwealth and institutions?

It was in accordance with the character of the Discourse presently under consideration, that Jesus

spake it, not, indeed, in Parables in the strict sense (for none such are recorded in the Fourth Gospel), but in an allegory in the Parabolic form, hiding the higher truths from those who, having eyes, had not seen, but revealing them to such whose eyes had been opened. If the scenes of the last few days had made anything plain, it was the utter unfitness of the teachers of Israel for their professed work of feeding the flock of God. The Rabbinists also called their spiritual leaders feeders Parnasin (Nysnrp) a term by which the Targum renders some of the references to the Shepherds in Ezek. xxxiv. and Zech xi. The term comprised the two ideas of leading and feeding which are separately insisted on in the Lord's allegory. As we think of it, no better illustration, nor more apt, could be found for those to whom the flock of God was entrusted. It needed not therefore that a sheepfold should have been in view, to explain the form of Christ's address. It only required to recall the Old Testament language about the shepherding of God, and that of evil shepherds, to make the application to what had so lately happened. They were, surely, not shepherds, who had cast out the healed blind man, or who so judged of the Christ, and would cast out all His disciples. They had entered into God's Sheepfold, but not by the door by which the owner, God, had brought His flock into the fold. To it the entrance had been His free love, His gracious provision, His thoughts of pardoning, His purpose of saving mercy. That was God's Old Testament-door into His Sheepfold. Not by that door, as had so lately fully appeared, had Israel's rulers come in. They had climbed up to their place in the fold some other way with the same right, or by the same wrong, as a thief or a robber. They had wrongfully taken what did not belong to them cunningly and undetected, like a thief; they had allotted it to themselves, and usurped it by violence, like a robber. What more accurate description could be given of the means by which the Pharisees and Sadducees had attained the rule over God's flock, and claimed it for themselves? And what was true of them holds equally so of all, who, like them, enter by some other way.

How different He, who comes in and leads us through God's door of covenant-mercy and Gospel-promise the door by which God had brought, and ever brings, His flock into His fold! This was the true Shepherd. The allegory must, of course, not be too closely pressed; but, as we remember how in the East the flocks are at night driven into a large fold, and charge of them is given to an under shepherd, we can understand how, when the shepherd comes in the morning, the doorkeeper or guardian opens to him. In interpreting the allegory, stress must be laid not so much on any single phrase, be it the porter the door or the opening as on their combination. If the shepherd comes to the door, the porter hastens to open it to him from within, that he may obtain access to the flock; and when a true spiritual Shepherd comes to the true spiritual door, it is opened to him by the guardian from within, that is, he finds ready and immediate access. Equally pictorial is the progress of the allegory. Having thus gained access to His flock, it has not been to steal or rob, but the Shepherd knows and calls them, each by his name, and leads them out. We mark that in the expression: when He has put forth all His own the word is a strong one. For they have to go each singly, and perhaps they are not willing to go out each by himself, or even to leave that fold, and so he puts or thrusts them forth, and He does so to all His own. Then the Eastern shepherd places himself at the head of his flock, and goes before them, guiding them, making sure of their following simply by his voice, which they know. So would His flock follow Christ, for they know His voice, and in vain would strangers seek to lead them away, as the Pharisees had tried. It was not the known voice of their own Shepherd, and they would only flee from it.

We can scarcely wonder, that they who heard it did not understand the allegory, for they were not of His flock and knew not His voice. But His own knew it then, and would know it for ever. Therefore both for the sake of the one and the other, He continued, now dividing for greater clearness the two leading ideas of His allegory, and applying each separately for better comfort. These two ideas were: entrance by the door, and the characteristics of the good Shepherd thus affording a twofold test by which to recognise the true, and distinguish it from the false.

I. The door Christ was the Door. 10 The entrance into God's fold and to God's flock was only through that, of which Christ was the reality. And it had ever been so. All the Old Testament institutions,

prophecies, and promises, so far as they referred to access into God's fold, meant Chri And all those who went before Him, pretending to be the door whether Pharisees, Sadducees, or Nationalists were only thieves and robbers: that was not the door into the Kingdom of God . And the sheep, God's flock, did not hear them; for, although they might pretend to lead the flock, the voice was that of strangers. The transition now to another application of the allegorical idea of the door was natural and almost necessary, though it appears somewhat abrupt. Even in this it is peculiarly Jewish. We must understand this transition as follows: I am the Door; those who professed otherwise to gain access to the fold have climbed in some other way. But if I am the only, I am also truly the Door. And, dropping the figure, if any man enters by Me, he shall be saved, securely go out and in (where the language is not to be closely pressed), in the sense of having liberty and finding pasture.

II. This forms also the transition to the second leading idea of the allegory: the True and Good Shepherd. Here we mark a fourfold progression of thought, which reminds us of the poetry of the Book of Psalms. There the thought expressed in one line or one couplet is carried forward and developed in the next, forming what are called the Psalms of Ascent (of Degrees). And in the Discourse of Christ also the final thought of each couplet of verses is carried forward, or rather leads upward in the next. Thus we have here a Psalm of Degrees concerning the Good Shepherd and His Flock, and, at the same time, a New Testament version of Psalm xxiii. Accordingly its analysis might be formulated as follows:

1. Christ, the Good Shepherd, in contrast to others who falsely claimed to be the shepherds. Their object had been self, and they had pursued it even at the cost of the sheep, of their life and safety. He came for them, to give, not to take, that they may have life and have abundance.

Life nay, that they may have it, I lay down Mine: so does it appear that I am the Good Shepherd.

2. The Good Shepherd Who layeth down His life for His Sheep! What a contrast to a mere hireling, whose are not the sheep, and who fleeth at sight of the wolf (danger), and the wolf seizeth them, and scattereth (viz., the flock): (he fleeth) because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. The simile of the wolf must not be too closely pressed, but taken in a general sense, to point the contrast to Him Who layeth down His Life for His sheep.

Truly He is is seen to be the fair Shepherd Whose are the sheep, and as such, I know Mine, and Mine know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father. And I lay down My Life for the sheep.

3. For the sheep that are Mine, whom I know, and for whom I lay down My Life! But those sheep, they are not only of this fold not all of the Jewish fold but also scattered sheep of the Gentiles. They have all the characteristics of the flock: they are His; and they hear His Voice; but as yet they are outside the fold. Them also the Good Shepherd must lead and, in evidence that they are His, as He calls them and goes before them, they shall hear His voice, and so, O most glorious consummation, they shall become one flock and one Shepherd.

And thus is the great goal of the Old Testament reached, and the good tidings of great joy which issue from Israel are unto all people. The Kingdom of David', which is the Kingdom of God , is set up upon earth, and opened to all believers. We cannot help noticing though it almost seems to detract from it how different from the Jewish ideas of it is this Kingdom with its Shepherd-King, Who knows and who lays down His life for the sheep, and who leads the Gentiles not to subjection nor to inferiority, but to equality of faith and privileges, taking the Jews out of their special fold and leading up the Gentiles, and so making of both one flock. Whence did Jesus of Nazareth obtain these thoughts and views, towering so far aloft of all around?

But, on the other hand, they are utterly un-Gentile also if by the term Gentile we mean the Gentile Churches in antagonism to the Jewish Christians, as a certain school of critics would represent them, which traces the origin of this Gospel to this separation. A Gospel written in that spirit would never have spoken on this wise of the mutual relation of Jews and Gentiles towards Christ and in the Church. The sublime words of Jesus are only compatible with one supposition: that He was indeed the Christ of God. Nay, although men have studied or cavilled at these words for eighteen and a half

centuries, they have not yet reached unto this: They shall become one flock, one Shepherd.

4. In the final Step of Ascent the leading thoughts of the whole Discourse are taken up and carried to the last and highest thought. The Good Shepherd that brings together the One Flock! Yes by laying down His life, but also by taking it up again. Both are necessary for the work of the Good Shepherd nay, the life is laid down in the surrender of sacrifice, in order that it may be taken up again, and much more fully, in the Resurrection-Power. And, therefore, His Father loveth Him as the Messiah-Shepherd, who so fully does the work committed to Him, and so entirely surrenders Himself to it. His Death, His Resurrection, let no one imagine that it comes from without! It is His own act. He has power in regard to both, and both are His own, voluntary, Sovereign, and Divine acts.

And this, all this, in order to be the Shepherd-Saviour to die, and rise for His sheep, and thus to gather them all, Jews and Gentiles, into one flock, and to be their Shepherd. This, neither more nor less, was the Mission which God had given Him; this, the commandment which He had received of His Father that which God had given Him to do.

It was a noble close of the series of those Discourses in the Temple, which had it for their object to show, that He was truly sent of God.

And, in a measure, they attained that object. To some, indeed, it all seemed unintelligible, incoherent, madness; and they fell back on the favourite explanation of all this strange drama He hath a demon! But others there were let us hope, many, not yet His disciples to whose hearts these words went straight. And how could they resist the impression? These utterances are not of a demonised' and, then, it came back to them: Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

And so, once again, the Light of His Words and His Person fell upon His Works, and, as ever, revealed their character, and made them clear.

Note, It seems right here, in a kind of Postscript-Note to call attention to what could not have been inserted in the text without breaking up its unity, and yet seems too important to be relegated to an ordinary foot-note. In Yoma 66 b, lines 18 to 24 from top, we have a series of questions addressed to Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, designed as it seems to me to test his views about Jesus and his relation to the new doctrine. Rabbi Eliezer, one of the greatest Rabbis, was the brother-in-law of Gamaliel II., the son of that Gamaliel at whose feet Paul sat. He may, therefore, have been acquainted with the Apostle. And we have indubitable evidence that he had intercourse with Jewish Christians, and took pleasure in their teaching; and, further, that he was accused of favouring Christianity. Under these circumstances, the series of covered, enigmatic questions, reported as addressed to him, gains a new interest. I can only repeat, that I regard them as referring to the Person and the Words of Christ. One of these questions is to this effect: Is it [right, proper, duty] for the Shepherd to save a lamb from the lion? To this the Rabbi gives (as always in this series of questions) an evasive answer, as follows: You have only asked me about the lamb. On this the following question is next put, I presume by way of forcing an express reply: Is it [right, proper, duty] to save the Shepherd from the lion? and to this the Rabbi once more evasively replies: You have only asked me about the Shepherd. Thus, as the words of Christ to which covert reference is made have only meaning when the two ideas of the Sheep and the Shepherd are combined, the Rabbi, by dividing them, cleverly evaded giving an answer to his questioners. But these inferences come to us, all of deepest importance: 1. I regard the questions above quoted as containing a distinct reference to the words of Christ in John x. 11. Indeed, the whole string of questions, of which the above form part, refers to Christ and His Words. 2. It casts a peculiar light, not only upon the personal history of this great Rabbi, the brother-in-law of the Patriarch Gamaliel II., but a side-light also, on the history of Nicodemus. Of course, such evasive answers are utterly unworthy of a disciple of Christ, and quite incompatible with the boldness of confession which must characterise them. But the question arises now often seriously discussed by Jewish writers: how far many Rabbis and laymen may have gone in their belief of Christ, and yet at least in too many instances fallen short of discipleship; and, lastly, as to the relation between the early Church and the Jews, on which not a few things of deep interest have to be said, though it may not be on the present occasion. 3. Critically also, the quotation is of the

deepest importance. For, does it not furnish a reference and that on the lips of Jews to the Fourth Gospel, and that from the close of the first century? There is here something which the opponents of its genuineness and authenticity will have to meet and answer.

Another series of similar allegorical questions in connection with R. Joshua b. Chananyah is recorded in Bekhor. 8 a and b, but answered by the Rabbi in an anti-Christian sense. See Mandelstamm, Talmud. Stud. i. But Mandelstamm goes too far in his view of the purely allegorical meaning, especially of the introductory part.

Chapter 11 The First Peraean Discourses

To the Pharisees concerning the Two Kingdoms Their Contest What Qualifies a Disciple for the Kingdom of God, and how Israel was Becoming Subject to that of Evil

(Matthew 12:22-45; Luke 11:14-36.)

It was well that Jesus should, for the present, have parted from Jerusalem with words like these. They would cling about His hearers like the odour of incense that had ascended. Even the schism that had come among them concerning His Person made it possible not only to continue His teaching, but to return to the City once more ere His final entrance. For, His Peraean Ministry, which extended from after the Feast of Tabernacles to the week preceding the last Passover, was, so to speak, cut in half by the brief visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication. Thus, each part of the Peraean Ministry would last about three months; the first, from about the end of September to the month of December; the second, from that period to the beginning of April. Of these six months we have (with the solitary exception of Matthew xii. 22-45), no other account than that furnished by Luke, although, as usually, the Jerusalem and Judaeian incidents of it are described by John. After that we have the account of His journey to the last Passover, recorded, with more or less detail, in the three Synoptic Gospels.

It will be noticed that this section is peculiarly lacking in incident. It consists almost exclusively of Discourses and Parables, with but few narrative portions interspersed. And this, not only because the season of the year must have made itinerancy difficult, and thus have hindered the introduction to new scenes and of new persons, but chiefly from the character of His Ministry in Peraea. We remember that, similarly, the beginning of Christ's Galilean Ministry had been chiefly marked by Discourses and Parables. Besides, after what had passed, and must now have been so well known, illustrative deeds could scarcely have been so requisite in Peraea. In fact, His Peraean was, substantially, a resumption of His early Galilean Ministry, only modified and influenced by the much fuller knowledge of the people concerning Christ, and the greatly developed enmity of their leaders. This accounts for the recurrence, although in fuller, or else in modified, form, of many things recorded in the earlier part of this History. Thus, to begin with, we can understand how He would, at this initial stage of His Peraean, as in that of His Galilean Ministry, repeat, when asked for instruction concerning prayer, those sacred words ever since known as the Lord's Prayer. The variations are so slight as to be easily accounted for by the individuality of the reporter. They afford, however, the occasion for remarking on the two principal differences. In Luke the prayer is for the forgiveness of sins while Matthew uses the Hebraic term debts which has passed even into the Jewish Liturgy, denoting our guilt as indebtedness. Again, the day by day of Luke, which further explains the petition for daily bread common both to Matthew and Luke, may be illustrated by the beautiful Rabbinic teaching, that the Manna fell only for each day, in order that thought of their daily dependence might call forth constant faith in our Father Which is in heaven. Another Rabbinic saying places our nourishment on the same level with our redemption, as regards the thanks due to God and the fact

that both are day by day. Yet a third Rabbinic saying notes the peculiar manner in which both nourishment and redemption are always mentioned in Scripture (by reduplicated expressions), and how, while redemption took place by an Angel, nourishment is attributed directly to God.

But to return. From the introductory expression: When (or whenever) ye pray, say' we venture to infer, that this prayer was intended, not only as the model, but as furnishing the words for the future use of the Church. Yet another suggestion may be made. The request, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples seems to indicate what was the certain place which, now consecrated by our Lord's prayer, became the school for ours. It seems at least likely, that the allusion of the disciples to the Baptist may have been prompted by the circumstance, that the locality was that which had been the scene of John's labours of course, in Peraea. Such a note of place is the more interesting, that Luke so rarely indicates localities. In fact, he leaves us in ignorance of what was the central place in Christ's Peraean Ministry, although there must have been such. In the main, the events are, indeed, most likely narrated in their chronological order. But, as Discourses, Parables, and incidents are so closely mixed up, it will be better, in a work like the present, for clearness and briefness sake, to separate and group them, so far as possible. Accordingly, this chapter will be devoted to the briefest summary of the Lord's Discourses in Peraea, previous to His return to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple.

The first of these was on the occasion of His casting out a demon, and restoring speech to the demonised; or if, as seems likely, the cure is the same as that recorded in Matt. xii. 22, both sight and speech, which had probably been paralysed. This is one of the cases in which it is difficult to determine whether narratives in different Gospels, with slightly varying details, represent different events or only differing modes of narration. It needs no argument to prove, that substantially the same event, such as the healing of a blind or dumb demonised person, may, and probably would, have taken place on more than one occasion, and that, when it occurred, it would elicit substantially the same remarks by the people, and the same charge against Christ of superior demoniac agency which the Pharisees had now distinctly formulated. Again, when recording similar events, the Evangelists would naturally come to tell them in much the same manner. Hence, it does not follow that two similar narratives in different Gospels always represent the same event. But in this instance, it seems likely. The earlier place which it occupies in the Gospel by Matthew may be explained by its position in a group denunciatory of the Pharisees; and the notice there of their blasphemous charge of His being the instrument of Satan probably indicates the outcome of their council how they might destroy Him. It is this charge of the Pharisees which forms the main subject of Christ's address, His language being now much more explicit than formerly, even as the opposition of the Pharisees had more fully ripened. In regard to the slight difference in the narratives of Matthew and Luke, we mark that, as always, the Words of the Lord are more fully reported by the former, while the latter supplies some vivid pictorial touches. The following are the leading features of Christ's reply to the Pharisaic charge: First, it was utterly unreasonable, and inconsistent with their own premisses, showing that their ascription of Satanic agency to what Christ did was only prompted by hostility to His Person. This mode of turning the argument against the arguer was peculiarly Hebraic, and it does not imply any assertion on the part of Christ, as to whether or not the disciples of the Pharisees really cast out demons. Mentally, we must supply according to your own professions, your disciples cast out demons. If so, by whom are they doing it?

But, secondly, beneath this logical argumentation lies deep and spiritual instruction, closely connected with the late teaching during the festive days in Jerusalem. It is directed against the flimsy, superstitious, and unspiritual views entertained by Israel, alike of the Kingdom of evil and of that of God. For, if we ignore the moral aspect of Satan and his kingdom, all degenerates into the absurdities and superstitions of the Jewish view concerning demons and Satan, which are fully described in another place. On the other hand, introduce the ideas of moral evil, of the concentration of its power in a kingdom of which Satan is the representative and ruler, and of our own inherent sinfulness, which makes us his subjects and all becomes clear. Then, truly, can Satan not cast out Satan else how

could his kingdom stand; then, also, is the casting out of Satan only by God's Spirit or Finger: and this is the Kingdom of God. Nay, by their own admission, the casting out of Satan was part of the work of Messiah. Then had the Kingdom of God, indeed, come to them for in this was the Kingdom of God; and He was the God-sent Messiah, come not for the glory of Israel, nor for anything outward or intellectual, but to engage in mortal conflict with moral evil, and with Satan as its representative. In that contest Christ, as the Stronger, bindeth the strong one spoils his house (divideth his spoil), and takes from him the armour in which his strength lay (he trusted) by taking away the power of sin. This is the work of the Messiah and, therefore also, no one can be indifferent towards Him, because all, being by nature in a certain relation towards Satan, must, since the Messiah had commenced His Work, occupy a definite relationship towards the Christ who combats Satan.

It follows, that the work of the Christ is a moral contest waged through the Spirit of God, in which, from their position, all must take a part. But it is conceivable that a man may not only try to be passively, but even be actively on the enemy's side, and this not by merely speaking against the Christ, which might be the outcome of ignorance or unbelief, but by representing that as Satanic which was the object of His Coming. Such perversion of all that is highest and holiest, such opposition to, and denunciation of, the Holy Spirit as if He were the manifestation of Satan, represents sin in its absolute completeness, and for which there can be no pardon, since the state of mind of which it is the outcome admits not the possibility of repentance, because its essence lies in this, to call that Satanic which is the very object of repentance. It were unduly to press the Words of Christ, to draw from them such inferences as, whether sins unforgiven in this world might or might not be forgiven in the next, since, manifestly, it was not the intention of Christ to teach on this subject. On the other hand, His Words seem to imply that, at least as regards this sin, there is no room for forgiveness in the other world. For, the expression is not the age to come the world to come which, as we know, does not strictly refer to Messianic times, but to the future and eternal, as distinguished both from this world, and from the days of the Messiah.

3. But this recognition of the spiritual, which was the opposite of the sin against the Holy Ghost, was, as Christ had so lately explained in Jerusalem, only to be attained by spiritual kinship with it. 35 The tree must be made good, if the fruit were to be good; tree and fruit would correspond to each other. How, then, could these Pharisees speak good things since the state of the heart determined speech and action? Hence, a man would have to give an account even of every idle word, since, however trifling it might appear to others or to oneself, it was really the outcome of the heart and showed the inner state. And thus, in reality, would a man's future in judgment be determined by his words; a conclusion the more solemn, when we remember its bearing on what His disciples on the one side, and the Pharisees on the other, said concerning Christ and the Spirit of God.

4. Both logically and morally the Words of Christ were unanswerable; and the Pharisees fell back on the old device of challenging proof of His Divine Mission by some visible sign. But this was to avoid the appeal to the moral element which the Lord had made; it was an attempt to shift the argument from the moral to the physical. It was the moral that was at fault, or rather, wanting in them; and no amount of physical evidence or demonstration could have supplied that. All the signs from heaven would not have supplied the deep sense of sin and of the need for a mighty spiritual deliverance, which alone would lead to the reception of the Saviour Christ. Hence, as under previous similar circumstances, He would offer them only one sign, that of Jonas the prophet. But whereas on the former occasion Christ chiefly referred to Jonas preaching (of repentance), on this He rather pointed to the allegorical history of Jonas as the Divine attestation of his Mission. As he appeared in Nineveh, he was himself a sign unto the Ninevites; the fact that he had been three days and nights in the whale's belly, and that thence he had, so to speak, been sent forth alive to preach in Nineveh, was evidence to them that he had been sent of God. And so would it be again. After three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' which is a Hebraism for in the earth would His Resurrection Divinely attest to this generation His Mission. The Ninevites did not question, but received this attestation of Jonas; nay, an authentic report of the wisdom of Solomon had been sufficient to bring the Queen of

Sheba from so far; in the one case it was, because they felt their sin; in the other, because she felt need and longing for better wisdom than she possessed. But these were the very elements wanting in the men of this generation; and so both Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba would stand up, not only as mute witnesses against, but to condemn, them. For, the great Reality of which the preaching of Jonas had been only the type, and for which the wisdom of Solomon had been only the preparation, had been presented to them in Chri

5. And so, having put aside this cavil, Jesus returned to His former teaching concerning the Kingdom of Satan and the power of evil; only now with application, not, as before, to the individual, but, as prompted by a view of the unbelieving resistance of Israel, to the Jewish commonwealth as a whole. Here, also, it must be remembered, that, as the words used by our Lord were allegorical and illustrative, they must not be too closely pressed. As compared with the other nations of the world, Israel was like a house from which the demon of idolatry had gone out with all his attendants, really the Beel-Zibbul whom they dreaded. And then the house had been swept of all the foulness and uncleanness of idolatry, and garnished with all manner of Pharisaic adornments. Yet all this while the house was left really empty; God was not there; the Stronger One, who alone could have resisted the Strong One, held not rule in it. And so the demon returned to it again, to find the house whence he had come out, swept and garnished indeed, but also empty and defenceless. The folly of Israel lay in this, that they thought of only one demon him of idolatry Beel-Zibbul, with all his foulness. That was all very repulsive, and they had carefully removed it. But they knew that demons were only manifestations of demoniac power, and that there was a Kingdom of evil. So this house, swept of the foulness of heathenism and adorned with all the self-righteousness of Pharisaism, but empty of God, would only become a more suitable and more secure habitation of Satan; because, from its cleanness and beauty, his presence and rule there as an evil spirit would not be suspected. So, to continue the illustrative language of Christ, he came back with seven other spirits more wicked than himself' pride, self-righteousness, unbelief, and the like, the number seven being general and thus the last state Israel without the foulness of gross idolatry and garnished with all the adornments of Pharisaic devotion to the study and practice of the Law was really worse than had been the first with all its open repulsiveness.

6. Once more was the Discourse interrupted, this time by a truly Jewish incident. A woman in the crowd burst into exclamations about the blessedness of the Mother who had borne and nurtured such a Son. The phraseology seems to have been not uncommon, since it is equally applied by the Rabbis to Moses, and even to a great Rabbi. More striking, perhaps, is another Rabbinic passage (previously quoted), in which Israel is described as breaking forth into these words on beholding the Messiah: Blessed the hour in which Messiah was created; blessed the womb whence He issued; blessed the generation that sees Him; blessed the eye that is worthy to behold Him.

And yet such praise must have been peculiarly unwelcome to Christ, as being the exaltation of only His Human Personal excellence, intellectual or moral. It quite looked away from that which He would present: His Work and Mission as the Saviour. Hence it was, although from the opposite direction, as great a misunderstanding as the Personal depreciation of the Pharisees. Or, to use another illustration, this praise of the Christ through His Virgin Mother was as unacceptable and unsuitable as the depreciation of the Christ, which really, though unconsciously, underlay the loving care of the Virgin Mother when she would have arrested Him in His Work, and which (perhaps for this very reason) Matthew relates in the same connection. Accordingly, the answer in both cases is substantially the same: to point away from His merely Human Personality to His Work and Mission in the one case: Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother; in the other: Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.

7. And now the Discourse draws to a close by a fresh application of what, in some other form or connection, Christ had taught at the outset of His public Ministry in the Sermon on the Mount. Rightly to understand its present connection, we must pass over the various interruptions of Christ's

Discourse, and join this as the conclusion to the previous part, which contained the main subject. This was, that spiritual knowledge presupposed spiritual kinship. Here, as becomes the close of a Discourse, the same truth is practically applied in a more popular and plain, one might almost say realistic, manner. As here put, it is, that spiritual receptiveness is ever the condition of spiritual reception. What was the object of lighting a lamp? Surely, that it may give light. But if so, no one would put it into a vault, nor under the bushel, but on the stand. Should we then expect that God would light the spiritual lamp, if it be put in a dark vault? Or, to take an illustration of it from the eye, which, as regards the body, serves the same purpose as the lamp in a house. Does it not depend on the state of the eye whether or not we have the sensation, enjoyment, and benefit of the light? Let us, therefore, take care, lest, by placing, as it were, the lamp in a vault, the light in us be really only darkness. On the other hand, if by means of a good eye the light is transmitted through the whole system if it is not turned into darkness, like a lamp that is put into a vault or under a bushel, instead of being set up to spread light through the house then shall we be wholly full of light. And this, finally, explains the reception or rejection of Christ: how, in the words of an Apostle, the same Gospel would be both a savour of life unto life, and of death unto death.

It was a blessed lesson with which to close His Discourse, and one full of light, if only they had not put it into the vault of their darkened hearts. Yet presently would it shine forth again, and give light to those whose eyes were opened to receive it; for, according to the Divine rule and spiritual order, to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath.

Chapter 12 The Morning-Meal in the Pharisee's House Meals and Feasts among the Jews

Christ's Last Peraean Warning to Pharisaism

(Luke 11:37-54.)

Bitter as was the enmity of the Pharisaic party against Jesus, it had not yet so far spread, nor become so avowed, as in every place to supersede the ordinary rules of courtesy. It is thus that we explain that invitation of a Pharisee to the morning-meal, which furnished the occasion for the second recorded Peraean Discourse of Christ. Alike in substance and tone, it is a continuation of His former address to the Pharisees. And it is probably here inserted in order to mark the further development of Christ's anti-Pharisaic teaching. It is the last address to the Pharisees, recorded in the Gospel of Luke. A similar last appeal is recorded in a much later portion of Matthew's Gospel, only that Luke reports that spoken in Peraea, Matthew that made in Jerusalem. This may also partly account for the similarity of language in the two Discourses. Not only were the circumstances parallel, but the language held at the end may naturally have recurred to the writer, when reporting the last controversial Discourse in Peraea. Thus it may well have been, that Christ said substantially the same things on both occasions, and yet that, in the report of them, some of the later modes of expression may have been transferred to the earlier occasion. And because the later both represents and presents the fullest anti-Pharisaic Discourse of the Saviour, it will be better to postpone our analysis till we reach that period of His Life.

Some distinctive points, however, must here be noted. The remarks already made will explain, how some time may have elapsed between this and the former Discourse, and that the expression And as He spake 5 must not be pressed as a mark of time (referring to the immediately preceding Discourse), but rather be regarded as indicating the circumstances under which a Pharisee had bidden Him to the meal. 6 Indeed, we can scarcely imagine that, immediately after such a charge by the Pharisees as that Jesus acted as the representative of Beelzebul, and such a reply on the part of

Jesus, a Pharisee would have invited Him to a friendly meal, or that Lawyers or, to use a modern term, Canonists would have been present at it. How different their feelings were after they had heard His denunciations, appears from the bitterness with which they afterwards sought to provoke Him into saying what might serve as ground for a criminal charge. And there is absolutely no evidence that, as commentators suggest, the invitation of the Pharisee had been hypocritically given, for the purpose of getting up an accusation against Chri More than this, it seems entirely inconsistent with the unexpressed astonishment of the Pharisee, when he saw Jesus sitting down to food without having first washed hands. Up to that moment, then, it would seem that he had only regarded Him as a celebrated Rabbi, though perhaps one who taught strange things.

But what makes it almost certain, that some time must have elapsed between this and the previous Discourse (or rather that, as we believe, the two events happened in different places), is, that the invitation of the Pharisee was to the morning-meal. We know that this took place early immediately after the return from morning prayers in the Synagogue. It is, therefore, scarcely conceivable, that all that is recorded in connection with the first Discourse should have occurred before this first meal. On the other hand, it may well have been, that what passed at the Pharisee's table may have some connection with something that had occurred just before in the Synagogue, for we conjecture that it was the Sabbath-day. We infer this from the circumstance that the invitation was not to the principal meal, which on a Sabbath the Lawyers (and, indeed, all householders) would, at least ordinarily, have in their own homes. We can picture to ourselves the scene. The week-day family-meal was simple enough, whether breakfast or dinner the latter towards evening, although sometimes also in the middle of the day, but always before actual darkness, in order, as it was expressed, that the sight of the dishes by daylight might excite the appetite. The Babylonian Jews were content to make a meal without meat; not so the Palestinians. With the latter the favorite food was young meat: goats, lambs, calves. Beef was not so often used, and still more rarely fowls. Bread was regarded as the mainstay of life, without which no entertainment was considered as a meal. Indeed, in a sense it constituted the meal. For the blessing was spoken over the bread, and this was supposed to cover all the rest of the food that followed, such as the meat, fish or vegetables in short, all that made up the dinner, but not the dessert. Similarly, the blessing spoken over the wine included all other kinds of drink. Otherwise it would have been necessary to pronounce a separate benediction over each different article eaten or drunk. He who neglected the prescribed benedictions was regarded as if he had eaten of things dedicated to God, since it was written: The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. Beautiful as this principle is, it degenerated into tedious questions of casuistry. Thus, if one kind of food was eaten as an addition to another, it was settled that the blessing should be spoken only over the principal kind. Again, there are elaborate disputations as to what should be regarded as fruit, and have the corresponding blessing, and how, for example, one blessing should be spoken over the leaves and blossom, and another over the berries of the caper. 18 Indeed, that bush gave rise to a serious controversy between the Schools of Hillel and Shammai. Another series of elaborate discussions arose, as to what blessing should be used when a dish consisted of various ingredients, some the product of the earth, others, like honey, derived from the animal world. Such and similar disquisitions, giving rise to endless argument and controversy, busied the minds of the Pharisees and Scribes. Let us suppose the guests assembled. To such a morning-meal they would not be summoned by slaves, nor be received in such solemn state as at feasts. First, each would observe, as a religious rite, the washing of hands. Next, the head of the house would cut a piece from the whole loaf on the Sabbath there were two loaves and speak the blessing. But this, only if the company reclined at table, as at dinner. If they sat, as probably always at the early meal, each would speak the benediction for himself. The same rule applied in regard to the wine. Jewish casuistry had it, that one blessing sufficed for the wine intended as part of the meal. If other wine were brought in during the meal, then each one would have to say the blessing anew over it; if after the meal (as was done on Sabbaths and feast-days, to prolong the feast by drinking), one of the company spoke the benediction for all.

At the entertainment of this Pharisee, as indeed generally, our Lord omitted the prescribed washing of hands before the meal. But as this rite was in itself indifferent, He must have had some definite object, which will be explained in the sequel. The externalism of all these practices will best appear from the following account which the Talmud gives of a feast. As the guests enter, they sit down on chairs, and water is brought to them, with which they wash one hand. After this the cup is taken, when each speaks the blessing over the wine partaken of before dinner. Presently they all lie down at table. Water is again brought them, with which they now wash both hands, preparatory to the meal, when the blessing is spoken over the bread, and then over the cup, by the chief person at the feast, or else by one selected by way of distinction. The company responded by Amen, always supposing the benediction to have been spoken by an Israelite, not a heathen, slave, nor law-breaker. Nor was it lawful to say it with an unlettered man, although it might be said with a Cuthaeon (heretic, or else Samaritan), who was learned. After dinner the crumbs, if any, are carefully gathered hands are again washed, and he who first had done so leads in the prayer of thanksgiving. The formula in which he is to call on the rest to join him, by repeating the prayers after him, is prescribed, and differs according to the number of those present. The blessing and the thanksgiving are allowed to be said not only in Hebrew, but in any other language.

In regard to the position of the guests, we know that the uppermost seats were occupied by the Rabbis. The Talmud formulates it in this manner: That the worthiest lies down first, on his left side, with his feet stretching back. If there are two cushions (divans), the next worthiest reclines above him, at his left hand; if there are three cushions, the third worthiest lies below him who had lain down first (at his right), so that the chief person is in the middle (between the worthiest guest at his left and the less worthy one at his right hand). The water before eating is first handed to the worthiest, and so in regard to the washing after meat. But if a very large number are present, you begin after dinner with the least worthy, till you come to the last five, when the worthiest in the company washes his hands, and the other four after him. The guests being thus arranged, the head of the house, or the chief person at table, speaks the blessing, and then cuts the bread. By some it was not deemed etiquette to begin eating till after he who had said the prayer had done so, but this does not seem to have been the rule among the Palestinian Jews. Then, generally, the bread was dipped into salt, or something salted, etiquette demanding that where there were two they should wait one for the other, but not where there were three or more.

This is not the place to furnish what may be termed a list of menus at Jewish tables. In earlier times the meal was, no doubt, very simple. It became otherwise when intercourse with Rome, Greece, and the East made the people familiar with foreign luxury, while commerce supplied its requirements. Indeed, it would scarcely be possible to enumerate the various articles which seem to have been imported from different, and even distant, countries.

To begin with: the wine was mixed with water, and, indeed, some thought that the benediction should not be pronounced till the water had been added to the wine. According to one statement, two parts, according to another, three parts, of water were to be added to the wine. Various vintages are mentioned: among them a red wine of Saron, and a black wine. Spiced wine was made with honey and pepper. Another mixture, chiefly used for invalids, consisted of old wine, water, and balsam; yet another was wine of myrrh; we also read of a wine in which capers had been soaked. To these we should add wine spiced, either with pepper, or with absinthe; and what is described as vinegar, a cooling drink made either of grapes that had not ripened, or of the lees. Besides these, palm-wine was also in use. Of foreign drinks, we read of wine from Ammon, and from the province Asia, the latter a kind of must boiled down. Wine in ice came from the Lebanon; a certain kind of vinegar from Idumaea; beer from Media and Babylon; a barley-wine from Egypt. Finally, we ought to mention Palestinian apple-cider, 31 and the juice of other fruits. If we adopt the rendering of some, even liqueurs were known and used.

Long as this catalogue is, that of the various articles of food, whether native or imported, would occupy a much larger space. Suffice it that, as regarded the various kinds of grain, meat, fish, and

fruits, either in their natural state or preserved, it embraced almost everything known to the ancient world. At feasts there was an introductory course, consisting of appetising salted meat, or of some light dish. This was followed by the dinner itself, which finished with dessert consisting of pickled olives, radishes and lettuce, and fruits, among which even preserved ginger from India is mentioned. The most diverse and even strange statements are made as to the healthiness, or the reverse, of certain articles of diet, especially vegetables. Fish was a favorite dish, and never wanting at a Sabbath-meal. It was a saying, that both salt and water should be used at every meal, if health was to be preserved. Condiments, such as mustard or pepper, were to be sparingly used. Very different were the meals of the poor. Locusts fried in flour or honey, or preserved required, according to the Talmud, no blessing, since the animal was really among the curses of the land. Eggs were a common article of food, and sold in the shops. Then there was a milk-dish into which people dipped their bread. Others, who were better off, had a soup made of vegetables, especially onions, and meat, while the very poor would satisfy the cravings of hunger with bread and cheese, or bread and fruit, or some vegetables, such as cucumbers, lentils, beans, peas, or onions.

At meals the rules of etiquette were strictly observed, especially as regarded the sages. Indeed, two tractates are added to the Talmud, of which the one describes the general etiquette, the other that of sages and the title of which may be translated by The Way of the World, being a sort of code of good manners. According to some, it was not good breeding to speak while eating. The learned and most honored occupied not only the chief places, but were sometimes distinguished by a double portion. According to Jewish etiquette, a guest should conform in everything to his host, even though it were unpleasant. Although hospitality was the greatest and most prized social virtue, which, to use a Rabbinic expression, might make every home a sanctuary and every table an altar, an unbidden guest, or a guest who brought another guest, was proverbially an unwelcome apparition. Sometimes, by way of self-righteousness, the poor were brought in, and the best part of the meal ostentatiously given to them. At ordinary entertainments, people were to help themselves. It was not considered good manners to drink as soon as you were asked, but you ought to hold the cup for a little in your hand. But it would be the height of rudeness, either to wipe the plates, to scrape together the bread, as though you had not had enough to eat, or to drop it, to the inconvenience of your neighbour. If a piece were taken out of a dish, it must of course not be put back; still less must you offer from your cup or plate to your neighbour. From the almost religious value attaching to bread, we scarcely wonder that these rules were laid down: not to steady a cup or plate upon bread, nor to throw away bread, and that after dinner the bread was to be carefully swept together. Otherwise, it was thought, demons would sit upon it. The Way of the World for Sages, lays down these as the marks of a Rabbi: that he does not eat standing; that he does not lick his fingers; that he sits down only beside his equals in fact, many regarded it as wrong to eat with the unlearned; that he begins cutting the bread where it is best baked, nor ever breaks off a bit with his hand; and that, when drinking, he turns away his face from the company. Another saying was that the sage was known by four things: at his cups, in money matters, when angry, and in his jokes. After dinner, the formalities concerning handwashing and prayer, already described, were gone through, and then frequently aromatic spices burnt, over which a special benediction was pronounced. We have only to add, that on Sabbaths it was deemed a religious duty to have three meals, and to procure the best that money could obtain, even though one were to save and fast for it all the week. Lastly, it was regarded as a special obligation and honor to entertain sages.

We have no difficulty now in understanding what passed at the table of the Pharisee. When the water for purification was presented to Him, Jesus would either refuse it; or if, as seems more likely at a morning-meal, each guest repaired by himself for the prescribed purification, He would omit to do so, and sit down to meat without this formality. No one, who knows the stress which Pharisaism laid on this rite would argue that Jesus might have conformed to the practice. Indeed, the controversy was long and bitter between the Schools of Shammai and Hillel, on such a point as whether the hands were to be washed before the cup was filled with wine, or after that, and where the towel was to be

deposited. With such things the most serious ritual inferences were connected on both sides. 36 A religion which spent its energy on such trivialities must have lowered the moral tone. All the more that Jesus insisted so earnestly, as the substance of His teaching, on that corruption of our nature which Judaism ignored, and on that spiritual purification which was needful for the reception of His doctrine, would He publicly and openly set aside ordinances of man which diverted thoughts of purity into questions of the most childish character. On the other hand, we can also understand what bitter thoughts must have filled the mind of the Pharisee, whose guest Jesus was, when he observed His neglect of the cherished rite. It was an insult to himself, a defiance of Jewish Law, a revolt against the most cherished traditions of the Synagogue. Remembering that a Pharisee ought not to sit down to a meal with such, he might feel that he should not have asked Jesus to his table. All this, as well as the terrible contrast between the punctiliousness of Pharisaism in outward purifications, and the inward defilement which it never sought to remove, must have lain open before Him Who read the inmost secrets of the heart, and kindled His holy wrath. Probably taking occasion (as previously suggested) from something that had passed before, He spoke with the point and emphasis which a last appeal to Pharisaism demanded.

What our Lord said on this occasion will be considered in detail in another place. Suffice it hear to mark, that He first exposed the mere externalism of the Pharisaic law of purification, to the utter ignoring of the higher need of inward purity, which lay at the foundation of all. If the primary origin of the ordinance was to prevent the eating of sacred offerings in defilement, were these outward offerings not a symbol of the inward sacrifice, and was there not an inward defilement as well as the outward? To consecrate what we had to God in His poor, instead of selfishly enjoying it, would not, indeed, be a purification of them (for such was not needed), but it would, in the truest sense, be to eat God's offerings in cleanness. We mark here a progress and a development, as compared with the former occasion when Jesus had publicly spoken on the same subject. Formerly, He had treated the ordinance of the Elders as a matter not binding; now, He showed how this externalism militated against thoughts of the internal and spiritual. Formerly, He had shown how traditionalism came into conflict with the written Law of God: now, how it superseded the first principles which underlay that Law. Formerly, He had laid down the principle that defilement came not from without inwards, but from within outwards; now, He unfolded this highest principle that higher consecration imparted purity. The same principle, indeed, would apply to other things, such as to the Rabbinic law of tithing. At the same time it may have been, as already suggested, that something which had previously taken place, or was the subject of conversation at table, had given occasion for the further remarks of Christ. Thus, the Pharisee may have wished to convey his rebuke of Christ by referring to the subject of tithing. And such covert mode of rebuking was very common among the Jews. It was regarded as utterly defiling to eat of that which had not been tithed. Indeed, the three distinctions of a Pharisee were: not to make use nor to partake of anything that had not been tithed; to observe the laws of purification; and, as a consequence of these two, to abstain from familiar intercourse with all non-Pharisees. This separation formed the ground of their claim to distinction. It will be noticed that it is exactly to these three things our Lord adverts: so that these sayings of His are not, as might seem, unconnected, but in the strictest internal relationship. Our Lord shows how Pharisaism, as regarded the outer, was connected with the opposite tendency as regarded the inner man: outward purification with ignorance of the need of that inward purity, which consisted in God-consecration, and with the neglect of it; strictness of outward tithing with ignorance and neglect of the principle which underlay it, viz., the acknowledgment of God's right over mind and heart (judgment and the love of God); while, lastly, the Pharisaic pretence of separation, and consequent claim to distinction, issued only in pride and self-assertion. Thus, tried by its own tests, Pharisaism terribly failed. It was hypocrisy, although that word was not mentioned till afterwards; and that both negatively and positively: the concealment of what it was, and the pretension to what it was not. And the Pharisaism which pretended to the highest purity, was, really, the greatest impurity the defilement of graves, only covered up, not to be seen of men! It was at this point that one of the Scribes at table broke in. Remembering in what contempt some of

the learned held the ignorant bigotry of the Pharisees, we can understand that he might have listened with secret enjoyment to denunciations of their folly. As the common saying had it, the silly pietist a woman Pharisee and the (self-inflicted) blows of Pharisaism were among the plagues of life. And we cannot help feeling, that there is sometimes a touch of quiet humour in the accounts which the Rabbis give of the encounters between the Pharisees and their opponents. But, as the Scribe rightly remarked, by attacking, not merely their practice, but their principles, the whole system of traditionalism, which they represented, was condemned. And so the Lord assuredly meant it. The Scribes were the exponents of the traditional law; those who bound and loosed in Israel. They did bind on heavy burdens, but they never loosed one; all those grievous burdens of traditionalism they laid on the poor people, but not the slightest effort did they make to remove any of them. Tradition, yes! The very profession of it bore witness against them. Tradition, the ordinances that had come down they would not reform nor put aside anything, but claim and proclaim all that had come down from the fathers as a sacred inheritance to which they clung. So be it! Let them be judged by their own words. The fathers had murdered the prophets, and they built their sepulchres; that, also, was a tradition that of guilt which would be avenged. Tradition, learning, exclusiveness alas! It was only taking away from the poor the key of knowledge; and while they themselves entered not by the door into the Kingdom, they hindered those who would have gone in. And truly so did they prove that theirs was the inheritance, the tradition of guilt in hindering and banishing the Divine teaching of old, and murdering its Divine messengers.

There was a terrible truth and solemnity in what Jesus spake, and in the woe which He denounced on them. The history of the next few months would bear witness how truly they had taken upon them this tradition of guilt; and all the after-history of Israel shows how fully this Woe has come upon them. But, after such denunciations, the entertainment in the Pharisee's house must have been broken up. The Christ was too terribly in earnest too mournfully so over those whom they hindered from entering the Kingdom, to bear with the awful guilt of their trivialities. With what feelings they parted from Him, appears from the sequel.

And when He was come out from thence, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things; laying wait for Him, to catch something out of His Mouth.

Chapter 13 To The Disciples

Two Events and their Moral

(Luke 12:1-13:17.)

The record of Christ's last warning to the Pharisees, and of the feelings of murderous hate which it called forth, is followed by a summary of Christ's teaching to His disciples. The tone is still that of warning, but entirely different from that to the Pharisees. It is a warning of sin that threatened, not of judgment that awaited; it was for prevention, not in denunciation. That such warnings were most seasonable, requires scarcely proof. They were prompted by circumstances around. The same teaching, because prompted by the same causes, had been mostly delivered, also, on other occasions. Yet there are notable, though seemingly slight, divergences, accounted for by the difference of the writers or of the circumstances, and which mark the independence of the narratives.

1. The first of these Discourses naturally connects itself with what had passed at the Pharisee's table, an account of which must soon have spread. Although the Lord is reported as having addressed the same language chiefly to the Twelve when sending them on their first Mission, we shall presently mark several characteristic variations. The address or so much of it as is reported, probably only its

summary is introduced by the following notice of the circumstances: In the mean time, when the many thousands of the people were gathered together, so that they trode upon each other, He began to say to His disciples: "First [above all, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." There is no need to point out the connection between this warning and the denunciation of Pharisaism and traditionalism at the Pharisee's table. Although the word hypocrisy had not been spoken there, it was the sum and substance of His contention, that Pharisaism, while pretending to what it was not, concealed what it was. And it was this which, like leaven pervaded the whole system of Pharisaism. Not that as individuals they were all hypocrites, but that the system was hypocrisy. And here it is characteristic of Pharisaism, that Rabbinic Hebrew has not even a word equivalent to the term hypocrisy. The only expression used refers either to flattery of, or pretence before men, not to that unconscious hypocrisy towards God which our Lord so truly describes as the leaven that pervaded all the Pharisees said and did. It is against this that He warned His disciples and in this, rather than conscious deception, pretence, or flattery, lies the danger of the Church. Our common term, unreality but partially describes it. Its full meaning can only be gathered from Christ's teaching. But what precise term He may have used, it is impossible to suggest. After all, hypocrisy was only self-deception. But, there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed. Hence, what they had said in the darkness would be revealed, and what they had spoken about in the store-rooms would be proclaimed on the housetops. Nor should fear influence them. Fear of whom? Man could only kill the body, but God held body and soul. And, as fear was foolish, so was it needless in view of that wondrous Providence which watched over even the meanest of God's creatures. Rather let them, in the impending struggle with the powers of this world, rise to consciousness of its full import how earth's voices would find their echo in heaven. And then this contest, what was it! Not only opposition to Christ, but, in its inmost essence, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Therefore, to succumb in that contest, implied the deepest spiritual danger. Nay, but let them not be apprehensive; their acknowledgment would be not only in the future; even now, in the hour of their danger, would the Holy Ghost help them, and give them an answer before their accusers and judges, whoever they might be Jews or Gentiles. Thus, if they fell victims, it would be with the knowledge not by neglect of their Father; here, there, everywhere, in their own hearts, before the Angels, before men, would He give testimony for those who were His witnesses.

Before proceeding, we briefly mark the differences between this and the previous kindred address of Christ, when sending the Apostles on their Mission. There (after certain personal directions), the Discourse began with what it here closes. There it was in the form of warning prediction, here in that of comforting reassurance; there it was near the beginning, here near the close, of His Ministry. Again, as addressed to the Twelve on their Mission, it was followed by personal directions and consolations, and then, transition was made to the admonition to dismiss fear, and to speak out publicly what had been told them privately. On the other hand, when addressing His Peraean disciples, while the same admonition is given, and partly on the same grounds, yet, as spoken to disciples rather than to preachers, the reference to the similarity of their fate with that of Christ is omitted, while, to show the real character of the struggle, an admonition is added, which in His Galilean Ministry was given in another connection. Lastly, whereas the Twelve were admonished not to fear, and, therefore, to speak openly what they had learned privately, the Peraean disciples are forewarned that, although what they had spoken together in secret would be dragged into the light of greatest publicity, yet they were not to be afraid of the possible consequences to themselves.

2. The second Discourse recorded in this connection was occasioned by a request for judicial interposition on the part of Christ. This He answered by a Parable, which will be explained in conjunction with the other Parables of that period. The outcome of this Parable, as to the utter uncertainty of this life, and the consequent folly of being so careful for this world while neglectful of God, led Him to make warning application to His Peraean disciples. Only here the negative injunction that preceded the Parable, beware of covetousness is, when addressed to the disciples carried back to its positive underlying principle: to dismiss all anxiety, even for the necessities of life, learning from

the birds and the flowers to have absolute faith and trust in God, and to labour for only one thing, the Kingdom of God. But, even in this, they were not to be careful, but to have absolute faith and trust in their Father, Who was well pleased to give them the Kingdom.

With but slight variations the Lord had used the same language, even as the same admonition had been needed, at the beginning of His Galilean Ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps we may here, also, regard the allusion to the springing flowers as a mark of time. Only, whereas in Galilee this would mark the beginning of spring, it would, in the more favoured climate of certain parts of Peraea, indicate the beginning of December, about the time of the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. More important, perhaps, is it to note, that the expression rendered in the Authorised and Revised Versions, neither be ye of doubtful mind really means, neither be ye uplifted in the sense of not aiming, or seeking after great things. This rendering the Greek word is in accordance with its uniform use in the LXX., and in the Apocrypha; while, on the other hand, it occurs in Josephus and Philo, in the sense of being of a doubtful mind. But the context here shows, that the term must refer to the disciples coveting great things, since only to this the remark could apply, that the Gentile world sought such things, but that our Father knew what was really needful for us.

Of deepest importance is the final consolation, to dismiss all care and anxiety, since the Father was pleased to give to this little flock the Kingdom. The expression flood carries us back to the language which Jesus had held ere parting from Jerusalem. Henceforth this designation would mark His people. Even its occurrence fixes this Discourse as not a repetition of that which Matthew had formerly reported, but as spoken after the Jerusalem visit. It designates Christ's people in distinction to their ecclesiastical (or outward) organisation in a fold and marks alike their individuality and their conjunction, their need and dependence, and their relation to Him as the Good Shepherd. Small and despised though it be in the eyes of men, the little flock is unspeakably noble, and rich in the gift of the Father.

These admonitions, alike as against covetousness, and as to absolute trust and a self-surrender to God, which would count all loss for the Kingdom, are finally set forth, alike in their present application and their ultimate and permanent principle, in what we regard as the concluding part of this Discourse. Its first sentence: Sell that ye have, and give alms which is only recorded by Luke, indicates not a general principle, but its application to that particular period, when the faithful disciple required to follow the Lord, unencumbered by worldly cares or possessions. The general principle underlying it is that expressed by Paul, and finally resolves itself into this: that the Christian should have as not holding, and use what he has not for self nor sin, but for necessity. This conclusion of Christ's Discourse, also, confirms the inference that it was delivered near the terrible time of the end. Most seasonable would be here the repetition though in slightly different language of an admonition, given in the beginning of Christ's Galilean Ministry, to provide treasure in heaven, which could neither fail nor be taken away, for, assuredly, where the treasure was, there also would the heart be.

3. Closely connected with, and yet quite distinct from, the previous Discourse is that about the waiting attitude of the disciples in regard to their Master. Wholly detached from the things of the world, their hearts set on the Kingdom, only one thing should seem worthy their whole attention, and engage all their thoughts and energies: their Master! He was away at some joyous feast, and the uncertainty of the hour of His return must not lead the servants to indulge in surfeiting, nor to lie down in idleness, but to be faithful to their trust, and eagerly expectant of their Master. The Discourse itself consists of three parts and a practical application.

1. The Disciples as Servants in the absence of their Master: their duty and their reward. This part, containing what would be so needful to these Peraean disciples, is peculiar to Luke. The Master is supposed to be absent, at a wedding, a figure which must not be closely pressed, not being one of the essentials in the Parable. At most, it points to a joyous occasion, and its mention may chiefly indicate that such a feast might be protracted, so that the exact time of the Master's return could not be known to the servants who waited at home. In these circumstances, they should hold themselves in readiness, that, whatever hour it might be, they should be able to open the door at the first

knocking. Such eagerness and devotion of service would naturally meet its reward, and the Master would, in turn, consult the comfort of those who had not allowed themselves their evening-meal, nor lain down, but watched for His return. Hungry and weary as they were from their zeal for Him, He would now, in turn, minister to their personal comfort. And this applied to servants who so watched it mattered not how long, whether into the second or the third of the watches into which the night was divided.

The Parable now passes into another aspect of the case, which is again referred to in the last Discourses of Chri. Conversely suppose the other case, of people sleeping: the house might be broken into. Of course, if one had known the hour when the thief would come, sleep would not have been indulged in; but it is just this uncertainty and suddenness and the Coming of the Christ into His Kingdom would be equally sudden which should keep the people in the house ever on their watch till Christ came.

It was at this particular point that a question of Peter interrupted the Discourse of Chri. To whom did this Parable apply about the good man and the servants who were to watch: to the Apostles, or also to all? From the implied for it is not an express answer of the Lord, we infer, that Peter expected some difference between the Apostles and the rest of the disciples, whether as regarded the attitude of the servants that waited, or the reward. From the words of Christ the former seems the more likely. We can understand how Peter might entertain the Jewish notion, that the Apostles would come with the Master from the marriage-supper, rather than wait for His return, and work while waiting. It is to this that the reply of Christ refers. If the Apostles or others are rulers, it is as stewards, and their reward of faithful and wise stewardship will be advance to higher administration. But as stewards they are servants servants of Christ, and ministering servants in regard to the other and general servants. What becomes them in this twofold capacity is faithfulness to the absent, yet ever near, Lord, and to their work, avoiding, on the one hand, the masterfulness of pride and of harshness, and, on the other, the self-degradation of conformity to evil manners, either of which would entail sudden and condign punishment in the sudden and righteous reckoning at His appearing. The Parable therefore, alike as to the waiting and the reckoning, applied to work for Christ, as well as to personal relationship towards Him.

Thus far this solemn warning would naturally be afterwards repeated in Christ's Last Discourses in Judaea, as equally needful, in view of His near departure. But in this Peraean Discourse, as reported by Luke, there now follows what must be regarded, not, indeed, as a further answer to Peter's inquiry, but as specifically referring to the general question of the relation between special work and general discipleship which had been raised. For, in one sense, all disciples are servants, not only to wait, but to work. As regarded those who, like the professed stewards or labourers, knew their work, but neither made ready nor did according to His Will, their punishment and loss (where the illustrative figure of many and few stripes must not be too closely pressed) would naturally be greater than that of them who knew not, though this also involves guilt, that their Lord had any will towards them, that is, any work for them. This, according to a well-understood principle, universally, almost instinctively, acted upon among men.

2. In the absence of their master! A period this of work, as well as of waiting; a period of trial also. Here, also, the two opening verses, in their evident connection with the subject matter under the first head of this Discourse, but especially with the closing sentences about work for the Master, are peculiar to Luke's narrative, and fit only into it. The Church had a work to do in His absence the work for which He had come. He came to cast fire on earth that fire which was kindled when the Risen Saviour sent the Holy Ghost, and of which the tongues of fire were the symbol. Oh, how He longed, that it were already kindled! But between Him and it lay the cold flood of His Passion, the terrible Passion in which He was to be baptized. Oh, how He felt the burden of that coming Agony! 43 That fire must they spread: this was the work in which, as disciples, each one must take part. Again, in that Baptismal Agony of His they also must be prepared to share. It was fire: burning up, as well as purifying and giving light. And here it was in place to repeat to His Peraean disciples the prediction

already addressed to the Twelve when going on their Mission, as to the certain and necessary trials connected with carrying the fire which Christ had cast on earth, even to the burning up of the closest bonds of association and kinship.

3. Thus far to the disciples. And now for its application to the multitudes although here also He could only repeat what on a former occasion He had said to the Pharisees. Let them not think that all this only concerned the disciples. No, it was a question between Israel and their Messiah, and the struggle would involve the widest consequences, alike to the people and the Sanctuary. Were they so blinded as not to know how to interpret the time? Could they not read its signs they who had no difficulty in interpreting it when a cloud rose from the sea, or the sirocco blew from the south? Why then and here Luke is again alone in his report did they not, in the circumstances, of themselves judge what was right and fitting and necessary, in view of the gathering tempest?

What was it? Even that he had told them before in Galilee, for the circumstances were the same. What common sense and common prudence would dictate to every one whom his accuser or creditor hauled before the magistrate: to come to an agreement with him before it was too late, before sentence had been pronounced and executed. Although the illustration must not be pressed as to details, its general meaning would be the more readily understood that there was a similar Rabbinic proverb, although with very different practical application.

4. Besides these Discourses, two events are recorded before Christ's departure to the Feast of the Dedication. Each of these led to a brief Discourse, ending in a Parable.

The first records two circumstances not mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus, nor in any other historical notice of the time, either by Rabbinic or other writers. This shows, on the one hand, how terribly common such events must have been, when they could be so generally omitted from the long catalogue of Pilate's misdeeds towards the Jews. On the other hand it also evidences that the narrative of Luke was derived from independent, authentic sources in other words, the historical character of his narrative when he could refer as well known to facts, which are not mentioned in any other record of the times; and, lastly, that we are not warranted in rejecting a notice, simply because we find no other mention of it than on the pages of the Third Gospel.

It appears that, just then, or quite soon afterwards, some persons told Christ about a number of His own Galileans, whom Pilate had ordered to be cut down, as we infer, in the Temple, while engaged in offering their sacrifices, so that, in the pictorial language of the East, their blood had mingled with that of their sacrifices. Clearly, their narration of this event must be connected with the preceding Discourse of Jesus. He had asked them, whether they could not discern the signs of the terrible national storm that was nearing. And it was in reference to this, as we judge, that they repeated this story. To understand their object, we must attend to the answer of Christ. It is intended to refute the idea, that these Galileans had in this been visited by a special punishment of some special sin against God. Two questions here arise. Since between Christ's visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles and that at the Dedication of the Temple no Festival took place, it is most probable that this event had happened before Christ's visit to Jerusalem. But in that case it seems most likely almost certain that Christ had heard of it before. If so, or, at any rate, if it was not quite a recent event, why did these men tell Him of it then and there? Again, it seems strange that, although the Jews connected special sins with special punishments, they should have regarded it as the Divine punishment of a special sin to have been martyred by a Pilate in the Temple, while engaged in offering sacrifices.

All this becomes quite plain, if we regard these men as trying to turn the edge of Jesus warning by a kind of Tu quoque argument. Very probably these Galileans were thus ruthlessly murdered, because of their real or suspected connection with the Nationalist movement, of which Galilee was the focus. It is as if these Jews had said to Jesus: Yes, signs of the times and of the coming storm! These Galileans of yours, your own countrymen, involved in a kind of Pseudo-Messianic movement, a kind of signs of the times rising, something like that towards which you want us to look was not their death a condign punishment? This latter inference they did not express in words, but implied in their

narration of the fact. But the Lord read their thoughts and refuted their reasoning. For this purpose He adduced another instance, when a tower at the Siloam-Pool had fallen on eighteen persons and killed them, perhaps in connection with that construction of an aqueduct into Jerusalem by Pilate, which called forth, on the part of the Jews, the violent opposition, which the Roman so terribly avenged. As good Jews, they would probably think that the fall of the tower, which had buried in its ruins these eighteen persons, who were perhaps engaged in the building of that cursed structure, was a just judgment of God! For Pilate had used for it the sacred money which had been devoted to Temple-purposes (the Qorban), and many there were who perished in the tumult caused by the Jewish resistance to this act of profanation. But Christ argued, that it was as wrong to infer that Divine-judgment had overtaken His Galilean countrymen, as it would be to judge that the Tower of Siloam had fallen to punish these Jerusalemites. Not one party only, nor another; not the supposed Messianic tendency (in the shape of a national rising), nor, on the other hand, the opposite direction of absolute submission to Roman domination, was in fault. The whole nation was guilty; and the coming storm, to the signs of which He had pointed, would destroy all unless there were spiritual repentance on the part of the nation. And yet wider than this, and applying to all time, is the underlying principle, that, when a calamity befalls a district or an aggregation of individuals, we ought not to take to ourselves judgment as to its special causation, but to think spiritually of its general application not so much seek to trace what is the character of its connection with a district or individuals, as to learn its lessons and to regard them as a call addressed to all. And conversely, also, this holds true in regard to deliverances.

Having thus answered the implied objection, the Lord next showed, in the Parable of the Fig-tree, 58 the need and urgency of national repentance.

The second event recorded by Luke in this connection recalls the incidents of the early Judæan and of the Galilean Ministry. We observe the same narrow views and externalism as before in regard to the Sabbath on the part of the Jewish authorities, and, on the part of Christ, the same wide principles and spiritual application. If we were in search of evidence of the Divine Mission of Jesus, we would find it in this contrariety on so fundamental a point, since no teacher in Israel nor Reformer of that time not the most advanced Sadducee would have defended, far less originated, the views as to the Sabbath which Christ now propounded. 63 Again, if we were in quest of evidence of the historical truthfulness of the Gospel-narratives, we would find it in a comparison of the narratives of the three Sabbath-controversies: in Jerusalem, in Galilee, and in Peraea. In all the spirit was the same. And, although the differences between them may seem slight, they are characteristic, and mark, as if they pointed to it with the finger, the locality and circumstances in which each took place. In Jerusalem there is neither reasoning nor rebuke on the part of the Jews, but absolute persecution. There also the Lord enters on the higher exposition of His action, motives, and Mission. In Galilee there is questioning, and cunning intrigue against Him on the part of the Judæans who dogged His steps. But while no violence can be attempted against Him, the people do not venture openly to take His part. But in Peraea we are confronted by the clumsy zeal of a country-Archisynagogos (Chief Ruler of a Synagogue), who is very angry, but not very wise; who admits Christ's healing power, and does not dare to attack Him directly, but, instead, rebukes, not Christ, not even the woman who had been healed, but the people who witnessed it, at the same time telling them to come for healing on other days, not perceiving, in his narrow-minded bigotry, what this admission implied. This rustic ruler had not the cunning, nor even the courage, of the Judæan Pharisees in Galilee, whom the Lord had formerly convicted and silenced. Enough, to show this obscure Peraean partisan of Pharisaism and the like of him their utter folly, and that by their own admissions. And presently, not only were His adversaries ashamed, while in Galilee they went out and held a council against Him, but the people were not afraid, as the Galileans had been in presence of their rulers, and openly rejoiced in the glorious working of the Chri

Little more requires to be added about this incident in one of the Synagogues of Peraea. Let us only briefly recall the scene. Among those present in this Synagogue had been a poor woman, who for

eighteen years had been a sufferer, as we learn, through demoniac agency. It is quite true that most, if not all, such diseases were connected with moral distemper, since demoniac possession was not permanent, and resistance might have been made in the lucid intervals, if there had been moral soundness. But it is ungrounded to distinguish between the spirit of infirmity as the moral and psychical, and her being bent as indicating the physical disease, or even to describe the latter as a permanent curvature of the spine. 69 The Greek word here rendered infirmity has passed into Rabbinic language (Isteniseyah, hysyntsyand there means, not any particular disease, but sickness, sometimes weakness. In fact, she was, both physically and morally, not sick, but sickly, and most truly was hers a spirit of infirmity so that she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. For, we mark that hers was not demoniac possession at all and yet, though she had not yielded, she had not effectually resisted, and so she was bound by a spirit of infirmity both in body and soul. We recognise the same spirit of infirmity in the circumstances of her healing. When Christ, seeing her probably a fit symbol of the Peraeans in that Synagogue called her, she came; when He said unto her, Woman, thou hast been loosed from thy sickness she was unbound, and yet in her weakness she answered not, nor straightened herself, till Jesus laid His Hands on her and so strengthened her in body and soul, and then she was immediately made straight, and glorified God. As for the Archisynagogos, we have, as already hinted, such characteristic portraiture of him that we can almost see him: confused, irresolute, perplexed, and very angry, bustling forward and scolding the people who had done nothing, yet not venturing to silence the woman, now no longer infirm far less, to reprove the great Rabbi, who had just done such a glorious thing but speaking at Him through those who had been the astounded eye-witnesses. He was easily and effectually silenced, and all who sympathised with him put to shame. Hypocrites! spake the Lord on your own admissions your practice and your Law condemn your speech. Every one on the Sabbath looseth his ox or ass, and leads him to the watering. The Rabbinic law expressly allowed this, and even to draw the water, provided the vessel were not carried to the animal. If, as you admit, I have the power of loosing from the bonds of Satan, and she has been so bound these eighteen years, should she a daughter of Abraham not have that done for her which you do for your beasts of burden? The retort was unanswerable and irresistible; it did what was intended: it covered the adversaries with shame. And the Peraeans in that Synagogue felt also, at least for the time, the blessed freedom which had come to that woman. They took up the echoes of her hymn of praise, and rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him. And He answered their joy by rightly directing it by setting before them the Kingdom which He had come both to preach and to bring, in all its freeness, reality, power, and all-pervading energy, as exhibited in the two Parables of the Mustard-seed and the Leaven spoken before in Galilee. These were now repeated, as specially suited to the circumstances: first, to the Miracle they had witnessed; then, to the contention that had passed; and, lastly, to their own state of feeling. And the practical application of these Parables must have been obvious to all.

Chapter 14 At The Feast of the Dedication of the Temple

(Luke 13:22; John 10:22-42.)

About two months had passed since Jesus had left Jerusalem after the Feast of Tabernacles. Although we must not commit ourselves to such calculations, we may here mention the computation which identifies the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles of that year with Thursday the 23rd September; the last, the Great Day of the Feast with Wednesday the 29th; the Octave of the Feast with the 30th September; and the Sabbath when the man born blind was healed with the 2nd of October. In that case, the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple which commenced on the 25th day of Chislev, and lasted eight days, would have begun on Wednesday the 1st, and closed on Wednesday

the 8th December. But, possibly, it may have been a week or two later. At that Feast, or about two months after He had quitted the City, we find Christ once more in Jerusalem and in the Temple . His journey thither seems indicated in the Third Gospel (Luke xiii. 22), and is at least implied in the opening words with which John prefaces his narrative of what happened on that occasion.

As we think of it, there seems special fitness presently to be pointed out in Christ's spending what we regard as the last anniversary season of His Birth in the Temple at that Fea It was not of Biblical origin, but had been instituted by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 b.c., when the Temple, which had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, was once more purified, and rededicated to the Service of Jehovah. Accordingly, it was designated as the Dedication of the Altar. Josephus calls it The Lights from one of the principal observances at the Feast, though he speaks in hesitating language of the origin of the festival as connected with this observance, probably because, while he knew, he was ashamed to avow, and yet afraid to deny his belief in the Jewish legend connected with it. The Jews called it Chanukkah, dedication or consecration and, in much the same sense, Enkainia in the Greek of the LXX., and in the New Testament. During the eight days of the Feast the series of Psalms known as at the Hallel 11 was chanted in the Temple, the people responding as at the Feast of Tabernacles. Other rites resembled those of the latter Fea Thus, originally, the people appeared with palm branches. This, however, does not seem to have been afterwards observed, while another rite, not mentioned in the Book of Maccabees that of illuminating the Temple and private houses became characteristic of the Fea Thus, the two festivals, which indeed are put in juxtaposition in 2 Macc. x., seem to have been both externally and internally connected. The Feast of the Dedication or of Lights derived from that of Tabernacles its duration of eight days, the chanting of the Hallel, and the practice of carrying palm branches. On the other hand, the rite of the Temple illumination may have passed from the Feast of the Dedication into the observances of that of Tabernacles. Tradition had it, that, when the Temple Services were restored by Judas Maccabaeus, the oil found to have been desecrated. Only one flagon was discovered of that which was pure, sealed with the very signet of the High Prie The supply proved just sufficient to feed for one day the Sacred Candlestick, but by a miracle the flagon was continually replenished during eight days, till a fresh supply could be brought from Thekoah. In memory of this, it was ordered the following year, that the Temple be illuminated for eight days on the anniversary of its Dedication. The Schools of Hillel and Shammai differed in regard to this, as on most other observances. The former would have begun the first night with the smallest number of lights, and increased it every night till on the eighth it was eight times as large as on the fir The School of Shammai, on the other hand, would have begun with the largest number, and diminished, till on the last night it amounted to an eighth of the fir Each party had its own not very satisfactory reasons for its distinctive practice, and its own adherents. But the Lights in honour of the Feast were lit not only in the Temple , but in every home. One would have sufficed for the whole household on the first evening, but pious householders lit a light for every inmate of the home, so that, if ten burned on the first, there would be eighty on the last night of the Festival. According to the Talmud, the light might be placed at the entrance to the house or room, or, according to circumstances, in the window, or even on the table. According to modern practice the light is placed at the left on entering a room (the Mezuzah is on the right). Certain benedictions are spoken on lighting these lights, all work is stayed, and the festive time spent in merriment. The first night is specially kept in memory of Judith, who is supposed then to have slain Holofernes, and cheese is freely partaken of as the food of which, according to legend, she gave him so largely, to incite him to thirst and drunkenness. Lastly, during this Festival, all fasting and public mourning were prohibited, though some minor acts of private mourning were allowed.

More interesting, perhaps, than this description of the outward observances is the meaning of this Festival and its connection with the Feast of Tabernacles, to both of which reference has already been made. Like the Feast of Tabernacles, it commemorated a Divine Victory, which again gave to Israel their good land, after they had once more undergone sorrows like those of the wilderness; it was another harvest-feast, and pointed forward to yet another ingathering. As the once extinguished

light was relit in the Temple, and, according to Scriptural imagery, might that not mean the Light of Israel, the Lamp of David it grew day by day in brightness, till it shone quite out into the heathen darkness, that once had threatened to quench it. That He Who purified the Temple, was its True Light, and brought the Great Deliverance, should (as hinted) have spent the last anniversary season of His Birth at that Feast in the Sanctuary, shining into their darkness, seems most fitting, especially as we remember the Jewish legend, according to which the making of the Tabernacle had been completed on the 25th Chislev, although it was not set up till the 1st of Nisan (the Paschal month).

Thoughts of the meaning of this Feast, and of what was associated with it, will be helpful as we listen to the words which Jesus spake to the people in Solomon's Porch. There is a pictorialness in the description of the circumstances, which marks the eyewitness. It is winter, and Christ is walking in the covered Porch, in front of the Beautiful Gate which formed the principal entrance into the Court of the Women. As he walks up and down, the people are literally barring His Way came round about Him. From the whole circumstances we cannot doubt, that the question which they put: How long holdest Thou us in suspense? had not in it an element of truthfulness or genuine inquiry. Their desire, that He should tell them plainly if He were the Christ, had no other motive than that of grounding on it an accusation. The more clearly we perceive this, the more wonderful appears the forbearance of Christ and the wisdom of His answer. Briefly he puts aside their hypocrisy. What need is there of fresh speech? He told them before, and they believe not. From words He appeals to the mute but indisputable witness of deeds: the works which He wrought in His Father's Name. Their non-belief in presence of these facts was due to their not being of His Sheep. As he had said unto them before, it was characteristic of His Sheep (as generally of every flock in regard to its own shepherd) to hear recognise, listen to His Voice and follow Him. We mark in the words of Christ, a triplet of double parallelisms concerning the Sheep and the Shepherd, in ascending climax, as follows:

My sheep hear My Voice, And I know them, And they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: And they shall never perish. And no one shall snatch them out of My Hand. A similar fourfold parallelism with descending and ascending climax, but of an antithetic character, has been noticed in Christ's former Discourse in the Temple (John x. 13-15)

The hireling I Is an hireling, Am the good Shepherd, Careth not for the sheep. Know the sheep, Fleeth Lay down My Life.

Richer or more comforting assurance than that recorded above could not have been given. But something special has here to be marked. The two first parallelisms always link the promise of Christ to the attitude of the sheep; not, perhaps, conditionally, for the relation is such as not to admit conditionalness, either in the form of because therefore or even of if then but as a matter of sequence and of fact. But in the third parallelism there is no reference to anything on the part of the sheep; it is all promise, and the second clause only explains and intensifies what is expressed in the first. If it indicates attack of the fiercest kind and by the strongest and most cunning of enemies, be they men or devils, it also marks the watchfulness and absolute superiority of Him Who hath them, as it were, in His Hand perhaps a Hebraism for power' and hence their absolute safety. And, as if to carry twofold assurance of it, He reminds His hearers that His Work being the Father's Commandment it is really the Father's Work, given to Christ to do, and no one could snatch them out of the Father's Hand. It is a poor cavil, to try to limit these assurances by seeking to grasp and to comprehend them in the hollow of our human logic. Do they convey what is commonly called the doctrine of perseverance? Nay! but they teach us, not about our faith but about His faithfulness, and convey to us assurance concerning Him rather than ourselves; and this is the only aspect in which the doctrine of perseverance is either safe, true, or Scriptural.

But one logical sequence is unavoidable. Rightly understood, it is not only the last and highest announcement, but it contains and implies everything else. If the Work of Christ is really that of the Father, and His Working also that of the Father, then it follows that He and the Father are One (one is in the neuter). This identity of work (and purpose) implies the identity of Nature (Essence); that of working, the identity of power. And so, evidently, the Jews understood it, when they again took up

stones with the intention of stoning Him no doubt, because He expressed, in yet more plain terms, what they regarded as His blasphemy. Once more the Lord appealed from His Words, which were doubted, to His Works, which were indubitable. And so He does to all time. His Divine Mission is evidence of His Divinity. And if His Divine Mission be doubted, He appeals to the many excellent works (which He hath showed from the Father any one of which might, and, in the case of not a few, had, served as evidence of His Mission. And when the Jews ignored, as so many in our days, this line of evidence, and insisted that He had been guilty of blasphemy, since, being a man, He had made Himself God, the Lord replied in a manner that calls for our special attention. From the peculiarly Hebraistic mode of designating a quotation from the Psalms as written in the Law we gather that we have here a literal transcript of the very words of our Lord. But what we specially wish, is, emphatically, to disclaim any interpretation of them, which would seem to imply that Christ had wished to evade their inference: that He claimed to be One with the Father and to convey to them, that nothing more had been meant than what might lawfully be applied to an ordinary man. Such certainly is not the case. He had claimed to be One with the Father in work and working: from which, of course, the necessary inference was, that He was also One with Him in Nature and Power. Let us see whether the claim was strange. In Ps. lxxxii. 6 the titles God (Elohim) and Sons of the Highest (Beney Elyon) had been given to Judges as the Representatives and Vicegerents of God, wielding His delegated authority, since to them had come His Word of authorisation. But here was authority not transmitted by the word but personal and direct consecration, and personal and direct Mission on the part of God. The comparison made was not with prophets, because they only told the word and message from God, but with Judges, who, as such, did the very act of God. If those who, in so acting, had received an indirect commission, were gods the very representatives of God, could it be blasphemy when He claimed to be the Son of God, Who had received, not authority through a word transmitted through long centuries, but direct personal command to do the Father's Work; had been directly and personally consecrated to it by the Father, and directly and personally sent by Him, not to say, but to do, the work of the Father? Was it not rather the true and necessary inference from these premisses?

All would, of course, depend on this, whether Christ really did the works of the Father. That was the test; and, as we instinctively perceive, both rationally and truly. But if He did the works of His Father, then let them believe, if not the words yet the works, and thus would they arrive at the knowledge, and understand distinguishing here the act from the state that in Me is the Father, and I in the Father. In other words, recognizing the Work as that of the Father, they would come to understand that the father worked in Him, and that the root of His Work was in the Father.

The stones, that had been taken up, were not thrown, for the words of Christ rendered impossible the charge of explicit blasphemy which alone would, according to Rabbinic law, have warranted such summary vengeance. But they sought again to seize Him so as to drag Him before their tribunal. His time, however, had not yet come, and He went forth out of their hand' how, we know not.

Once more the Jordan rolled between Him and His bitter persecutors. Far north, over against Galilee, in the place of John's early labours, probably close to where Jesus Himself had been baptized, was the scene of His last labours. And those, who so well remembered both the Baptist and the testimony which he had there borne to the Christ, recalled it all as they listened to His Words and saw His Works. As they crowded around Him, both the difference and the accord between John and Jesus carried conviction to their minds. The Baptist had done no sign such as those which Jesus wrought: but all things which John had spoken of Him, they felt it, were true. And, undisturbed by the cavils of Pharisees and Scribes, many of these simple-minded, truehearted men, far away from Jerusalem, believed on Him. To adapt a saying of Bengel: they were the posthumous children of the Bapti Thus did he, being dead, yet speak. And so will all that is sown for Christ, though it lie buried and forgotten of men, spring up and ripen, as in one day, to the deep, grateful, and external joy of them who had laboured in faith and gone to rest in hope.

Chapter 15 The Second Series of Parables

The Two Parables of Him who is Neighbour to Us The First, Concerning the Love that, Unasked, Gives in Our Need The Second, Concerning the Love which is Elicited by Our Asking in Our Need

(Luke 10:25-37, 11:5-13.)

The period between Christ's return from the Feast of the Dedication and His last entry into Jerusalem, may be arranged into two parts, divided by the brief visit to Bethany for the purpose of raising Lazarus from the dead. Even if it were possible, with any certainty, chronologically to arrange the events of each of these periods, the variety and briefness of what is recorded would prevent our closely following them in this narrative. Accordingly, we prefer grouping them together as the Parables of that period, its Discourses, and its Events. And the record of the raising of Lazarus may serve as a landmark between our Summary of the Parables and that of the Discourses and Events which preceded the Lord's final appearance in Jerusalem .

These last words help us to understand the necessary difference between the Parables of this and of the preceding and the following periods. The Parables of this period look back upon the past, and forward into the future. Those spoken by the Lake of Galilee were purely symbolical. They presented unseen heavenly realities under emblems which required to be translated into earthly language. It was quite easy to do so, if you possessed the key to the heavenly mysteries; otherwise, they were dark and mysterious. So to speak, they were easily read from above downwards. Viewed from below upwards, only most dim and strangely intertwining outlines could be perceived. It is quite otherwise with the second series of Parables. They could, as they were intended, be understood by all. They required no translation. They were not symbolical but typical, using the word type not in the sense of involving a predictive element, but as indicating an example, or, perhaps, more correctly, an exemplification. Accordingly, the Parables of this series are also intensely practical. Lastly, their prevailing character is not descriptive, but hortatory; and they bring the Gospel, in the sense of glad tidings to the lost, most closely and touchingly to the hearts of all who hear them. They are signs in words, as the miracles are signs in works, of what Christ has come to do and to teach. Most of them bear this character openly; and even those which do not, but seem more like warning, have still an undertone of love, as if Divine compassion lingered in tender pity over that which threatened, but might yet be averted.

Of the Parables of the third series it will for the present suffice to say, that they are neither symbolical nor typical, but their prevailing characteristic is prophetic. As befits their historical place in the teaching of Christ, they point to the near future. They are the fast falling, lengthening shadows cast by the events which are near at hand,

The Parables of the second (or Peraean) series, which are typical and hortatory, and Evangelical in character, are thirteen in number, and, with the exception of the last, are either peculiar to, or else most fully recorded in, the Gospel by Luke.

1. The Parable of the Good Samaritan. This Parable is connected with a question, addressed to Jesus by a lawyer' not one of the Jerusalem Scribes or Teachers, but probably an expert in Jewish Canon Law, who possibly made it more or less a profession in that district, though perhaps not for gain. Accordingly, there is a marked absence of that rancour and malice which characterised his colleagues of Judaea. In a previous chapter it has been shown, that this narrative probably stands in its proper place in the Gospel of Luke. We have also suggested, that the words of this lawyer referred, or else that himself belonged, to that small party among the Rabbins who, at least in theory, attached greater value to good works than to study. At any rate, there is no occasion to impute directly evil motives to him. Knowing the habits of his class, we do not wonder that he put his question to tempt' test, try the great Rabbi of Nazareth. There are many similar instances in Rabbinic writings

of meetings between great Teachers, when each tried to involve the other in dialectic difficulties and subtle disputations. Indeed, this was part of Rabbinism, and led to that painful and fatal trifling with truth, when everything became matter of dialectic subtlety, and nothing was really sacred. What we require to keep in view is, that to this lawyer the question which he propounded was only one of theoretic, not of practical interest, nor matter of deep personal concern, as it was to the rich young ruler, who, not long afterwards, addressed a similar inquiry to the Lord.

We seem to witness the opening of a regular Rabbinic contest, as we listen to this speculative problem: Teacher, what having done shall I inherit eternal life? At the foundation lay the notion, that eternal life was the reward of merit, of works: the only question was, what these works were to be. The idea of guilt had not entered his mind; he had no conception of sin within. It was the old Judaism of self-righteousness speaking without disguise: that which was the ultimate ground of the rejecting and crucifying of the Chri There certainly was a way in which a man might inherit eternal life, not indeed as having absolute claim to it, but (as the Schoolmen might have said: *de congruo*) in consequence of God's Covenant on Sinai. And so our Lord, using the common Rabbinic expression what readest thou? (pointed him to the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The reply of the lawyer is remarkable, not only on its own account, but as substantially, and even literally, that given on two other occasions by the Lord Himself. The question therefore naturally arises, whence did this lawyer, who certainly had not spiritual insight, derive his reply? As regarded the duty of absolute love to God, indicated by the quotation of Deut. vi. 5, there could, of course, be no hesitation in the mind of a Jew. The primary obligation of this is frequently referred to, and, indeed, taken for granted, in Rabbinic teaching. The repetition of this command, which in the Talmud receives the most elaborate and strange interpretation, formed part of the daily prayers. When Jesus referred the lawyer to the Scriptures, he could scarcely fail to quote this first paramount obligation. Similarly, he spoke as a Rabbinic lawyer, when he referred in the next place to love to our neighbour, as enjoined in Lev. xix. 18. Rabbinism is never weary of quoting as one of the characteristic sayings of its greatest teacher, Hillel (who, of course, lived before this time), that he had summed up the Law, in briefest compass, in these words: What is hateful to thee, that do not to another. This is the whole Law; the rest is only its explanation. Similarly, Rabbi Akiba taught, that Lev. xix. 18 was the principal rule, we might almost say, the chief summary of the Law (Still, the two principles just mentioned are not enunciated in conjunction by Rabbinism, nor seriously propounded as either containing the whole Law or as securing heaven. They are also, as we shall presently see, subjected to grave modifications. One of these, as regards the negative form in which Hillel put it, while Christ put it positively, has been previously noticed. The existence of such Rabbinic modifications, and the circumstance, already mentioned, that on two other occasions the answer of Christ Himself to a similar inquiry was precisely that of this lawyer, suggests the inference, that this question may have been occasioned by some teaching of Christ, to which they had just listened, and that the reply of the lawyer may have been prompted by what Jesus had preached concerning the Law.

If it be asked, why Christ seemed to give His assent to the lawyer's answer, as if it really pointed to the right solution of the great question, we reply: No other answer could have been given him. On the ground of works if that had been tenable this was the way to heaven. To understand any other answer, would have required a sense of sin; and this could not be imparted by reasoning: it must be experienced. It is the preaching of the Law which awakens in the mind a sense of sin. Besides, if not morally, yet mentally, the difficulty of this way would soon suggest itself to a Jew. Such, at least, is one aspect of the counter-question with which the lawyer now sought to retort on Jesus.

Whatever complexity of motives there may have been for we know nothing of the circumstances, and there may have been that in the conduct or heart of the lawyer which was specially touched by what had just passed there can be no doubt as to the main object of his question: But who is my neighbour? He wished to justify himself in the sense of vindicating his original question, and showing that it was not quite so easily settled as the answer of Jesus seemed to imply. And here it was that Christ could in a Parable show how far orthodox Judaism was from even a true understanding, much

more from such perfect observance of this Law as would gain heaven. Thus might He bring even this man to feel his shortcomings and sins, and awaken in him a sense of his great need. This, of course, would be the negative aspect of this Parable; the positive is to all time and to all men.

That question: Who is my neighbour? has ever been at the same time the outcome of Judaism (as distinguished from the religion of the Old Testament), and also its curse. On this point it is duty to speak plainly, even in face of the wicked persecutions to which the Jews have been exposed on account of it. Whatever modern Judaism may say to the contrary, there is a foundation of truth in the ancient heathen charge against the Jews of odium generis humani (hatred of mankind). God had separated Israel unto Himself by purification and renovation and this is the original meaning of the word holy and sanctify in the Hebrew (They separated themselves in self-righteousness and pride and that is the original meaning of the word Pharisee and Pharisaism (In so saying no blame is cast on individuals; it is the system which is at fault. This question: Who is my neighbour? frequently engages Rabbinism. The answer to it is only too clear. If a hypercriticism were to interpret away the passage which directs that idolaters are not to be delivered when in imminent danger, while heretics and apostates are even to be led into it, the painful discussion on the meaning of Exod. xxiii. 5 would place it beyond question. The sum of it is, that, except to avert hostility, a burden is only to be unloaded, if the beast that lieth under it belongeth to an Israelite, not if it belong to a Gentile; and so the expression, the ass of him that hateth thee must be understood of a Jewish, and not of a Gentile enemy

It is needless to follow the subject further. But more complete rebuke of Judaistic narrowness, as well as more full, generous, and spiritual world-teaching than that of Christ's Parable could not be imagined. The scenery and colouring are purely local. And here we should remember, that, while admitting the lawfulness of the widest application of details for homiletical purposes, we must take care not to press them in a strictly exegetical interpretation.

Some one coming from the Holy City, the Metropolis of Judaism, is pursuing the solitary desert-road, those twenty-one miles to Jericho, a district notoriously insecure, when he fell among robbers, who, having both stripped and inflicted on him strokes, went away leaving him just as he was, half dead.

This is the first scene. The second opens with an expression which, theologically, as well as exegetically, is of the greatest interest. The word rendered by chance (occurs only in this place, for Scripture commonly views matters in relation to agents rather than to results. As already noted, the real meaning of the word is concurrence much like the corresponding Hebrew term (And better definition could not be given, not, indeed, of Providence which is a heathen abstraction for which the Bible has no equivalent, but for the concrete reality of God's providing. He provides through a concurrence of circumstances, all in themselves natural and in the succession of ordinary causation (and this distinguishes it from the miracle), but the concurring of which is directed and overruled by Him. And this helps us to put aside those coarse tests of the reality of prayer and of the direct rule of God, which men sometimes propose. Such stately ships ride not in such shallow waters.

It was by such a concurrence that, first a priest, then a Levite came down that road, when each, successively, when he saw him, passed by over against (him). It was the principle of questioning, Who is my neighbour? which led both priest and Levite to such heartless conduct. Who knew what this wounded man was, and how he came to lie there: and were they called upon, in ignorance of this, to take all the trouble, perhaps incur the risk of life, which care of him would involve? Thus Judaism (in the persons of its chief representatives) had, by its exclusive attention to the letter, come to destroy the spirit of the Law. Happily, there came yet another that way, not only a stranger, but one despised, a semi-heathen Samaritan. He asked not who the man was, but what was his need.

Whatever the wounded Jew might have felt towards him, the Samaritan proved a true neighbour. He came towards him, and beholding him, he was moved with compassion. His resolution was soon taken. He first bound up his wounds, and then, taking from his travelling provision wine and oil, made of them, what was regarded as the common dressing for wounds. Next, having set (lifted) him on his own beast, he walked by his side, and brought him to one of those houses of rest and entertainment,

whose designation (has passed into Rabbinic language (These khans, or hostelries, by the side of unfrequented roads, afforded free lodgment to the traveller. But generally they also offered entertainment, in which case, of course, the host, commonly a non-Israelite, charged for the victuals supplied to man or beast, or for the care taken. In the present instance the Samaritan seems himself to have tended the wounded man all that evening. But even thus his care did not end. The next morning, before continuing his journey, he gave to the host two dinars about one shilling and threepence of our money, the amount of a labourer's wages for two days, as it were, two days wages for his care of him, with this provision, that if any further expense were incurred, either because the wounded man was not sufficiently recovered to travel, or else because something more had been supplied to him, the Good Samaritan would pay it when he next came that way.

So far the Parable: its lesson the lawyer is made himself to enunciate. Which of these three seems to thee to have become neighbour of him that fell among the robbers? Though unwilling to take the hated name of Samaritan on his lips, especially as the meaning of the Parable and its anti-Rabbinic bearing were so evident, the lawyer was obliged to reply, He that showed mercy on him when the Saviour finally answered, Go, and do thou likewise.

Some further lessons may be drawn. The Parable implies not a mere enlargement of the Jewish ideas, but a complete change of them. It is truly a Gospel-Parable, for the whole old relationship of mere duty is changed into one of love. Thus, matters are placed on an entirely different basis from that of Judaism. The question now is not Who is my neighbour? but Whose neighbour am I? The Gospel answers the question of duty by pointing us to love. Wouldst thou know who is thy neighbour? Become a neighbour to all by the utmost service thou canst do them in their need. And so the Gospel would not only abolish man's enmity, but bridge over man's separation. Thus is the Parable truly Christian, and, more than this, points up to Him Who, in our great need, became Neighbour to us, even at the cost of all He had. And from Him, as well as by His Word, are we to learn our lesson of love.

2. The Parable which follows in Luke's narrative seems closely connected with that just commented upon. It is also a story of a good neighbour who gives in our need, but presents another aspect of the truth to which the Parable of the Good Samaritan had pointed. Love bends to our need: this is the objective manifestation of the Gospel. Need looks up to love, and by its cry elicits the boon which it seeks. And this is the subjective experience of the Gospel. The one underlies the story of the first Parable, the other that of the second.

Some such internal connection between the two Parables seems, indeed, indicated even by the loose manner in which this second Parable is strung to the request of some disciples to be taught what to pray. Like the Parable of the Good Samaritan it is typical, and its application would be the more felt, that it not only points to an exemplification, but appeals to every man's consciousness of what himself would do in certain given circumstances. The latter are as follows. A man has a friend who, long after nightfall, unexpectedly comes to him from a journey. He has nothing in the house, yet he must provide for his need, for hospitality demands it. Accordingly, though it be so late, he goes to his friend and neighbour to ask him for three loaves, stating the case. On the other hand, the friend so asked refuses, since, at that late hour, he has retired to bed with his children, and to grant his request would imply not only inconvenience to himself, but the disturbing of the whole household. The main circumstances therefore are: Sudden, unthought-of sense of imperative need, obliging to make what seems an unseasonable and unreasonable request, which, on the face of it, offers difficulties and has no claim upon compliance. It is, therefore, not ordinary but, so to speak, extraordinary prayer, which is here alluded to.

To return to the Parable: the question (abruptly broken off from the beginning of the Parable in ver. 5), is what each of us would do in the circumstances just detailed. The answer is implied in what follows. It points to continued importunity, which would at last obtain what it needs. I tell you, even if he will not give him, rising up, because he is his friend, yet at least on account of his importunity, he will rise up and give him as many as he needeth. This literal rendering will, it is hoped, remove some of the

seeming difficulties of the Parable. It is a gross misunderstanding to describe it as presenting a mechanical view of prayer: as if it implied, either that God was unwilling to answer; or else, that prayer, otherwise unheard, would be answered merely for its importunity. It must be remembered, that he who is within is a friend, and that, under circumstances, he would at once have complied with the request. But, in this case, there were special difficulties, which are represented as very great; it is midnight; he has retired to bed, and with his children; the door is locked. And the lesson is, that where, for some reasons, there are, or seem, special difficulties to an answer to our prayers (it is very late, the door is no longer open, the children have already been gathered in), the importunity arising from the sense of our absolute need, and the knowledge that He is our Friend, and that He has bread, will ultimately prevail. The difficulty is not as to the giving, but as the giving then rising up and this is overcome by perseverance, so that (to return to the Parable), if he will not rise up because he is his friend, yet at least he will rise because of his importunity, and not only give him three loaves, but, in general, as many as he needeth.

So important is the teaching of this Parable, that Christ makes detailed application of it. In the circumstances described a man would persevere with his friend, and in the end succeed. And, similarly, the Lord bids us ask and that earnestly and believingly; seek and that energetically and instantly; knock and that intently and loudly. Ask He is a Friend, and we shall receive; seek it is there, and we shall find; knock our need is absolute, and it shall be opened to us. But the emphasis of the Parable and its lesson are in the word everyone (Not only this or that, but everyone shall so experience it. The word points to the special difficulties that may be in the way of answer to prayer the difficulties of the rising up which have been previously indicated in the Parable. These are met by perseverance which indicates the reality of our need (ask), the reality of our belief that the supply is there (seek), and the intensity and energy of our spiritual longing (knock). Such importunity applies to everyone whoever he be, and whatever the circumstances which would seem to render his prayer specially difficult of answer. Though he feel that he has not and needs, he ask; though he have lost time, opportunities, mercies he seek; though the door seem shut, he knocks. Thus the Lord is helper to everyone; but, as for us, let us learn the lesson from what we ourselves would do in analogous circumstances.

Nay, more than this, God will not deceive by the appearance of what is not reality. He will even give the greatest gift. The Parabolic relation is now not that of friends, but of father and son. If the son asks for bread, will the father give what seems such, but is only a stone? If he asks for a fish, will he tender him what looks such, but is a serpent? If he seek an egg, will he hand to him what breeds a scorpion? The need, the hunger, of the child will not, in answer to its prayer, receive at the Father's Hands, that which seems, but gives not the reality of satisfaction rather is poison. Let us draw the inference. Such is our conduct how much more shall our heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. That gift will not disappoint by the appearance of what is not reality; it will not deceive either by the promise of what it does not give, or by giving what would prove fatal. As we follow Christ's teaching, we ask for the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit, in leading us to Him, leads us into all truth, to all life, and to what satisfies all need.

Chapter 16 The Three Parables of Warning:

To the Individual, to the Nation, and to the Theocracy The Foolish Rich Man The Barren Fig Tree The Great Supper

(Luke 12:13-21, 13:6-9, 14:16-24.)

The three Parables, which successively follow in Luke's Gospel, may generally be designated as

those of warning. This holds specially true of the last two of them, which refer to the civil and the ecclesiastical polity of Israel . Each of the three Parables is set in an historical frame, having been spoken under circumstances which gave occasion for such illustration.

1. The Parable of the foolish rich man. It appears, that some one among them that listened to Jesus conceived the idea, that the authority of the Great Rabbi of Nazareth might be used for his own selfish purposes. This was all he had profited, that it seemed to open possibilities of gain stirred thoughts of covetousness. But other inferences also come to us. Evidently, Christ must have attracted and deeply moved multitudes, or His interposition would not have been sought; and, equally evidently, what He preached had made upon this man the impression, that he might possibly enlist Him as his champion. The presumptive evidence which it affords as regards the effect and the subject matter of Christ's preaching is exceedingly interesting. On the other hand, Christ had not only no legal authority for interfering, but the Jewish law of inheritance was so clearly defined, and, we may add, so just, that if this person had any just or good cause, there could have been no need for appealing to Jesus. Hence it must have been covetousness in the strictest sense, which prompted it perhaps, a wish to have, besides his own share as a younger brother, half of that additional portion which, by law, came to the eldest son of the family. Such an attempt for covetous purposes to make use of the pure unselfish preaching of love, and to derive profit from His spiritual influence, accounts for the severity with which Christ rejected the demand, although, as we judge, He would, under any circumstances, have refused to interfere in purely civil disputes, with which the established tribunals were sufficient to deal.

All this accounts for the immediate reference of our Lord to covetousness, the folly of which He showed by this almost self-evident principle, too often forgotten that not in the superabounding to any one [not in that wherein he has more than enough] consisteth his life, from the things which he possesseth. In other words, that part of the things which a man possesseth by which his life is sustained, consists not in what is superabundant; his life is sustained by that which he needs and uses; the rest, the super-abundance, forms no part of his life, and may, perhaps, never be of use to him. Why, then, be covetous, or long for more than we need? And this folly also involves danger. For, the love of these things will engross mind and heart, and care about them will drive out higher thoughts and aims. The moral as regarded the Kingdom of God, and the warning not to lose it for thought of what perisheth with the using are obvious.

The Parable itself bears on all these points. It consists of two parts, of which the first shows the folly, the second the sin and danger, of that care for what is beyond our present need, which is the characteristic of covetousness. The rich man is surveying his land, which is bearing plentifully evidently beyond its former yield, since the old provision for storing the corn appears no longer sufficient. It seems implied or, we may at least conjecture that this was not only due to the labour and care of the master, but that he had devoted to it his whole thought and energy. More than this, it seems as if, in the calculations which he now made, he looked into the future, and saw there progressive increase and riches. As yet, the harvest was not reaped; but he was already considering what to do, reckoning upon the riches that would come to him. And so he resolved to pull down the old, and build larger barns, where he would store his future possessions. From one aspect there would have been nothing wrong in an act of almost necessary foresight only great folly in thinking, and speaking, and making plans, as if that were already absolutely his which might never come to him at all, which, was still unreaped, and might be garnered long after he was dead. His life was not sustained by that part of his possessions which were the superabounding. But to this folly was also added sin. For, God was not in all his thoughts. In all his plans for the future and it was his folly to make such absolutely he thought not of God. His whole heart was set on the acquisition of earthly riches not on the service of God. He remembered not his responsibility; all that he had, was for himself, and absolutely his own to batten upon; Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. He did not even remember, that there was a God Who might cut short his years.

So had he spoken in his heart proud, selfish, self-indulgent, God-forgetting as he looked forth upon what was not yet, even in an inferior sense, his own, but which he already treated as such, and that in the most absolute sense. And now comes the quick, sharp, contrast, which is purposely introduced quite abruptly. But God said unto Him' not by revelation nor through inward presentiment, but, with awful suddenness, in those unspoken words of fact which cannot be gainsaid or answered: Thou fool! this very night' which follows on thy plans and purposings thy soul is required of thee. But, the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? Here, with the obvious evidence of the folly of such state of mind, the Parable breaks off. Its sinfulness nay, and beyond this negative aspect of it, the wisdom of righteousness in laying up the good treasure which cannot be taken from us, appears in this concluding remark of Christ So is he who layeth up treasure (treasureth) for himself, and is not rich towards God.

It was a barbed arrow, we might say, out of the Jewish quiver, but directed by the Hand of the Lord. For, we read in the Talmud that a Rabbi told his disciples, Repent the day before thy death; and when his disciples asked him: Does a man know the day of his death? he replied, that on that very ground he should repent today, lest he should die tomorrow. And so would all his days be days of repentance. Again, the son of Sirach wrote: There is that waxeth rich by his wariness and pinching, and this is the portion of his reward; whereas he saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods; and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave those things to others, and die. But we sadly miss in all this the spiritual application which Christ made. Similarly, the Talmud, by a play on the last word (in the first verse of Psalm xlix., compares man to the weasel, which laboriously gathers and deposits, not knowing for whom, while the Midrash tells a story, how, when a Rabbi returned from a feast where the Host had made plans of storing his wine for a future occasion, the Angel of Death appeared to him, grieved for man, since you say, thus and thus shall we do in the future, while no one knoweth how soon he shall be called to die as would be the case with the host of that evening, who would die after the lapse of thirty days. But once more we ask, where is the spiritual application, such as was made by Christ? So far from it, the Midrash adds, that when the Rabbi challenged the Angel to show him the time of his own death, he received this reply, that he had not dominion over the like of him, since God took pleasure in their good works, and added to their days!

2. The special warning intended to be conveyed by the Parable of the Barren Fig-tree sufficiently appears from the context. As explained in a previous chapter, the Lord had not only corrected the erroneous interpretation which the Jews were giving to certain recent national occurrences, but pointed them to this higher moral of all such events, that, unless speedy national repentance followed, the whole people would perish. This Parable offers not merely an exemplification of this general prediction of Christ, but sets before us what underlies it: Israel in its relation to God; the need of repentance; Israel's danger; the nature of repentance, and its urgency; the relation of Christ to Israel ; the Gospel; and the final judgment on impenitence.

As regards the details of this Parable, we mark that the fig tree had been specially planted by the owner in his vineyard, which was the choicest situation. This, we know, was not unusual. Fig trees, as well as palm and olive-trees, were regarded as so valuable, that to cut them down if they yielded even a small measure of fruit, was popularly deemed to deserve death at the Hand of God. Ancient Jewish writings supply interesting particulars of this tree and its culture. According to Josephus, in favoured localities the ripe fruit hung on the tree for ten months of the year, the two barren months being probably April and May, before the first of the three crops which it bore had ripened. The first figs ripened towards the end of June, sometimes earlier. The second, which are those now dried and exported, ripened in August; the third, which were small and of comparatively little value, in September, and often hung all winter on the trees. A species (the Benoth Shuach) is mentioned, of which the fruit required three years for ripening. The fig tree was regarded as the most fruitful of all trees. On account of its repeated crops, it was declared not subject to the ordinance which enjoined that fruit should be left in the corners for the poor. Its artificial inoculation was known. The practice

mentioned in the Parable, of digging about the tree and dunging it (is frequently mentioned in Rabbinic writings, and by the same designations. Curiously, Maimonides mentions three years as the utmost limit within which a tree should bear fruit in the land of Israel. Lastly, as trees were regarded as by their roots undermining and deteriorating the land, a barren tree would be of threefold disadvantage: it would yield no fruit; it would fill valuable space, which a fruit-bearer might occupy; and it would needlessly deteriorate the land. Accordingly, while it was forbidden to destroy fruit-bearing trees, it would, on the grounds above stated, be duty to cut down a barren or empty tree. These particulars will enable us more fully to understand the details of the Parable. Allegorically, the fig tree served in the Old Testament as emblem of the Jewish nation in the Talmud, rather as that of Israel's lore, and hence of the leaders and the pious of the people. The vineyard is in the New Testament the symbol of the Kingdom of God, as distinct from the nation of Israel. Thus far, then, the Parable may be thus translated: God called Israel as a nation, and planted it in the most favoured spot: as a fig tree in the vineyard of His own Kingdom. And He came seeking as He had every right to do, fruit thereon, and found none. It was the third year that He had vainly looked for fruit, when He turned to His Vinedresser the Messiah, to Whom the vineyard is committed as its King with this direction: Cut it down why doth it also deteriorate the soil? It is barren, though in the best position; as a fig tree it ought to bear figs, and here the best; it fills the place which a good tree might occupy; and besides, it deteriorates the soil (literally: And its three years barrenness has established (as before explained) its utterly hopeless character. Then it is that the Divine Vinedresser, in His infinite compassion, pleads, and with far deeper reality than either Abraham or Moses could have entreated, for the fig tree which Himself had planted and tended, that it should be spared this year also until then that I shall dig about it, and dung it till He labour otherwise than before, even by His Own Presence and Words, nay, by laying to its roots His most precious Blood. And if then it bear fruit' here the text abruptly breaks off, as implying that in such case it would, of course, be allowed to remain; but if not, then against the future (coming) year shalt thou cut it down. The Parable needs no further commentation. In the words of a recent writer: 29 Between the tree and the axe nothing intervenes but the intercession of the Gardener, Who would make a last effort, and even His petition applies only to a short and definite period, and, in case it pass without result, this petition itself merges in the proposal, "But if not, then cut it down." How speedily and terribly the warning came true, not only students of history, but all men and in all ages have been made to know. Of the lawfulness of a further application of this Parable to all kindred circumstances of nation, community, family, nay, even of individuals, it is not necessary to speak.

3. The third Parable of warning that of the Great Supper refers not to the political state of Israel but to their ecclesiastical status, and their continuance as the possessors and representatives of the Kingdom of God. It was spoken after the return of Jesus from the Feast of the Dedication, and therefore carries us beyond the point in this history which we have reached. Accordingly, the attendant circumstances will be explained in the sequel. In regard to these we only note, how appropriately such a warning of Israel's spiritual danger, in consequence of their hardness of heart, misrepresentation, and perversion of God's truth, would come at a Sabbath-meal of the Pharisees, when they lay in wait against Him, and He first challenged their externalising of God's Day and Law to the subversion of its real meaning, and then rebuked the self-assertion, pride, and utter want of all real love on the part of these leaders of Israel.

What led up to the Parable of the Great Supper happened after these things: after His healing of the man with the dropsy in sight of them all on the Sabbath, after His twofold rebuke of their perversion of the Sabbath-Law, and of those marked characteristics of Pharisaism, which showed how far they were from bringing forth fruit worthy of the Kingdom, and how, instead of representing, they represented the Kingdom, and were utterly unfit ever to do otherwise. The Lord had spoken of making a feast, not for one's kindred, nor for the rich whether such outwardly, or mentally and spiritually from the standpoint of the Pharisees but for the poor and afflicted. This would imply true spirituality, because that fellowship of giving, which descends to others in order to raise them as brethren, not

condescends, in order to be raised by them as their Master and Superior. And He had concluded with these words: And thou shalt be blessed because they have not to render back again to thee, for it shall be rendered back to thee again in the Resurrection of the Ju

It was this last clause but separated, in true Pharisaic spirit, from that which had preceded, and indicated the motive on which one of those present now commented, probably with a covert, perhaps a provocative, reference to what formed the subject of Christ's constant teaching: Blessed whoso shall eat bread in the Kingdom of Heaven. An expression this, which to the Pharisee meant the common Jewish expectancy of a great feast at the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom. So far he had rightly understood, and yet he had entirely misunderstood, the words of Chri Jesus had, indeed, referred to the future retribution of (not, for) deeds of love, among which He had named as an instance, suggested by the circumstances, a feast for, or rather brotherly love and fellowship towards, the poor and suffering. But although the Pharisee referred to the Messianic Day, his words show that he did not own Jesus as the Messiah. Whether or not it was the object of his exclamation, as sometimes religious commonplaces or platitudes are in our days, to interrupt the course of Christ's rebukes, or, as before hinted, to provoke Him to unguarded speech, must be left undetermined. What is chiefly apparent is, that this Pharisee separated what Christ said about the blessings of the first Resurrection from that with which He had connected them we do not say as their condition, but as logically their moral antecedent: viz., love, in opposition to self-assertion and self-seeking. The Pharisee's words imply that, like his class, he, at any rate, fully expected to share in these blessings, as a matter of course, and because he was a Pharisee. Thus to leave out Christ's anteceding words was not only to set them aside, but to pervert His saying, and to place the blessedness of the future on the very opposite basis from that on which Christ had rested it. Accordingly, it was to this man personally that the Parable was addressed.

There can be no difficulty in understanding the main ideas underlying the Parable. The man who made the Great Supper was He Who had, in the Old Testament, prepared a feast of fat things. The bidding many preceded the actual announcement of the day and hour of the fea We understand by it a preliminary intimation of the feast then preparing, and a general invitation of the guests, who were the chief people in the city; for, as we shall presently see, the scene is laid in a city. This general announcement was made in the Old Testament institutions and prophecies, and the guests bidden were those in the city, the chief men not the ignorant and those out of the way, but the men who knew, and read, and expounded these prophecies. At last the preparations were ended, and the Master sent out His Servant, not necessarily to be understood of any one individual in particular such as John the Baptist but referring to whomsoever He would employ in His Service for that purpose. It was to intimate to the persons formerly bidden, that everything was now ready. Then it was that, however differing in their special grounds for it, or expressing it with more or less courtesy, they were all at one in declining to come. The feast, to which they had been bidden some time before, and to which they had apparently agreed to come (at least, this was implied), was, when actually announced as ready, not what they had expected, at any rate not what they regarded as more desirable than what they had, and must give up in order to come to it. For and this seems one of the principal points in the Parable to come to that feast, to enter into the Kingdom, implies the giving up of something that seems if not necessary yet most desirable, and the enjoyment of which appears only reasonable. Be it possession, business, and pleasure (Stier), or the priesthood, the magistracy, and the people generally (Augustine), or the priesthood, the Pharisees, and the Scribes, or the Pharisees, the Scribes, and the self-righteously virtuous, with reference to whom we are specially to think of the threefold excuse, the main point lies in this, that, when the time came, they all refused to enter in, each having some valid and reasonable excuse. But the ultimate ground of their refusal was, that they felt no real desire, and saw nothing attractive in such a feast; had no real reverence for the host; in short, that to them it was not a feast at all, but something much less to be desired than what they had, and would have been obliged to give up, if they had complied with the invitation.

Then let the feast for it was prepared by the goodness and liberality of the Host be for those who

were in need of it, and to whom it would be a feast: the poor and those afflicted the maimed, and blind, and lame, on whom those great citizens who had been first bidden would look down. This, with reference to, and in higher spiritual explanation of, what Christ had previously said about bidding such to our feast of fellowship and love. Accordingly, the Servant is now directed to go out quickly into the (larger) streets and the (narrow) lanes of the City a trait which shows that the scene is laid in the City the professed habitation of God. The importance of this circumstance is evident. It not only explains who the first bidden chief citizens were, but also that these poor were the despised ignorant, and the maimed, lame, and blind such as the publicans and sinners. These are they in the streets and lanes; and the Servant is directed, not only to invite, but to bring them in as otherwise they might naturally shrink from coming to such a feast. But even so, there is yet room; for the great Lord of the house has, in His great liberality, prepared a very great feast for very many. And so the Servant is once more sent, so that the Master's house may be filled. But now he is bidden to go out outside the City, outside the Theocracy, into the highways and hedges to those who travel along the world's great highway, or who have fallen down weary, and rest by its hedges; into the busy, or else weary, heathen world. This reference to the heathen world is the more apparent that, according to the Talmud, 39 there were commonly no hedges round the fields of the Jews. And this time the direction to the Servant is not, as in regard to those naturally bashful outcasts of the City who would scarcely venture to the great house to bring them in but constrain [without a pronoun] to come in. Not certainly as indicating their resistance and implying force, but as the moral constraint of earnest, pressing invitation, coupled with assurance both of the reality of the feast and of their welcome to it. For, these wanderers on the world's highway had, before the Servant came to them, not known anything of the Master of the house, and all was quite new and unexpected. Their being invited by a Lord Whom they had not known, perhaps never heard of before, to a City in which they were strangers, and to a feast for which as wayfarers, or as resting by the hedges, or else as working within their enclosure they were wholly unprepared, required special urgency, a constraining to make them either believe in it, or come to it from where the messengers found them, and that without preparing for it by dress or otherwise. And so the house would be filled!

Here the Parable abruptly breaks off. What follows are the words of our Lord in explanation and application of it to the company then present: For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper. And this was the final answer to this Pharisee and to those with him at that table, and to all such perversion of Christ's Words and misapplication of God's Promises as he and they were guilty of.

Chapter 17 The Three Parables of the Gospel:

of The Recovery of the Lost Sheep The Lost Drachm The Lost Son

(Luke 15.)

A simple perusal of the three Parables, grouped together in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel, will convince us of their connection. Although they treat of repentance we can scarcely call them The Parables of Repentance; for, except in the last of them, the aspect of repentance is subordinate to that of restoration, which is the moral effect of repentance. They are rather peculiarly Gospel-Parables of the recovery of the lost: in the first instance, through the unwearied labour; in the second, through the anxious care, of the owner; and in the third Parable, through the never-ceasing love of the Father.

Properly to understand these Parables, the circumstance which elicited them must be kept in view. As Jesus preached the Gospel of God's call, not to those who had, as they imagined, prepared

themselves for the Kingdom by study and good works, but as that to a door open, and a welcome free to all, all the publicans and sinners were [constantly] drawing near to Him. It has formerly been shown, that the Jewish teaching concerning repentance was quite other than, nay, contrary to, that of Christ. Theirs was not a Gospel to the lost: they had nothing to say to sinners. They called upon them to do penitence and then Divine Mercy, or rather Justice, would have its reward for the penitent. Christ's Gospel was to the lost as such. It told them of forgiveness, of what the Saviour was doing, and the Father purposed and felt for them; and that, not in the future and as reward of their penitence, but now in the immediate present. From what we know of the Pharisees, we can scarcely wonder that they were murmuring at Him, saying, This man receiveth "sinners," and eateth with them. Whether or not Christ had on this, as on other occasions, joined at a meal with such persons which, of course, in the eyes of the Pharisees would have been a great aggravation to His offence their charge was so far true, that this One in contrariety to the principles and practice of Rabbinism, received sinners as such, and consorted with them. Nay, there was even more than they charged Him with: He not only received them when they sought Him, but He sought them, so as to bring them to Him; not, indeed, that they might remain sinners but that, by seeking and finding them, they might be restored to the Kingdom, and there might be joy in heaven over them. And so these are truly Gospel-Parables, although presenting only some aspects of it.

Besides their subject matter, these three Parables have some other points in common. Two things are here of chief interest. They all proceed on the view that the work of the Father and of Christ, as regards the Kingdom is the same; that Christ was doing the work of the Father, and that they who know Christ know the Father also. That work was the restoration of the lost; Christ had come to do it, and it was the longing of the Father to welcome the lost home again. Further, and this is only second in importance, the lost was still God's property; and he who had wandered farthest was a child of the Father, and considered as such. And, although this may, in a wider sense, imply the general propriety of Christ in all men, and the universal Fatherhood of God, yet, remembering that this Parable was spoken to Jews, we, to whom these Parables now come, can scarcely be wrong in thinking, as we read them, with special thankfulness of our Christian privileges, as by Baptism numbered among the sheep of His Flock, the treasure of His Possession, and the children of His Home.

In other particulars there are, however, differences, all the more marked that they are so finely shaded. These concern the lost, their restoration, and its results.

1. The Parable of the Lost Sheep. At the outset we remark that this Parable and the next, that of the Lost Drachm, are intended as an answer to the Pharisees. Hence they are addressed to them: What man of you? or what woman? just as His late rebuke to them on the subject of their Sabbath-cavils had been couched: Which of you shall have a son or an ox fallen into a well? Not so the last Parable, of the Lost Son, in which He passed from defence, or rather explanation, of His conduct, to its higher reason, showing that He was doing the work of the Father. Hence, while the element of comparison (with that which had not been lost) appears in most detailed form in the first Parable, it is generalised in the second, and wholly omitted in the third.

Other differences have to be marked in the Parables themselves. In the first Parable (that of the Lost Sheep) the main interest centres in the lost; in the second (that of the Lost Drachm), in the search; in the third, in the restoration. And although in the third Parable the Pharisees are not addressed, there is the highest personal application to them in the words which the Father speaks to the elder son an application, not so much of warning, as of loving correction and entreaty, and which seems to imply, what otherwise these Parables convey, that at least these Pharisees had murmured not so much from bitter hostility to Christ, as from spiritual ignorance and misunderstanding.

Again, these Parables, and especially that of the Lost Sheep, are evidently connected with the preceding series, that of warnings. The last of these showed how the poor, the blind, lame, and maimed, nay, even the wanderers on the world's highway, were to be the guests at the heavenly Feast. And this, not only in the future, and after long and laborious preparation, but now, through the agency of the Saviour. As previously stated, Rabbinism placed acceptance at the end of repentance, and

made it its wages. And this, because it knew not, nor felt the power of sin, nor yet the free grace of God. The Gospel places acceptance at the beginning of repentance, and as the free gift of God's love. And this, because it not only knows the power of sin, but points to a Saviour, provided of God. The Lost Sheep is only one among a hundred: not a very great loss. Yet which among us would not, even from the common motives of ownership, leave the ninety-and-nine, and go after it, all the more that it has strayed into the wilderness? And, to take these Pharisees on their own ground, should not the Christ have done likewise to the straying and almost lost sheep of His own flock? Nay, quite generally and to all time, is this not the very work of the Good Shepherd and may we not, each of us, thus draw from it precious comfort? As we think of it, we remember that it is natural for the foolish sheep so to wander and stray. And we think not only of those sheep which Jewish pride and superciliousness had left to go astray, but of our own natural tendency to wander. And we recall the saying of Peter, which, no doubt, looked back upon this Parable: Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. It is not difficult in imagination to follow the Parabolic picture: how in its folly and ignorance the sheep strayed further and further, and at last was lost in solitude and among stony places; how the shepherd followed and found it, weary and footsore; and then with tender care lifted it on his shoulder, and carried it home, gladsome that he had found the lost. And not only this, but when, after long absence, he returned home with his found sheep, that now nestled close to its Saviour, he called together his friends, and bade them rejoice with him over the erst lost and now found treasure.

It needs not, and would only diminish the pathos of this exquisite Parable, were we to attempt interpreting its details. They apply wherever and to whatever they can be applied. Of these three things we think: of the lost sheep; of the Good Shepherd, seeking, finding, bearing, rejoicing; and of the sympathy of all who are truly friends like-minded with Him. These, then, are the emblems of heavenly things. In heaven oh, how different the feeling from that of Pharisaism! View the flock as do the Pharisees, and divide them into those who need and who need not repentance, the sinners and the righteous as regards man's application of the Law does not this Parable teach us that in heaven there shall be joy over the sinner that repenteth more than over the ninety-and-nine righteous which have not need of repentance? And to mark the terrible contrast between the teaching of Christ and that of the Pharisees; to mark also, how directly from heaven must have been the message of Jesus, and how poor sinners must have felt it such, we put down in all its nakedness the message which Pharisaism brought to the lost. Christ said to them: There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Pharisaism said and we quote here literally There is joy before God when those who provoke Him perish from the world.

2. In proceeding to the second Parable, that of the Lost Drachm, we must keep in mind that in the first the danger of being lost arose from the natural tendency of the sheep to wander. In the second Parable it is no longer our natural tendency to which our loss is attributable. The drachm (about 7 ½d. of our money) has been lost, as the woman, its owner, was using or counting her money. The loss is the more sensible, as it is one out of only ten, which constitute the owner's property. But it is still in the house not like the sheep that had gone astray only covered by the dust that is continually accumulating from the work and accidents around. And so it is more and more likely to be buried under it, or swept into chinks and corners, and less and less likely to be found as time passes. But the woman lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and seeks diligently, till she has found it. And then she calleth together those around, and bids them rejoice with her over the finding of the lost part of her possessions. And so there is joy in the presence of the Angels over one sinner that repenteth. The comparison with others that need not such is now dropped, because, whereas formerly the sheep had strayed though from the frowardness of its nature here the money had simply been lost, fallen among the dust that accumulates practically, was no longer money, or of use; became covered, hidden, and was in danger of being forever out of sight, not serviceable, as it was intended to be and might have been.

We repeat, the interest of this Parable centres in the search, and the loss is caused, not by natural

tendency, but by surrounding circumstances, which cover up the bright silver, hide it, and render it useless as regards its purpose, and lost to its owner.

3. If it has already appeared that the two first Parables are not merely a repetition, in different form, of the same thought, but represent two different aspects and causes of the being lost' the essential difference between them appears even more clearly in the third Parable, that of the Lost Son. Before indicating it in detail, we may mark the similarity in form, and the contrast in spirit, of analogous Rabbinic Parables. The thoughtful reader will have noted this even in the Jewish parallel to the first Parable, where the reason of the man following the straying animal is Pharisaic fear and distrust, lest the Jewish wine which it carried should become mingled with that of the Gentiles. Perhaps, however, this is a more apt parallel, when the Midrash relates how, when Moses fed the sheep of Jethro in the wilderness, and a kid had gone astray, he went after it, and found it drinking at a spring. As he thought it might be weary, he laid it on his shoulder and brought it back, when God said that, because he had shown pity on the sheep of a man, He would give him His own sheep, Israel, to feed. As a parallel to the second Parable, this may be quoted as similar in form, though very different in spirit, when a Rabbi notes, that, if a man had lost a Sela or anything else of value in his house, he would light ever so many lights (till he had found what provides for only one hour in this world. How much more, then, should he search, as for hidden treasures, for the words of the Law, on which depends the life of this and of the world to come! And in regard to the high place which Christ assigned to the repenting sinner, we may note that, according to the leading Rabbis, the penitents would stand nearer to God than the perfectly righteous (since, in Is. lvii. 19, peace was first bidden to those who had been afar off, and then only to those near. This opinion was, however, not shared by all, and one Rabbi maintained, that, while all the prophets had only prophesied with reference to penitents (this had been the sole object of their mission), yet, as regarded the perfectly righteous eye hath not seen O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for them. Lastly, it may, perhaps, be noted, that the expression there is joy before Him (is not uncommon in Jewish writings with reference to events which take place on earth.

To complete these notes, it may be added that, besides illustrations, to which reference will be made in the sequel, Rabbinic tradition supplies a parallel to at least part of the third Parable, that of the Lost Son. It tells us that, while prayer may sometimes find the gate of access closed, it is never shut against repentance, and it introduces a Parable in which a king sends a tutor after his son, who, in his wickedness, had left the palace, with this message: Return, my son! to which the latter replied: With what face can I return? I am ashamed! On which the father sends this message: My son, is there a son who is ashamed to return to his father and shalt thou not return to thy father? Thou shalt return. So, continues the Midrash, had God sent Jeremiah after Israel in the hour of their sin with the call to return, and the comforting reminder that it was to their Father.

In the Parable of the Lost Son the main interest centres in his restoration. It is not now to the innate tendency of his nature, nor yet to the work and dust in the house that the loss is attributable, but to the personal, free choice of the individual. He does not stray; he does not fall aside he wilfully departs, and under aggravated circumstances. It is the younger of two sons of a father, who is equally loving to both, and kind even to his hired servants, whose home, moreover, is one not only of sufficiency, but of superabundance and wealth. The demand which he makes for the portion of property falling to him is founded on the Jewish Law of Inheritance. Presumably, the father had only these two sons. The eldest would receive two portions, the younger the third of all movable property. The father could not have disinherited the younger son, although, if there had been several younger sons, he might have divided the property falling to them as he wished, provided he expressed only his disposition, and did not add that such or such of the children were to have a less share or none at all. On the other hand, a man might, during his lifetime, dispose of all his property by gift, as he chose, to the disadvantage, or even the total loss, of the firstborn, or of any other children; nay, he might give all to strangers. In such cases, as, indeed, in regard to all such dispositions, greater latitude was allowed if the donor was regarded as dangerously ill, than if he was in good health. In the latter case

a legal formality of actual seizure required to be gone through. With reference to the two eventualities just mentioned that of diminishing or taking away the portion of younger children, and the right of gift the Talmud speaks of Testaments, which bear the name *Diyatqi*, as in the New Testament. These dispositions might be made either in writing or orally. But if the share of younger children was to be diminished or taken away, the disposition must be made by a person presumably near death (*Shekhibh mera*). But no one in good health (*Bari*) could diminish (except by gift) the legal portion of a younger son.

It thus appears that the younger son was, by law, fully entitled to his share of the possessions, although, of course, he had no right to claim it during the lifetime of his father. That he did so, might have been due to the feeling that, after all, he must make his own way in the world; to dislike of the order and discipline of his home; to estrangement from his elder brother; or, most likely, to a desire for liberty and enjoyment, with the latent belief that he would succeed well enough if left to himself. At any rate, his conduct, whatever his motives, was most heartless as regarded his father, and sinful as before God. Such a disposition could not prosper. The father had yielded to his demand, and, to be as free as possible from control and restraint, the younger son had gone into a far country. There the natural sequences soon appeared, and his property was wasted in riotous living. Regarding the demand for his inheritance as only a secondary trait in the Parable, designed, on the one hand, more forcibly to bring out the guilt of the son, and, on the other, the goodness, and afterwards the forgiveness, of the Father, we can scarcely doubt that by the younger son we are to understand those publicans and sinners against whose reception by, and fellowship with, Christ the Pharisees had murmured.

The next scene in the history is misunderstood when the objection is raised, that the young man's misery is there represented as the result of Providential circumstances rather than of his own misdoing. To begin with, he would not have been driven to such straits in the famine, if he had not wasted his substance with riotous living. Again, the main object is to show, that absolute liberty and indulgence of sinful desires and passions ended in anything but happiness. The Providence of God had an important part in this. Far more frequently are folly and sin punished in the ordinary course of Providence than by special judgments. Indeed, it is contrary to the teaching of Christ, and it would lead to an unmoral view of life, to regard such direct interpositions as necessary, or to substitute them for the ordinary government of God. Similarly, for our awakening also we are frequently indebted to what is called the Providence, but what is really the manifold working together of the grace, of God. And so we find special meaning in the occurrence of this famine. That, in his want, he clave (to one of the citizens of that country seems to indicate that the man had been unwilling to engage the dissipated young stranger, and only yielded to his desperate importunity. This also explains how he employed him in the lowest menial service, that of feeding swine. To a Jew, there was more than degradation in this, since the keeping of swine (although perhaps the ownership rather than the feeding) was prohibited to Israelites under a curse. And even in this demeaning service he was so evil entreated, that for very hunger he would fain have filled his belly with the carob-pods that the swine did eat. But here the same harshness, which had sent him to such employment, met him on the part of all the people of that country: and no man gave unto him even sufficient of such food. What perhaps gives additional meaning to this description is the Jewish saying: When Israel is reduced to the carob-tree, they become repentant.

It was this pressure of extreme want which first showed to the younger son the contrast between the country and the circumstances to which his sin had brought him, and the plentiful provision of the home he had left, and the kindness which provided bread enough and to spare for even the hired servants. There was only a step between what he said, having come into himself and his resolve to return, though its felt difficulty seems implied in the expression: I will arise. Nor would he go back with the hope of being reinstated in his position as son, seeing he had already received, and wasted in sin, his portion of the patrimony. All he sought was to be made as one of the hired servants. And, alike from true feeling, and to show that this was all his pretence, he would preface his request by the

confession, that he had sinned against heaven' a frequent Hebraism for against God and in the sight of his father, and hence could no longer lay claim to the name of son. The provision of the son he had, as stated, already spent, the name he no longer deserved. This favour only would he seek, to be as a hired servant in his father's house, instead of in that terrible, strange land of famine and harshness.

But the result was far other than he could have expected. When we read that, while he was yet afar off, his father saw him we must evidently understand it in the sense, that his father had been always on the outlook for him, an impression which is strengthened by the later command to the servants to bring the calf, the fatted one as if it had been specially fattened against his return. As he now saw him, he was moved with compassion, and he ran, and he fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses. Such a reception rendered the purposed request, to be made as one of the hired servants, impossible and its spurious insertion in the text of some important manuscripts affords sad evidence of the want of spiritual tact and insight of early copyists. The father's love had anticipated his confession, and rendered its self-spoken sentence of condemnation impossible. Perfect love casteth out fear and the hard thoughts concerning himself and his deserts on the part of the returning sinner were banished by the love of the father. And so he only made confession of his sin and wrong not now as preface to the request to be taken in as a servant, but as the outgoing of a humbled, grateful, truly penitent heart. Him whom want had humbled, thought had brought to himself, and mingled need and hope led a suppliant servant the love of a father, which anticipated his confession, and did not even speak the words of pardon, conquered, and so morally begat him a second time as his son. Here it deserves special notice, as marking the absolute contrast between the teaching of Christ and Rabbinism, that we have in one of the oldest Rabbinic works a Parable exactly the reverse of this, when the son of a friend is redeemed from bondage, not as a son, but to be a slave, that so obedience might be demanded of him. The inference drawn is, that the obedience of the redeemed is not that of filial love of pardoned, but the enforcement of the claim of a master. How otherwise in the Parable and teaching of Christ!

But even so the story of love has not come to an end. They have reached the house. And now the father would not only restore the son, but convey to him the evidence of it, and he would do so before, and by the servants. The three tokens of wealth and position are to be furnished him. Quickly the servants are to bring forth the stola the upper garment of the higher classes, and that the first' the best, and this instead of the tattered, coarse raiment of the foreign swineherd. Similarly, the finger-ring for his hand, and the sandals for his unshod feet, would indicate the son of the house. And to mark this still further, the servants were not only to bring these articles, but themselves to put them on the son, so as thereby to own his mastership. And yet further, the calf, the fatted one for this very occasion, was to be killed, and there was to be a joyous feast, for this his son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found.

Thus far for the reception of publicans and sinners and all in every time whom it may concern. Now for the other aspect of the history. While this was going on, so continues the Parable, the elder brother was still in the field. On his return home, he inquired of a servant the reason of the festivities which he heard within the house. Informed that his younger brother had come, and the calf long prepared against a feast had been killed, because his father had recovered him safe and sound he was angry, would not go in, and even refused the request to that effect of the father, who had come out for the purpose. The harsh words of reproach with which he set forth his own apparent wrongs could have only one meaning: his father had never rewarded him for his services. On the other hand, as soon as this his son' whom he will not even call his brother had come back, notwithstanding all his disservice, he had made a feast of joy!

But in this very thing lay the error of the elder son, and to apply it the fatal mistake of Pharisaism. The elder son regarded all as of merit and reward, as work and return. But it is not so. We mark, first, that the same tenderness which had welcomed the returning son, now met the elder brother. He spoke to the angry man, not in the language of merited reproof, but addressed him lovingly as son

and reasoned with him. And then, when he had shown him his wrong, he would fain recall him to better feeling by telling him of the other as his brother. But the main point is this. There can be here no question of desert. So long as the son is in His Father's house He gives in His great goodness to His child all that is the Father's. But this poor lost one still a son and a brother he has not got any reward, only been taken back again by a Father's love, when he had come back to Him in the deep misery of his felt need. This son, or rather, as the other should view him, this brother had been dead, and was come to life again; lost, and was found. And over this it was meet to make merry and be glad not to murmur. Such murmuring came from thoughts of work and pay wrong in themselves, and foreign to the proper idea of Father and son; such joy, from a Father's heart. The elder brother's were the thoughts of a servant: of service and return; the younger brother's was the welcome of a son in the mercy and everlasting love of a Father. And this to us, and to all time!

Chapter 18 The Unjust Steward. Dives and Lazarus

Jewish Agricultural Notes Prices of Produce Writing and Legal Documents Purple and Fine Linen
Jewish Notions of Hades

(Luke 16.)

Although widely differing in their object and teaching, the last group of Parables spoken during this part of Christ's Ministry are, at least outwardly, connected by a leading thought. The word by which we would string them together is Righteousness. There are three Parables of the Unrighteous: the Unrighteous Steward, the Unrighteous Owner, and the Unrighteous Dispenser, or Judge. And these are followed by two other Parables of the Self-righteous: Self-righteousness in its Ignorance, and its dangers as regards oneself; and Self-righteousness in its Harshness, and its dangers as regards others. But when this outward connection has been marked, we have gone the utmost length. Much more close is the internal connection between some of them.

We note it, first and chiefly, between the two first Parables. Recorded in the same chapter, and in the same connection, they were addressed to the same audience. True, the Parable of the Unjust Steward was primarily spoken to His disciples that of Dives and Lazarus to the Pharisees. But then the audience of Christ at that time consisted of disciples and Pharisees. And these two classes in the audience stood in peculiar relation to each other, which is exactly met in these two Parables, so that the one may be said to have sprung out of the other. For, the disciples to whom the first Parable was addressed, were not primarily the Apostles, but those publicans and sinners whom Jesus had received, to the great displeasure of the Pharisees. Then He would teach concerning the Mammon of unrighteousness. And, when the Pharisees sneered at this teaching, He would turn it against them, and show that, beneath the self-justification, which made them forget that now the Kingdom of God was opened to all, and imagine that they were the sole vindicators of a Law which in their everyday practice they notoriously broke, there lay as deep sin and as great alienation from God as that of the sinners whom they despised. Theirs might not be the Mammon of, yet it might be that for unrighteousness; and, while they sneered at the idea of such men making of their Mammon friends that would receive them into everlasting tabernacles, themselves would experience that in the end a terrible readjustment before God would follow on their neglect of using for God, and their employment only for self of such Mammon as was theirs, coupled as it was with harsh and proud neglect of what they regarded as wretched, sore-covered Lazarus, who lay forsaken and starving at their very doors. It will have been observed, that we lay once more special stress on the historical connection and the primary meaning of the Parables. We would read them in the light of the circumstances in which they were spoken as addressed to a certain class of hearers, and as referring to what had just passed.

The historical application once ascertained, the general lessons may afterwards be applied to the widest range. This historical view will help us to understand the introduction, connection, and meaning, of the two Parables which have been described as the most difficult: those of the Unjust Steward, and of Dives and Lazarus.

At the outset we must recall, that they were addressed to two different classes in the same audience. In both the subject is Unrighteousness. In the first, which is addressed to the recently converted publicans and sinners, it is the Unrighteous Steward, making unrighteous use of what had been committed to his administration by his Master; in the second Parable, which is addressed to the self-justifying, sneering Pharisees, it is the Unrighteous Possessor, who uses only for himself and for time what he has, while he leaves Lazarus, who, in his view, is wretched and sore-covered, to starve or perish, unheeded, at his very door. In agreement with its object, and as suited to the part of the audience addressed, the first Parable points a lesson, while the second furnishes a warning. In the first Parable we are told, what the sinner when converted should learn from his previous life of sin; in the second, what the self-deceiving, proud Pharisee should learn as regarded the life which to him seemed so fair, but was in reality so empty of God and of love. It follows and this is of greatest importance, especially in the interpretation of the first Parable that we must not expect to find spiritual equivalents for each of the persons or incidents introduced. In each case, the Parable itself forms only an illustration of the lessons, spoken or implied, which Christ would convey to the one and the other class in His audience.

I. The Parable of the Unjust Steward. In accordance with the canon of interpretation just laid down, we distinguish 1. The illustrative Parable. 2. Its moral. 3. Its application in the combination of the moral with some of the features of the Parable.

1. The illustrative Parable. This may be said to converge to the point brought out in the concluding verse: the prudence which characterises the dealings of the children of this world in regard to their own generation, or, to translate the Jewish forms of expression into our own phraseology, the wisdom with which those who care not for the world to come choose the means most effectual for attaining their worldly objects. It is this prudence by which their aims are so effectually secured, and it alone, which is set before the children of light as that by which to learn. And the lesson is the more practical, that those primarily addressed had hitherto been among these men of the world. Let them learn from the serpent its wisdom, and from the dove its harmlessness; from the children of this world, their prudence as regarded their generation, while, as children of the new light, they must remember the higher aim for which that prudence was to be employed. Thus would that Mammon which is of unrighteousness and which certainly faileth become to us treasure in the world to come welcome us there, and, so far from failing prove permanent welcome us in everlasting tabernacles. Thus, also, shall we have made friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness and that, which from its nature must fail, become eternal gain or, to translate it into Talmudic phraseology, it will be of the things of which a man enjoys the interest in this world, while the capital remains for the world to come.

It cannot now be difficult to understand the Parable. Its object is simply to show, in the most striking manner, the prudence of a worldly man, who is unrestrained by any other consideration than that of attaining his end. At the same time, with singular wisdom, the illustration is so chosen as that its matter (*materia*), the Mammon of unrighteousness may serve to point a life-lesson to those newly converted publicans and sinners, who had formerly sacrificed all for the sake, or in the enjoyment of, that Mammon. All else, such as the question, who is the master and who the steward, and such like, we dismiss, since the Parable is only intended as an illustration of the lesson to be afterwards taught. The connection between this Parable and what the Lord had previously said concerning returning sinners, to which our remarks have already pointed, is further evidenced by the use of the term wasting (in the charge against the steward, just as the prodigal son had wasted (his substance. 15 Only, in the present instance, the property had been entrusted to his administration. As regards the owner, his designation as rich seems intended to mark how large was the property committed to the steward. The steward was not, as in Luke xii. 42- 46, a slave, but one employed for the

administration of the rich man's affairs, subject to notice of dismissal. He was accused the term implying malevolence, but not necessarily a false charge not of fraud, but of wasting, probably by riotous living and carelessness, his master's goods. And his master seems to have convinced himself that the charge was true, since he at once gives him notice of dismissal. The latter is absolute, and not made dependent on the account of his stewardship which is only asked as, of course, necessary, when he gives up his office. Nor does the steward either deny the charge or plead any extenuation. His great concern rather is, during the time still left of his stewardship, before he gives up his accounts, to provide for his future support. The only alternative before him in the future is that of manual labour or mendicancy. But for the former he has not strength; from the latter he is restrained by shame.

Then it is that his prudence suggests a device by which, after his dismissal, he may, without begging, be received into the houses of those whom he has made friends. It must be borne in mind, that he is still steward, and, as such, has full power of disposing of his master's affairs. When, therefore, he sends for one after another of his master's debtors, and tells each to alter the sum in the bond, he does not suggest to them forgery or fraud, but, in remitting part of the debt whether it had been incurred as rent in kind, or as the price of produce purchased he acts, although unrighteously, yet strictly within his rights. Thus, neither the steward nor the debtors could be charged with criminality, and the master must have been struck with the cleverness of a man who had thus secured a future provision by making friends, so long as he had the means of so doing (ere his Mammon of unrighteousness failed).

A few archaeological notices may help the interpretation of details. From the context it seems more likely, that the bonds or rather writings of these debtors were written acknowledgements of debt, than, as some have supposed that they were, leases of farms. The debts over which the steward variously disposed, according as he wished to gain more or less favour, were considerable. In the first case they are stated at a hundred Bath of oil in the second as a hundred Cor of wheat. In regard to these quantities we have the preliminary difficulty, that three kinds of measurement were in use in Palestine that of the Wilderness or, the original Mosaic; that of Jerusalem which was more than a fifth larger; and that of Sepphoris, probably the common Galilean measurement, which, in turn, was more than a fifth larger than the Jerusalem measure. 18 To be more precise, one Galilean was equal to $\frac{3}{2}$ Wilderness measures. Assuming the measurement to have been the Galilean, one Bath 194536 would have been equal to an Attic Metrêtes, or about 39 litres. On the other hand, the so-called Wilderness measurement would correspond with the Roman measures, and, in that case, the Bath would be the same as the Amphora, or amount to a little less than 26 litres. The latter is the measurement adopted by Josephus. In the Parable, the first debtor was owing 100 of these Bath or, according to the Galilean measurement, about 3,900 litres of oil. As regards the value of a Bath of oil, little information can be derived from the statements of Josephus, since he only mentions prices under exceptional circumstances, either in particularly plentiful years, or else at a time of war and siege. In the former, an Amphora, or 26 litres, of oil seems to have fetched about 9d.; but it must be added, that, even in such a year, this represents a rare stroke of business, since the oil was immediately afterwards re-sold for eight times the amount, and this 3s. for half an Amphora of about 13 litres would probably represent an exceptionally high war-price. The fair price for it would probably have been 9d. For the Mishnah informs us, that the ordinary earthenware casks (the Gerab) held each 2 Seah, or 48 Log, or about 26 litres. Again, according to a notice in the Talmud, 26 100 such casks or, 200 Seah, were sold for 10 (presumably gold) dinars, or 250 silver dinars, equal to about 7l. 10s. of our money. And as the Bath (= 3 Seah) held a third more than one of those casks or Gerabhin, the value of the 100 Bath of oil would probably amount to about 10l. of our money, and the remission of the steward, of course, to 5l.

The second debtor owed a hundred Cor of wheat' that is, in dry measure, ten times the amount of the oil of the first debtor, since the Cor was ten Ephah or Bath, the Ephah three Seah, the Seah six Qabh, and the Qabh four Log. This must be borne in mind, since the dry and the fluid measures were

precisely the same; and here, also, their threefold computation (the Wilderness the Jerusalem and the Galilean) obtained. As regards the value of wheat, we learn that, on an average, four Seah of seed were expected to produce one Cor that is, seven and a half times their amount; and that a field 1,500 cubits long and 50 wide was expected to grow a Cor. The average price of a Cor of wheat, bought uncut, amounted to about 25 dinars, or 15s. Striking an average between the lowest prices mentioned and the highest, we infer that the price of 3 Seah or an Ephah would be from two shillings to half-a-crown, and accordingly of a Cor (or 10 Ephah) from 20 to 25 shillings (probably this is rather more than it would cost). On this computation the hundred Cor would represent a debt of from 100l. to 125l., and the remission of the steward (of 20 Cor), a sum of from 20l. to 25l. Comparatively small as these sums may seem, they are in reality large, remembering the value of money in Palestine, which, on a low computation, would be five times as great as in our own country. These two debtors are only mentioned as instances, and so the unjust steward would easily secure for himself friends by the Mammon of unrighteousness the term Mammon, 31 we may note, being derived from the Syriac and Rabbinic word of the same kind.

Another point on which acquaintance with the history and habits of those times throws light is, how the debtors could so easily alter the sum mentioned in their respective bonds. For, the text implies that this, and not the writing of a new bond, is intended; since in that case the old one would have been destroyed, and not given back for alteration. It would be impossible, within the present limits, to enter fully on the interesting subject of writing, writing materials, and written documents among the ancient Jews. Suffice it to give here the briefest notices.

The materials on which the Jews wrote were of the most divers kind: leaves, as of olives, palms, the carob, the rind of the pomegranate, the shell of walnuts, the prepared skins of animals (leather and parchment); and the product of the papyrus, used long before the time of Alexander the Great for the manufacture of paper, and known in Talmudic writings by the same name, as Papir or Apipeir, but more frequently by that of Nayyar probably from the stripes (Nirin) of the plant of which it was made. But what interests us more, as we remember the tablet (on which Zacharias wrote the name of the future Baptist, is the circumstance that it bears not only the same name, Pinaques or Pinqesa, but that it seems to have been of such common use in Palestine. . It consisted of thin pieces of wood (the Luach) fastened or strung together. The Mishnah enumerates three kinds of them: those where the wood was covered with papyrus, those where it was covered with wax, and those where the wood was left plain to be written on with ink. The latter was of different kinds. Black ink was prepared of soot (the Deyo), or of vegetable or mineral substances. Gum Arabic and Egyptian (Qumos and Quma) and vitriol (Qanqanthos) seem also to have been used in writing. It is curious to read of writing in colours and with red ink or Siqra, and even of a kind of sympathetic ink, made from the bark of the ash, and brought out by a mixture of vitriol and gum. We also read of a gold-ink, as that in which the copy of the Law was written which, according to the legend, the High Priest had sent to Ptolemy Philadelphus for the purpose of being translated into Greek by the LXX. But the Talmud prohibits copies of the Law in gold letters, or more probably such in which the Divine Name was written in gold letters. In writing, a pen, Qolemos, made of reed (Qaneh) was used, and the reference in an Apostolic Epistle to writing with ink and pen (finds even its verbal counterpart in the Midrash, which speaks of Milanin and Qolemin (ink and pens). Indeed, the public writer' a trade very common in the East went about with a Qolemos, or reed-pen, behind his ear, as a badge of his employment. With the reed-pen we ought to mention its necessary accompaniments: the penknife, the inkstand (which, when double, for black and red ink, was sometimes made of earthenware, Qalamarim), and the ruler it being regarded by the stricter set as unlawful to write any words of Holy Writ on any unlined material, no doubt to ensure correct writing and reading.

In all this we have not referred to the practice of writing on leather specially prepared with salt and flour, nor to the Qelaph, or parchment in the stricter sense. For we are here chiefly interested in the common mode of writing, that on the Pinaques, or tablet and especially on that covered with wax. Indeed, a little vessel holding wax was generally attached to it (Pinaques sheyesh bo beth Qibbul

shaavah). On such a tablet they wrote, of course, not with a reed-pen, but with a stylus, generally of iron. This instrument consisted of two parts, which might be detached from each other: the hard pointed writer (Kothebh), and the blotter (Mocheq) which was flat and thick for smoothing out letters and words which had been written or rather graven in the wax. There can be no question that acknowledgments of debt, and other transactions, were ordinarily written down on such wax-covered tablets; for not only is direct reference made to it, but there are special provisions in regard to documents where there are such erasures, or rather effacements: such as, that they require to be noted in the document, under what conditions and how the witnesses are in such cases to affix their signatures, just as there are particular injunctions how witnesses who could not write are to affix their mark.

But although we have thus ascertained that the bonds in the Parable must have been written on wax or else, possibly, on parchment where the Mocheq, or blotter, could easily efface the numbers, we have also evidence that they were not, as so often, written on tablets (the Pinaques). For, the Greek term, by which these bonds or writings are designated in the Parable is the same as is sometimes used in Rabbinic writings (Gerammation) for an acknowledgment of debt; the Hebraised Greek word corresponding to the more commonly used (Syriac) term Shitre (Shetar), which also primarily denotes writings and is used specifically for such acknowledgments. Of these there were two kinds. The most formal Shetar was not signed by the debtor at all, but only by the witnesses, who were to write their names (or marks) immediately (not more than two lines) below the text of the document, to prevent fraud. Otherwise, the document would not possess legal validity. Generally, it was further attested by the Sanhedrin of three, who signed in such manner as not to leave even one line vacant. Such a document contained the names of creditor and debtor, the amount owing, and the date, together with a clause attaching the property of the debtor. In fact, it was a kind of mortgage; all sale of property being, as with us, subject to such a mortgage, which bore the name Acharayuth (probably, guarantee). When the debt was paid, the legal obligation was simply returned to the debtor; if paid in part, either a new bond was written, or a receipt given, which was called Shobher or Tebhara, because it broke the debt.

But in many respects different were those bonds which were acknowledgements of debt for purchases made, such as we suppose those to have been which are mentioned in the Parable. In such cases it was not uncommon to dispense altogether with witnesses, and the document was signed by the debtor himself. In bonds of this kind, the creditor had not the benefit of a mortgage in case of sale. We have expressed our belief that the Parable refers to such documents, and we are confirmed in this by the circumstance that they not only bear a different name from the more formal bonds (the Shitre), but one which is perhaps the most exact rendering of the Greek term (a writing of hand note of hand). For completeness sake we add, in regard to the farming of land, that two kinds of leases were in use. Under the first, called Shetar Arisuth, the lessee received a certain portion of the produce. He might be a lessee for life, for a specified number of years, or even a hereditary tiller of the ground; or he might sub-let it to another person. Under the second kind of lease, the farmer or Meqabbel entered into a contract for payment either in kind, when he undertook to pay a stipulated and unvarying amount of produce, in which case he was called a Chokher (Chakhur or Chakhira), or else a certain annual rental in money, when he was called a Sokher.

2. From this somewhat lengthened digression, we return to notice the moral of the Parable. It is put in these words: Make to yourselves friends out of [by means of] the Mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting tabernacles. From what has been previously stated, the meaning of these words offers little serious difficulty. We must again recall the circumstances, that they were primarily addressed to converted publicans and sinners, to whom the expression 'Mammon of unrighteousness' of which there are close analogies, and even an exact transcript in the Targum would have an obvious meaning. Among us, also, there are not a few who may feel its aptness as they look back on the past, while to all it carries a much needed warning. Again, the addition of the definite article leaves no doubt, that the everlasting tabernacles mean the

well-known heavenly home; in which sense the term tabernacle is, indeed, already used in the Old Testament. But as a whole we regard it (as previously hinted) as an adaptation to the Parable of the well-known Rabbinic saying, that there were certain graces of which a man enjoyed the benefit here, while the capital, so to speak, remained for the next world. And if a more literal interpretation were demanded, we cannot but feel the duty incumbent on those converted publicans, nay, in a sense, on us all, to seek to make for ourselves of the Mammon be it of money, of knowledge, of strength, or opportunities, which to many has, and to all may so easily, become that of unrighteousness' such lasting and spiritual application: gain such friends by means of it, that, when it fails as fail it must when we die, all may not be lost, but rather meet us in heaven. Thus would each deed done for God with this Mammon become a friend to greet us as we enter the eternal world.

3. The suitableness both of the Parable and of its application to the audience of Christ appears from its similarity to what occurs in Jewish writings. Thus, the reasoning that the Law could not have been given to the nations of the world, since they have not observed the seven Noachic commandments (which Rabbinism supposes to have been given to the Gentiles), is illustrated by a Parable in which a king is represented as having employed two administrators (Apiterophin); one over the gold and silver, and the other over the straw. The latter rendered himself suspected, and continues the Parable when he complained that he had not been set over the gold and silver, they said unto him: Thou fool, if thou hast rendered thyself suspected in regard to the straw, shall they commit to thee the treasure of gold and silver? And we almost seem to hear the very words of Christ: He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much in this of the Midrash: The Holy One, blessed be His Name, does not give great things to a man until he has been tried in a small matter; which is illustrated by the history of Moses and of David, who were both called to rule from the faithful guiding of sheep.

Considering that the Jewish mind would be familiar with such modes of illustration, there could have been no misunderstanding of the words of Christ. These converted publicans might think and so may some of us that theirs was a very narrow sphere of service, one of little importance; or else, like the Pharisees, and like so many others among us, that faithful administration of the things of this world (the Mammon of unrighteousness) had no bearing on the possession of the true riches in the next world. In answer to the first difficulty, Christ points out that the principle of service is the same, whether applied to much or to little; that the one was, indeed, meet preparation for, and, in truth, the test of the other. He that is faithful' or, to paraphrase the word (he that has proved himself, is accredited (answering to in the least, is also faithful [accredited] in much; and who in the least is unjust is also in much unjust. Therefore, if a man failed in faithful service of God in his worldly matters in the language of the Parable, if he were not faithful in the Mammon of unrighteousness could he look for the true Mammon, or riches of the world to come? Would not his unfaithfulness in the lower stewardship imply unfitness for the higher? And still in the language of the Parable if they had not proved faithful in mere stewardship, in that which was another's could it be expected that they would be exalted from stewardship to proprietorship? And the ultimate application of all was this, that dividedness was impossible in the service of God. It is impossible for the disciple to make separation between spiritual matters and worldly, and to attempt serving God in the one and Mammon in the other. There is absolutely no such distinction to the disciple, and our common usage of the words secular and spiritual is derived from a terrible misunderstanding and mistake. To the secular, nothing is spiritual; and to the spiritual, nothing is secular: No servant can serve two Masters; ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

II. The Parable of Dives and Lazarus. Although primarily spoken to the Pharisees, and not to the disciples, yet, as will presently appear, it was spoken for the disciples. The words of Christ had touched more than one sore spot in the hearts of the Pharisees. This consecration of all to God as the necessary condition of high spiritual service, and then of higher spiritual standing as it were ownership' such as they claimed, was a very hard saying. It touched their covetousness. They would have been quite ready to hear, nay, they believed that the true treasure had been committed to their

tru But that its condition was, that they should prove themselves God-devoted in the unrighteous Mammon faithful in the employment of it in that for which it was entrusted to their stewardship, this was not to be borne. Nor yet, that such prospects should be held out to publicans and sinners, while they were withheld from those who were the custodians of the Law and of the Prophets. But were they faithful to the Law? And as to their claim of being the owners the Parable of the Rich Owner and of his bearing would exhibit how unfaithful they were in much as well as in little in what they claimed as owners as well as in their stewardship and this, on their own showing of their relations to publicans and sinners: the Lazarus who lay at their doors.

Thus viewed, the verses which introduce the second Parable (that of Dives and Lazarus) will appear, not detached sayings as some commentators would have us believe, but most closely connected with the Parable to which they form the Preface. Only, here especially, must we remember, that we have only Notes of Christ's Discourse, made years before by one who had heard it, and containing the barest outline as it were, the stepping-stones of the argument as it proceeded. Let us try to follow it. As the Pharisees heard what Christ said, their covetousness was touched. It is said, moreover, that they derided Him literally, turned up their noses at Him. The mocking gestures, with which they pointed to His publican-disciples, would be accompanied by mocking words in which they would extol and favourably compare their own claims and standing with that of those new disciples of Chri Not only to refute but to confute, to convict, and, if possible, to convince them, was the object of Christ's Discourse and Parable. One by one their pleas were taken up and shown to be utterly untenable. They were persons who by outward righteousness and pretences sought to appear just before men, but God knew their hearts; and that which was exalted among men, their Pharisaic standing and standing aloof, was abomination before Him. These two points form the main subject of the Parable. Its first object was to show the great difference between the before men and the before God; between Dives as he appears to men in this world, and as he is before God and will be in the next world. Again, the second main object of the Parable was to illustrate that their Pharisaic standing and standing aloof the bearing of Dives in reference to a Lazarus which was the glory of Pharisaism before men, was an abomination before God. Yet a third object of the Parable was in reference to their covetousness, the selfish use which they made of their possessions their Mammon. But a selfish was an unrighteous use; and, as such, would meet with sorer retribution than in the case of an unfaithful steward.

But we leave for the present the comparative analysis of the Parable to return to the introductory words of Chri Having shown that the claims of the Pharisees and their standing aloof from poor sinners were an abomination before God, Christ combats these grounds of their bearing, that they were the custodians and observers of the Law and of the Prophets, while those poor sinners had no claims upon the Kingdom of God. Yes but the Law and the Prophets had their terminus ad quem in John the Baptist, who brought the good tidings of the Kingdom of God . Since then everyone had to enter it by personal resolution and force. Yes it was true that the Law could not fail in one tittle of it. But, notoriously and in everyday life, the Pharisees, who thus spoke of the Law and appealed to it, were the constant and open breakers of it. Witness here their teaching and practice concerning divorce, which really involved a breach of the seventh commandment.

Thus, when bearing in mind that, as previously stated, we have here only the heads or rather the stepping stones of Christ's argument from notes by a hearer at the time, which were afterwards given to Luke we clearly perceive, how closely connected are the seemingly disjointed sentences which preface the Parable, and how aptly they introduce it. The Parable itself is strictly of the Pharisees and their relation to the publicans and sinners whom they despised, and to whose stewardship they opposed thoughts of their own proprietorship. With infinite wisdom and depth the Parable tells in two directions: in regard to their selfish use of the literal riches their covetousness and in regard to their selfish use of the figurative riches: their Pharisaic righteousness, which left poor Lazarus at their door to the dogs and to famine, not bestowing on him aught from their supposed rich festive banquets. On the other hand, it will be necessary in the interpretation of this Parable to keep in mind, that its

Parabolic details must not be exploited, nor doctrines of any kind derived from them, either as to the character of the other world, the question of the duration of future punishments, or the possible moral improvement of those in Gehinnom. All such things are foreign to the Parable, which is only intended as a type, or exemplification and illustration, of what is intended to be taught. And, if proof were required, it would surely be enough to remind ourselves, that this Parable is addressed to the Pharisees, to whom Christ would scarcely have communicated details about the other world, on which He was so reticent in His teaching to the disciples. The Parable naturally falls into three parts.

1. Dives and Lazarus before and after death, or the contrast between before men and before God; the unrighteous use of riches literal and figurative; and the relations of the Pharisaic Dives to the publican Lazarus, as before men and as before God: the exalted among men an abomination before God. And the application of the Parable is here the more telling, that alms were so highly esteemed among the Pharisees, and that the typical Pharisee is thus set before them as, on their own showing, the typical sinner.

The Parable opens by presenting to us a rich man clothed in purple and byssus, joyously faring everyday in splendor. All here is in character. His dress is described as the finest and most costly, for byssus and purple were the most expensive materials, only inferior to silk, which, if genuine and unmixed for at least three kinds of silk are mentioned in ancient Jewish writings was worth its weight in gold. Both byssus of which it is not yet quite certain, whether it was of hemp or cotton and purple were indeed manufactured in Palestine, but the best byssus (at least at that time) came from Egypt and India. The white garments of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement were made of it. To pass over exaggerated accounts of its costliness, the High Priest's dress of Pelusian linen for the morning service of the Day of Atonement was said to have cost about 36l.; that of Indian linen for the evening of the same day about 24l. Of course, this stuff would, if of home-manufacture, whether made in Galilee or in Judaea, be much cheaper. As regarded purple, which was obtained from the coasts of Tyre, wool of violet-purple was sold about that period by weight at the rate of about 3l. the Roman pound, though it would, of course, considerably vary in price.

Quite in accordance with this luxuriousness unfortunately not uncommon among the very high-placed Jews, since the Talmud (though, no doubt, exaggeratedly) speaks of the dress of a corrupt High Priest as having cost upwards of 300l. was the feasting everyday, the description of which conveys the impression of company, merriment, and splendour. All this is, of course, intended to set forth the selfish use which this man made of his wealth, and to point the contrast of his bearing towards Lazarus. Here also every detail is meant to mark the pitiableness of the case, as it stood out before Dives. The very name not often mentioned in any other real, and never in any other Parabolic story tells it: Lazarus, Laazar, a common abbreviation of Elazar, as it were, God help him! Then we read that he was cast (at his gateway, as if to mark that the bearers were glad to throw down their unwelcome burden. Laid there, he was in full view of the Pharisee as he went out or came in, or sat in his courtyard. And as he looked at him, he was covered with a loathsome disease; as he heard him, he uttered a piteous request to be filled with what fell from the rich man's table. Yet nothing was done to help his bodily misery, and, as the word desiring CHECK()implies, his longing for the crumbs remained unsatisfied. So selfish in the use of his wealth was Dives, so wretched Lazarus in his view; so self-satisfied and un pitying was the Pharisee, so miserable in his sight and so needy the publican and sinner. Yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores' for it is not to be understood as an alleviation, but as an aggravation of his ills, that he was left to the dogs, which in Scripture are always represented as unclean animals.

So it was before men. But how was it before God? There the relation was reversed. The beggar died no more of him here. But the Angels carried him away into Abraham's bosom. Leaving aside for the present 108 the Jewish teaching concerning the after death we are struck with the sublime simplicity of the figurative language used by Christ, as compared with the wild and sensuous fancies of later Rabbinic teaching on the subject. It is, indeed, true, that we must not look in this Parabolic language for Christ's teaching about the after death. On the other hand, while He would say nothing that was

essentially divergent from, at least, the purest views entertained on the subject at that time since otherwise the object of the Parabolic illustration would have been lost yet, whatever He did say must, when stripped of its Parabolic details, be consonant with fact. Thus, the carrying up of the soul of the righteous by Angels is certainly in accordance with Jewish teaching, though stripped of all legendary details, such as about the number and the greetings of the Angels. But it is also fully in accordance with Christian thought of the ministry of Angels. Again, as regards the expression Abraham's bosom it occurs, although not frequently, in Jewish writings. On the other hand, the appeal to Abraham as our father is so frequent, his presence and merits are so constantly invoked; notably, he is so expressly designated as he who receives (the penitent into Paradise, that we can see how congruous especially to the higher Jewish teaching, which dealt not in coarsely sensuous descriptions of Gan Eden, or Paradise, the phrase Abraham's bosom must have been. Nor surely can it be necessary to vindicate the accord with Christian thinking of a figurative expression, that likens us to children lying lovingly in the bosom of Abraham as our spiritual father.

2. Dives and Lazarus after death: The great contrast fully realised, and how to enter into the Kingdom. Here also the main interest centres in Dives. He also has died and been buried. Thus ends all his exaltedness before men. The next scene is in Hades or Sheol, the place of the disembodied spirits before the final Judgment. It consists of two divisions: the one of consolation, with all the faithful gathered unto Abraham as their father; the other of fiery torment. Thus far in accordance with the general teaching of the New Testament. As regards the details, they evidently represent the views current at the time among the Jews. According to them, the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life were the abode of the blessed. Nay, in common belief, the words of Gen. ii. 10: a river went out of Eden to water the garden indicated that this Eden was distinct from, and superior to, the garden in which Adam had been originally placed. With reference to it, we read that the righteous in Gan Eden see the wicked in Gehinnom, and rejoice; and, similarly, that the wicked in Gehinnom see the righteous sitting beautified in Gan Eden, and their souls are troubled. Still more marked is the parallelism in a legend told 118 about two wicked companions, of whom one had died impenitent, while the other on seeing it had repented. After death, the impenitent in Gehinnom saw the happiness of his former companion, and murmured. When told that the difference of their fate was due to the other's penitence, he wished to have space assigned for it, but was informed that this life (the eve of the Sabbath) was the time for making provision for the next (the Sabbath). Again, it is consonant with what were the views of the Jews, that conversations could be held between dead persons, of which several legendary instances are given in the Talmud. The torment, especially of thirst, of the wicked, is repeatedly mentioned in Jewish writings. Thus, in one place, the fable of Tantalus is apparently repeated. The righteous is seen beside delicious springs, and the wicked with his tongue parched at the brink of a river, the waves of which are constantly receding from him. But there is this very marked and characteristic contrast, that in the Jewish legend the beatified is a Pharisee, while the sinner tormented with thirst is a Publican! Above all, and as marking the vast difference between Jewish ideas and Christ's teaching, we notice that there is no analogy in Rabbinic writings to the statement in the Parable, that there is a wide and impassable gulf between Paradise and Gehenna.

To return to the Parable. When we read that Dives in torments lifted up his eyes it was, no doubt, for help, or, at least, alleviation. Then he first perceived and recognised the reversed relationship. The text emphatically repeats here: And he literally, this one (as if now, for the first time, he realised, but only to misunderstand and misapply it, how easily superabundance might minister relief to extreme need calling said: "Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus." The invocation of Abraham, as having the power, and of Abraham as Father was natural on the part of a Jew. And our Lord does not here express what really was, but only introduces Jews as speaking in accordance with the popular notions. Accordingly, it does not necessarily imply on the part of Dives either glorification of carnal descent (*gloriatio carnis*, as Bengel has it), nor a latent idea that he might still dispose of Lazarus. A Jew would have appealed to Father Abraham under such or like circumstances, and many analogous statements might be quoted in proof. But all the more telling is it, that the rich Pharisee

should behold in the bosom of Abraham, whose child he specially claimed to be, what, in his sight, had been poor Lazarus, covered with moral sores, and, religiously speaking, thrown down outside his gate not only not admitted to the fellowship of his religious banquet, but not even to be fed by the crumbs that fell from his table, and to be left to the dogs. And it was the climax of the contrast that he should now have to invoke, and that in vain, his ministry, seeking it at the hands of Abraham. And here we also recall the previous Parable about making, ere it fail, friends by means of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that they may welcome us in the everlasting tabernacles.

It should be remembered that Dives now limits his request to the humblest dimensions, asking only that Lazarus might be sent to dip the tip of his finger in the cooling liquid, and thus give him even the smallest relief. To this Abraham replies, though in a tone of pity: Child yet decidedly showing him, first, the rightness of the present position of things; and, secondly, the impossibility of any alteration, such as he had asked. Dives had, in his lifetime, received his good things; that had been his things, he had chosen them as his part, and used them for self, without communicating of them. And Lazarus had received evil things. Now Lazarus was comforted, and Dives in torment. It was the right order not that Lazarus was comforted because in this world he had suffered, nor yet that Dives was in torment because in this world he had had riches. But Lazarus received there the comfort which had been refused to him on earth, and the man who had made this world his good, and obtained there his portion, of which he had refused even the crumbs to the most needy, now received the meet reward of his un pitying, unloving, selfish life. But, besides all this, which in itself was right and proper, Dives had asked what was impossible: no intercourse could be held between Paradise and Gehenna, and on this account a great and impassable chasm existed between the two, so that, even if they would, they could not, pass from heaven to hell, nor yet from hell to those in bliss. And, although doctrinal statements should not be drawn from Parabolic illustrations, we would suggest that, at least so far as this Parable goes, it seems to preclude the hope of a gradual change or transition after a life lost in the service of sin and self.

3. Application of the Parable, showing how the Law and the Prophets cannot fail, and how we must now press into the Kingdom. It seems a strange misconception on the part of some commentators, that the next request of Dives indicates a commencing change of mind on his part. To begin with, this part of the Parable is only intended to illustrate the need, and the sole means of conversion to God the appeal to the Law and the Prophets being the more apt that the Pharisees made their boast of them, and the refusal of any special miraculous interposition the more emphatic, that the Pharisees had been asking for a sign from heaven. Besides, it would require more than ordinary charity to discover a moral change in the desire that his brothers might not be converted, but not come to that place of torment!

Dismissing, therefore, this idea, we now find Dives pleading that Lazarus might be sent to his five brothers, who, as we infer, were of the same disposition and life as himself had been, to testify unto them' the word implying more than ordinary, even earnest, testimony. Presumably, what he so earnestly asked to be attested was, that he, Dives, was in torment; and the expected effect, not of the testimony but of the mission of Lazarus, whom they are supposed to have known, was, that these, his brothers, might not come to the same place. At the same time, the request seems to imply an attempt at self-justification, as if, during his life, he had not had sufficient warning. Accordingly, the reply of Abraham is no longer couched in a tone of pity, but implies stern rebuke of Dives. They need no witness-bearer: they have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them. If testimony be needed, their has been given, and it is sufficient a reply this, which would specially appeal to the Pharisees. And when Dives, now, perhaps, as much bent on self-justification as on the message to his brothers, remonstrates that, although they had not received such testimony, yet if one come to them from the dead they would repent, the final, and, as, alas! history has shown since the Resurrection of Christ, the true answer is, that if they hear not [give not hearing to] Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be influenced [moved: their intellects to believe, their wills to repent], if one rose from the dead. And here the Parable, and the warning to the Pharisees, abruptly break off. When next we hear the

Master's voice, it is in loving application to the disciples of some of the lessons which were implied in what He had spoken to the Pharisees.

Chapter 19 The Three Last Parables of the Peraean Series:

The Unrighteous Judge The Self-Righteous Pharisee and the Publican The Unmerciful Servant

(Luke 18:1-14; Matthew 18:23-35.)

If we were to seek confirmation of the suggestion, that these last and the two preceding Parables are grouped together under a common viewpoint, such as that of Righteousness, the character and position of the Parables now to be examined would supply it. For, while the Parable of the Unjust Judge evidently bears close affinity to those that had preceded especially to that of him who persisted in his request for bread it evidently refers not, as the other, to man's present need, but to the Second Coming of Christ. The prayer, the perseverance, the delay, and the ultimate answer of which it speaks, are all connected with it. Indeed, it follows on what had passed on this subject immediately before first, between the Pharisees and Christ, and then between Christ and the disciples.

Again, we must bear in mind that between the Parable of Dives and Lazarus and that of the Unjust Judge, not indeed, a great interval of time, but most momentous events, had intervened. These were: the visit of Jesus to Bethany, the raising of Lazarus, the Jerusalem council against Christ, the flight to Ephraim, a brief stay and preaching there, and the commencement of His last journey to Jerusalem. During this last slow journey from the borders of Galilee to Jerusalem, we suppose the Discourses and the Parable about the Coming of the Son of Man to have been spoken. And although such utterances will be best considered in connection with Christ's later and full Discourses about The Last Things we readily perceive, even at this stage, how, when He set His Face towards Jerusalem, there to be offered up, thoughts and words concerning the End may have entered into all His teaching, and so have given occasion for the questions of the Pharisees and disciples, and for the answers of Christ, alike by Discourse and in Parable.

The most common and specious, but also the most serious mistake take in reference to the Parable of the Unjust Judge is to regard it as implying that, just as the poor widow insisted in her petition and was righted because of her insistence, so the disciples should persist in prayer and would be heard because of their insistence. But this is an entirely false interpretation. When treating of the Parable of the Unrighteous Steward, we disclaimed all merely mechanical ideas of prayer, as if God heard us for our many repetitions. This error must here also be carefully avoided. The inference from the Parable is not, that the Church will be ultimately vindicated because she perseveres in prayer, but that she so perseveres, because God will surely right her cause: it is not, that insistence in prayer is the cause of its answer, but that the certainty of that which is asked for should lead to continuance in prayer, even when all around seems to forbid the hope of answer. This is the lesson to be learned from a comparison of the Unjust Judge with the Just and Holy God in His dealings with His own. If the widow persevered, knowing that, although no other consideration, human or Divine, would influence the Unjust Judge, yet her insistence would secure its object, how much more should we not faint but continue in prayer, who are appealing to God, Who has His people and His cause at heart, even though He delay, remembering also that even this is for their sakes who pray. And this is fully expressed in the introductory words. He spake also a Parable to them with reference to the need be of their always praying and not fainting.

The remarks just made will remove what otherwise might seem another serious difficulty. If it be asked, how the conduct of the Unjust Judge could serve as illustration of what might be expected

from God, we answer, that the lesson in the Parable is not from the similarity but from the contrast between the Unrighteous human and the Righteous Divine Judge. Hear what the Unrighteous Judge saith. But God [mark the emphatic position of the word], shall He not indeed [vindicate [the injuries of, do judgment for] His elect In truth, this mode of argument is perhaps the most common in Jewish Parables, and occurs on almost every page of ancient Rabbinic commentaries. It is called the Qal vaChomer, light and heavy and answers to our reasoning a fortiori or de minore ad majus (from the less to the greater). According to the Rabbis, ten instances of such reasoning occur in the Old Testament itself. Generally, such reasoning is introduced by the words Qal vaChomer; often it is prefaced by, Al achath Kammah veKammah, against one how much and how much that is, how much more. Thus, it is argued that, if a King of flesh and blood did so and so, shall not the King of Kings, or, if the sinner received such and such, shall not the righteous, In the present Parable the reasoning would be: If the Judge of Unrighteousness said that he would vindicate, shall not the Judge of all Righteousness do judgment on behalf of His Elect? In fact, we have an exact Rabbinic parallel to the thought underlying, and the lesson derived from, this Parable. When describing, how at the preaching of Jonah Nineveh repented and cried to God, His answer to the loud persistent cry of the people is thus explained: The bold (he who is unabashed) conquers even a wicked person [to grant him his request], how much more the All-Good of the world!

The Parable opens by laying down as a general principle the necessity and duty of the Disciples always to pray the precise meaning being defined by the opposite, or limited clause: not to faint that is, not to become weary. The word always must not be understood in respect of time, as if it meant continuously, but at all times, in the sense of under all circumstances, however apparently adverse, when it might seem as if an answer could not come, and we would therefore be in danger of fainting or becoming weary. This rule applies here primarily to that weariness which might lead to the cessation of prayer for the Coming of the Lord, or of expectancy of it, during the long period when it seems as if He delayed His return, nay, as if increasingly there were no likelihood of it. But it may also be applied to all similar circumstances, when prayer seems so long unanswered that weariness in praying threatens to overtake us. Thus, it is argued, even in Jewish writings, that a man should never be deterred from, nor cease praying, the illustration by Qal vaChomer being from the case of Moses, who knew that it was decreed he should not enter the land, and yet continued praying about it.

The Parable introduces to us a Judge in a city, and a widow. Except where a case was voluntarily submitted for arbitration rather than judgment, or judicial advice was sought of a sage, one man could not have formed a Jewish tribunal. Besides, his mode of speaking and acting is inconsistent with such a hypothesis. He must therefore have been one of the Judges, or municipal authorities, appointed by Herod or the Romans, perhaps a Jew, but not a Jewish Judge. Possibly, he may have been a police-magistrate, or one who had some function of that kind delegated to him. We know that, at least in Jerusalem, there were two stipendiary magistrates (Dayyaney Gezereth whose duty it was to see to the observance of all police regulations and the prevention of crime. Unlike the regular Judges, who attended only on certain days and hours, and were unpaid, these magistrates were, so to speak, always on duty, and hence unable to engage in any other occupation. It was probably for this reason that they were paid out of the Temple-Treasury, and received so large a salary as 225l., or, if needful, even more. On account of this, perhaps also for their unjust exactions, Jewish wit designated them, by a play on the words, as Dayyaney Gezeloth Robber-Judges, instead of their real title of Dayyaney Gezereth (Judges of Prohibitions, or else of Punishments). It may have been that there were such Jewish magistrates in other places also. Josephus speaks of local magistracies. At any rate there were in every locality police officials, who watched over order and law. The Talmud speaks in very depreciatory terms of these village-Judges (Dayyaney deMegista), in opposition to the town tribunals (Bey Davar), and accuses them of ignorance, arbitrariness, and covetousness, so that for a dish of meat they would pervert justice. Frequent instances are also mentioned of gross injustice and bribery in regard to the non-Jewish Judges in Palestine.

It is to such a Judge that the Parable refers one who was consciously, openly, and avowedly

inaccessible to the highest motive, the fear of God, and not even restrained by the lower consideration of regard for public opinion. It is an extreme case, intended to illustrate the exceeding unlikelihood of justice being done. For the same purpose, the party seeking justice at his hands is described as a poor, unprotected widow. But we must also bear in mind, in the interpretation of this Parable, that the Church, whom she represents, is also widowed in the absence of her Lord. To return this widow came to the Unjust Judge (the imperfect tense in the original indicating repeated, even continuous coming), with the urgent demand to be vindicated of her adversary, that is, that the Judge should make legal inquiry, and by a decision set her right as against him at whose hands she was suffering wrong. For reasons of his own he would not; and this continued for a while. At last, not from any higher principle, nor even from regard for public opinion both of which, indeed, as he avowed to himself, had no weight with him he complied with her request, as the text (literally translated) has it: Yet at any rate because this widow troubleth me, I will do justice for her, lest, in the end, coming she bruise me do personal violence to me, attack me bodily. Then follows the grand inference from it: If the Judge of Unrighteousness speak thus, shall not the Judge of all Righteousness God do judgment, vindicate [by His Coming to judgment and so setting right the wrong done to His Church] His Elect, which cry to Him day and night, although He suffer long on account of them' delay His final interposition of judgment and mercy, and that, not as the Unjust Judge, but for their own sakes, in order that the number of the Elect may all be gathered in, and they fully prepared?

Difficult as the rendering of this last clause admittedly is, our interpretation of it seems confirmed by the final application of this Parable. Taking the previous verse along with it, we would have this double Parallelism: But God, shall He not vindicate [do judgment on behalf of] His Elect? 30 I tell you, that He will do judgment on behalf of them shortly' this word being chosen rather than speedily (as in the A. and R.V.), because the latter might convey the idea of a sudden interposition, such as is not implied in the expression. This would be the first Parallelism; the second this: Although He suffer long [delay His final interposition] on account of them (verse 7), to which the second clause of verse 8 would correspond, as offering the explanation and vindication: But the Son of Man, when He have come, shall He find the faith upon the earth? It is a terribly sad question, as put by Him Who is the Christ: After all this long-suffering delay, shall He find the faith upon the earth intellectual belief on the part of one class, and on the part of the Church the faith of the heart which trusts in, longs, and prays, because it expects and looks for His Coming, all undisturbed by the prevailing unbelief around, only quickened by it to more intensity of prayer! Shall He find it? Let the history of the Church, nay, each man's heart, make answer!

2. The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, which follows, is only internally connected with that of the Unjust Judge. It is not unrighteousness, but of self-righteousness and this, both in its positive and negative aspects: as trust in one's own state, and as contempt of others. Again, it has also this connection with the previous Parable, that, whereas that of the Unrighteous Judge pointed to continuance, this to humility in prayer.

The introductory clause shows that it has no connection in point of time with what had preceded, although the interval between the two may, of course, have been very short. Probably, something had taken place, which is not recorded, to occasion this Parable, which, if not directly addressed to the Pharisees, is to such as are of Pharisaic spirit. It brings before us two men going up to the Temple whether at the hour of prayer or otherwise, is not stated. Remembering that, with the exception of the Psalms for the day and the interval for a certain prescribed prayer, the service in the Temple was entirely sacrificial, we are thankful for such glimpses, which show that, both in the time of public service, and still more at other times, the Temple was made the place of private prayer. On the present occasion the two men, who went together to the entrance of the Temple, represented the two religious extremes in Jewish society. To the entrance of the Temple, but no farther, did the Pharisee and the Publican go together. Within the sacred enclosure before God, where man should least have made it, began their separation. The Pharisee put himself by himself, and prayed thus: O God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men extortioners, unjust, adulterers nor also as this Publican

[there]. Never, perhaps, were words of thanksgiving spoken in less thankfulness than these. For, thankfulness implies the acknowledgement of a gift; hence, a sense of not having had ourselves what we have received; in other words, then, a sense of our personal need, or humility. But the very first act of this Pharisee had been to separate himself from all the other worshippers, and notably from the Publican, whom, as his words show, he had noticed, and looked down upon. His thanksgiving referred not to what he had received, but to the sins of others by which they were separated from him, and to his own meritorious deeds by which he was separated from them. Thus, his words expressed what his attitude indicated; and both were the expression, not of thankfulness, but of boastfulness. It was the same as their bearing at the feast and in public places; the same as their contempt and condemnation of the rest of men and especially the publicans; the same that even their designation Pharisees Separated ones implied. The rest of men might be either the Gentiles, or, more probably, the common unlearned people, the Am haArets, whom they accused or suspected of every possible sin, according to their fundamental principle: The unlearned cannot be pious. And, in their sense of that term, they were right and in this lies the condemnation of their righteousness. And, most painful though it be, remembering the downright earnestness and zeal of these men, it must be added that, as we read the Liturgy of the Synagogue, we come ever and again upon such and similar thanksgiving that they are not as the rest of men.

But this was not all. From looking down upon others the Pharisee proceeded to look up to himself. Here Talmudic writings offer painful parallelisms. They are full of references to the merits of the just, to the merits and righteousness of the fathers or else of Israel in taking upon itself the Law. And for the sake of these merits and of that righteousness, Israel, as a nation, expects general acceptance, pardon, and temporal benefits for, all spiritual benefits Israel as a nation, and the pious in Israel individually, possess already, nor do they need to get them from heaven, since they can and do work them out for themselves. And here the Pharisee in the Parable significantly dropped even the form of thanksgiving. The religious performances which he enumerated are those which mark the Pharisee among the Pharisees: I fast twice a week, and I give tithes of all that I acquire. The first of these was in pursuance of the custom of some more righteous than the rest who, as previously explained, fasted on the second and fifth days of the week (Mondays and Thursdays). But, perhaps, we should not forget that these were also the regular market days, when the country-people came to the towns, and there were special Services in the Synagogues, and the local Sanhedrin met so that these saints in Israel would, at the same time, attract and receive special notice for their fasts. As for the boast about giving tithes of all that he acquired and not merely of his land, fruits, it has already been explained, that this was one of the distinctive characteristics of the sect of the Pharisees. Their practice in this respect may be summed up in these words of the Mishnah: He tithes all that he eats, all that he sells, and all that he buys, and he is not a guest with an unlearned person [Am haArets, so as not possibly to partake of what may have been left untithed].

Although it may not be necessary, yet one or two quotations will help to show how truly this picture of the Pharisee was taken from life. Thus, the following prayer of a Rabbi is recorded: I thank Thee, O Lord my God, that Thou hast put my part with those who sit in the Academy, and not with those who sit at the corners [money-changers and traders]. For, I rise early and they rise early: I rise early to the words of the Law, and they to vain things. I labour and they labour: I labour and receive a reward, they labour and receive no reward. I run and they run: I run to the life of the world to come, and they to the pit of destruction. 41 Even more closely parallel is this thanksgiving, which a Rabbi puts into the mouth of Israel: Lord of the world, judge me not as those who dwell in the big towns [such as Rome]: among whom there is robbery, and uncleanness, and vain and false swearing. Lastly, as regards the boastful spirit of Rabbinism, we recall such painful sayings as those of Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, to which reference has already been made notably this, that if there were only two righteous men in the world, he and his son were these; and if only one, it was he!

The second picture, or scene, in the Parable sets before us the reverse state of feeling from that of the Pharisee. Only, we must bear in mind, that, as the Pharisee is not blamed for his giving of thanks,

nor yet for his good-doing, real or imaginary, so the prayer of the Publican is not answered, because he was a sinner. In both cases what decides the rejection or acceptance of the prayer is, whether or not it was prayer. The Pharisee retains the righteousness which he had claimed for himself, whatever its value; and the Publican receives the righteousness which he asks: both have what they desire before God. If the Pharisee stood by himself apart from others, so did the Publican: standing afar off viz. from the Pharisee quite far back, as became one who felt himself unworthy to mingle with God's people. In accordance with this: He would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven as men generally do in prayer, but smote his breast' as the Jews still do in the most solemn part of their confession on the Day of Atonement saying, God be merciful to me the sinner. The definite article is used to indicate that he felt, as if he alone were a sinner nay, the sinner. Not only, as has been well remarked, does he not think of any one else (*de nemine alio homine cogitat*), while the Pharisee had thought of everyone else; but, as he had taken a position not in front of, but behind, everyone else, so, in contrast to the Pharisee, who had regarded everyone but himself as a sinner, the Publican regarded everyone else as righteous compared with him the sinner. And, while the Pharisee felt no need, and uttered no petition, the Publican felt only need, and uttered only petition. The one appealed to himself for justice, the other appealed to God for mercy.

More complete contrast, therefore, could not be imagined. And once more, as between the Pharisee and the Publican, the seeming and the real, that before men and before God, there is sharp contrast, and the lesson which Christ had so often pointed is again set forth, not only in regard to the feelings which the Pharisees entertained, but also to the gladsome tidings of pardon to the lost: I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified above the other [so according to the better reading, In other words, the sentence of righteousness as from God with which the Publican went home was above, far better than, the sentence of righteousness as pronounced by himself, with which the Pharisee returned. This saying casts also light on such comparisons as between the righteous elder brother and the pardoned prodigal, or the ninety-nine that need no repentance and the lost that was found, or, on such an utterance as this: Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And so the Parable ends with the general principle, so often enunciated: For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. And with this general teaching of the Parable fully accords the instruction of Christ to His disciples concerning the reception of little children, which immediately follows.

3. The Parable with which this series closes that of the Unmerciful Servant, can be treated more briefly, since the circumstances leading up to it have already been explained in chapter iii. of this Book. We are now reaching the point where the solitary narrative of Luke again merges with those of the other Evangelists. That the Parable was spoken before Christ's final journey to Jerusalem, appears from Matthew's Gospel. On the other hand, as we compare what in the Gospel by Luke follows on the Parable of the Pharisee and Publican with the circumstances in which the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant is introduced, we cannot fail to perceive inward connection between the narratives of the two Evangelists, confirming the conclusion, arrived at on other grounds, that the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant belongs to the Peraean series, and closes it.

Its connection with the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican lies in this, that Pharisaic self-righteousness and contempt of others may easily lead to unforgiveness and unmercifulness, which are utterly incompatible with a sense of our own need of Divine mercy and forgiveness. And so in the Gospel of Matthew this Parable follows on the exhibition of a self-righteous, unmerciful spirit, which would reckon up how often we should forgive, forgetful of our own need of absolute and unlimited pardon at the hands of God a spirit, moreover, of harshness, that could look down upon Christ's little ones in forgetfulness of our own need perhaps of cutting off even a right hand or foot to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

In studying this Parable, we must once more remind ourselves of the general canon of the need of distinguishing between what is essential in a Parable, as directly bearing on its lessons, and what is

merely introduced for the sake of the Parable itself, to give point to its main teaching. In the present instance, no sober interpreter would regard of the essence of the Parable the King's command to sell into slavery the first debtor, together with his wife and children. It is simply a historical trait, introducing what is analogous circumstances might happen in real life, in order to point the lesson, that a man's strict desert before God is utter hopeless, and eternal ruin and loss. Similarly, when the promise of the debtor is thus introduced: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all it can only be to complete in a natural manner the first part of the Parabolic history and to prepare for the second, in which forbearance is asked by a fellow-servant for the small debt which he owes. Lastly, in the same manner, the recall of the King's original forgiveness of the great debtor can only be intended to bring out the utter incompatibility of such harshness towards a brother on the part of one who has been consciously forgiven by God his great debt.

Thus keeping apart the essentials of the Parable from the accidents of its narration, we have three distinct scenes, or parts, in this story. In the first, our new feelings towards our brethren are traced to our new relation towards God, as the proper spring of all our thinking, speaking, and acting. Notably, as regards forgiveness, we are to remember the Kingdom of God: Therefore has the Kingdom of God become like' therefore: in order that thereby we may learn the duty of absolute, not limited, forgiveness not that of seven but of seventy times seven. And now this likeness of the Kingdom of Heaven is set forth in the Parable of a man, a King (as the Rabbis would have expressed it, a king of flesh and blood), who would make his reckoning with his servants' certainly not his bondservants, but probably the governors of his provinces, or those who had charge of the revenue and finances. But after he had begun to reckon' not necessarily at the very beginning of it one was brought to him, a debtor of ten thousand talents. Reckoning them only as Attic talents (1 talent = 60 minas = 6,000 dinars) this would amount to the enormous sum of about two and a quarter millions sterling. No wonder, that one who during his administration had been guilty of such speculation, or else culpable negligence, should, as the words brought to him imply, have been reluctant to face the king. The Parable further implies, that the debt was admitted; and hence, in the course of ordinary judicial procedure according to the Law of Moses, and the universal code of antiquity that servant with his family and all his property, was ordered to be sold, and the returns paid into the treasury.

Of course, it is not suggested that the payment thus made had met his debt. Even this would, if need were, confirm the view, previously expressed, that this trait belongs not to the essentials of the Parable, but to the details of the narrative. So does the promise, with which the now terrified servant as he cast himself at the feet of the King, supported his plea for patience: I will pay thee all. In truth, the narrative takes no notice of this, but, on the other hand, states: But, being moved with compassion, the lord of that servant released him [from the bondage decreed, and which had virtually begun with his sentence], and the debt forgave he him. A more accurate representation of our relation to God could not be made. We are the debtors of our heavenly King, Who has entrusted to us the administration of what is His, and which we have purloined or misused, incurring an unspeakable debt, which we can never discharge, and of which, in the course of justice, unending bondage, misery, and utter ruin would be the proper sequence. But, if in humble repentance we cast ourselves at His Feet, He is ready, in infinite compassion, not only to release us from meet punishment, but O blessed revelation of the Gospel! to forgive us the debt.

It is this new relationship to God which must be the foundation and the rule for our new relationship towards our fellow-servants. And this brings us to the second part, or scene in this Parable. Here the lately pardoned servant finds one of his fellow-servants, who owes him the small sum of 100 dinars, about 4l. 10s. Mark now the sharp contrast, which is so drawn as to give point to the Parable. In the first case, it was the servant brought to account, and that before the King; here it is a servant finding and that his fellowservant; in the first case, he owed talents, in the second dinars (a six-thousandth part of them); in the first, ten thousand talents; in the second, one hundred dinars. Again, in the first case payment is only demanded, while in the second the man takes his fellow-servant by the throat a not uncommon mode of harshness on the part of Roman creditors and says: Pay what or according

to the better reading, if thou owest anything. And, lastly, although the words of the second debtor are almost the same as those in which the first debtor besought the King's patience, yet no mercy is shown, but he is cast [with violence] into prison, till he have paid what was due.

It can scarcely be necessary to show the incongruousness or the guilt of such conduct. But this is the object of the third part, or scene, in the Parable. Here again for the sake of pictorialness the other servants are introduced as exceedingly sorry, no doubt about the fate of their fellow-servant, especially in the circumstances of the case. Then they come to their lord, and clearly set forth or explain (what had happened, upon which the Unmerciful Servant is summoned, and addressed as wicked servant not only because he had not followed the example of his lord, but because, after having received such immense favour as the entire remission of his debt on entreating his master, to have refused to the entreaty of his fellowservant even a brief delay in the payment of a small sum, argued want of all mercy and positive wickedness. And the words are followed by the manifestations of righteous anger. As he has done, so is it done to him and this is the final application of the Parable. He is delivered to the tormentors not in the sense of being tormented by them, which would scarcely have been just, but in that of being handed over to such keepers of the prison, to whom criminals who were to be tortured were delivered, and who executed such punishment on them: in other words he is sent to the hardest and severest prison, there to remain till he should pay all that was due by him that is, in the circumstances, for ever. And here we may again remark, without drawing any dogmatic inferences from the language of the Parable, that it seems to proceed on these two assumptions: that suffering neither expiates guilt, nor in itself amends the guilty, and that as sin has incurred a debt that can never be discharged, so the banishment, or rather the loss and misery of it, will be endless.

We pause to notice, how near Rabbinism has come to this Parable, and yet how far it is from its sublime teaching. At the outset we recall that unlimited forgiveness or, indeed, for more than the farthest limit of three times was not the doctrine of Rabbinism. It did, indeed, teach how freely God would forgive Israel, and it introduces a similar Parable of a debtor appealing to his creditor, and receiving the fullest and freest release of mercy, and it also draws from it the moral, that man should similarly show mercy: but it is not the mercy of forgiveness from the heart, but of forgiveness of money debts to the poor, or of various injuries, and the mercy of benevolence and beneficence to the wretched. But, however beautifully Rabbinism at times speaks on the subject, the Gospel conception of forgiveness, even as that of mercy, could only come by blessed experience of the infinitely higher forgiveness, and the incomparably greater mercy, which the pardoned sinner has received in Christ from our Father in Heaven.

But to us all there is the deepest seriousness in the warning against unmercifulness; and that, even though we remember that the case here referred to is only that of unwillingness to forgive from the heart an offending brother who actually asks for it. Yet, if not the sin, the temptation to it is very real to us all perhaps rather unconsciously to ourselves than consciously. For, how often is our forgiveness in the heart, as well as from the heart, narrowed by limitations and burdened with conditions; and is it not of the very essence of sectarianism to condemn without mercy him who does not come up to our demands ay, and until he shall have come up to them to the uttermost farthing?

Chapter 20 Christ's Discourses in Peraea

Close of the Peraean Ministry

(Luke 13:23-30,31-35, 14:1-11,25-35, 17:1-10.)

From the Parables we now turn to such Discourses of the Lord as belong to this period of His

Ministry. Their consideration may be the more brief, that throughout we find points of correspondence with previous or later portions of His teaching.

Thus, the first of these Discourses, of which we have an outline, recalls some passages in the Sermon on the Mount as well as what our Lord had said on the occasion of healing the servant of the centurion. But, to take the first of these parallelisms, the differences are only the more marked for the similarity of form. These prove incontestably, not only the independence of the two Evangelists ⁴ in their narratives, but, along with deeper underlying unity of thought in the teaching of Christ, its different application to different circumstances and persons. Let us mark this in the Discourse as outlined by Luke, and so gain fresh evidential confirmation of the trustworthiness of the Evangelic records.

The words of our Lord, as recorded by Luke, are not spoken, as in The Sermon on the Mount in connection with His teaching to His disciples, but are in reply to a question addressed to Him by some one we can scarcely doubt, a representative of the Pharisees: Lord, are they few, the saved ones [that are being saved]? Viewed in connection with Christ's immediately preceding teaching about the Kingdom of God in its wide and deep spread, as the great Mustard Tree from the tiniest seed, and as the Leaven hid, which pervaded three measures of meal, we can scarcely doubt that the word saved bore reference, not to the eternal state of the soul, but to admission to the benefits of the Kingdom of God the Messianic Kingdom, with its privileges and its judgments, such as the Pharisees understood it. The question, whether few were to be saved, could not have been put from the Pharisaic point of view, if understood of personal salvation; while, on the other hand, if taken as applying to part in the near-expected Messianic Kingdom, it has its distinct parallel in the Rabbinic statement, that, as regarded the days of the Messiah (His Kingdom), it would be similar to what it had been at the entrance into the land of promise, when only two (Joshua and Caleb), out of all that generation, were allowed to have part in it. Again, it is only when understanding both the question of this Pharisee and the reply of our Lord as applying to the Kingdom of the Messiah though each viewing the Kingdom from his own standpoint that we can understand the answering words of Christ in their natural and obvious sense, without either straining or adding to them a dogmatic gloss, such as could not have occurred to His hearers at the time.

Thus viewed, we can mark the characteristic differences between this Discourse and the parallels in the Sermon on the Mount and understand their reason. As regarded entrance into the Messianic Kingdom, this Pharisee, and those whom he represented, are told, that this Kingdom was not theirs, as a matter of course their question as to the rest of the world being only, whether few or many would share in it but that all must struggle [agonise] to enter in through the narrow door. When we remember, that in the Sermon on the Mount the call was only to enter in we feel that we have now reached a period, when the access to the narrow door was obstructed by the enmity of so many, and when it needed violence to break through, and take the Kingdom by force. This personal breaking through the opposing multitude, in order to enter in through the narrow door, was in opposition to the many the Pharisees and Jews generally who were seeking to enter in, in their own way, never doubting success, but who would discover their terrible mistake. Then, when once the Master of the house is risen up to welcome His guests to the banquet, and has shut to the door, while they, standing without, vainly call upon Him to open it, and He replies: I know you not whence ye are would they begin to remind Him of those covenant-privileges on which, as Israel after the flesh, they had relied (we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets). To this He would reply by a repetition of His former words, now seen to imply a disavowal of all mere outward privileges, as constituting a claim to the Kingdom, grounding alike His disavowal and His refusal to open on their inward contrariety to the King and His Kingdom: Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. It was a banquet to the friends of the King: the inauguration of His Kingdom. When they found the door shut, they would, indeed, knock, in the confident expectation that their claims would at once be recognised, and they admitted. And when the Master of the house did not recognise them, as they had expected, and they reminded Him of their outward connection, He only repeated the same words

as before, since it was not outward but inward relationship that qualified the guests, and theirs was not friendship, but antagonism to Him. Terrible would then be their sorrow and anguish, when they would see their own patriarchs (we have eaten and drunk in Thy Presence) and their own prophets (Thou hast taught in our streets) within, and yet themselves were excluded from what was peculiarly theirs while from all parts of the heathen world the welcome guests would flock to the joyous feast. And here pre-eminently would the saying hold good, in opposition to Pharisaic claims and self-righteousness: There are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

As a further characteristic difference from the parallel passage in the Sermon on the Mount we note, that there the reference seems not to any special privileges in connection with the Messianic Kingdom, such as the Pharisees expected, but to admission into the Kingdom of Heaven generally. In regard to the latter also the highest outward claims would be found unavailing; but the expectation of admission was grounded rather on what was done, than on mere citizenship and its privileges. And here it deserves special notice, that in Luke's Gospel, where the claim is that of fellow-citizenship (eaten and drunk in Thy Presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets), the reply is made, I know you not whence ye are; while in the Sermon on the Mount where the claim is of what they had done in His Name, they are told: I never knew you. In both cases the disavowal emphatically bears on the special plea which had been set up. With this, another slight difference may be connected, which is not brought out in the Authorised or in the Revised Version. Both in the Sermon on the Mount and in Luke's Gospel, they who are bidden depart are designated as workers of iniquity. But, whereas, in Matthew's Gospel the term (really means lawlessness the word used in that of Luke should be rendered unrighteousness (Thus, the one class are excluded, despite the deeds which they plead, for their real contrariety to God's Law; the other, despite the plea of citizenship and privileges, for their unrighteousness. And here we may also note, as a last difference between the two Gospels, that in the prediction of the future bliss from which they were to be excluded, the Gospel of Luke, which had reported the plea that He had taught in their streets adds, as it were in answer, to the names of the Patriarchs, mention of all the prophets.

2. The next Discourse, noted by Luke, had been spoken in that very day as the last. It was occasioned by a pretended warning of certain of the Pharisees to depart from Peraea, which, with Galilee, was the territory of Herod Antipas, as else the Tetrarch would kill Him. We have previously shown reason for supposing secret intrigues between the Pharisaic party and Herod, and attributing the final imprisonment of the Baptist, at least in part, to their machinations. We also remember, how the conscience of the Tetrarch connected Christ with His murdered Forerunner, and that rightly, since, at least so far as the Pharisees wrought on the fears of that intensely jealous and suspicious prince, the imprisonment of John was as much due to his announcement of the Messiah as to the enmity of Herodias. On these grounds we can easily understand that Herod should have wished to see Jesus, not merely to gratify curiosity, nor in obedience to superstitious impulses, but to convince himself, whether He was really what was said of Him, and also to get Him into his power. Probably, therefore, the danger of which these Pharisees spoke might have been real enough, and they might have special reasons for knowing of it. But their suggestion, that Jesus should depart, could only have proceeded from a ruse to get Him Out of Peraea, where, evidently, His works of healing were largely attracting and influencing the people.

But if our Lord would not be deterred by the fears of His disciples from going into Judaea, feeling that each one had his appointed working day, in the light of which he was safe, and during the brief duration of which he was bound to walk far less would He recede before His enemies. Pointing to their secret intrigues, He bade them, if they chose, go back to that fox and give to his low cunning, and to all similar attempts to hinder or arrest His Ministry, what would be a decisive answer, since it unfolded what He clearly foresaw in the near future. Depart? yes, depart ye to tell that fox I have still a brief and an appointed time to work, and then I am perfected in the sense in which we all readily understand the expression, as applying to His Work and Mission. Depart! Yes, I must "depart," or go My brief appointed time: I know that at the goal of it is death, yet not at the hands of Herod, but in

Jerusalem , the slaughter-house of them that "teach in her streets."

And so, remembering that this message to Herod was spoken in the very day, perhaps the very hour that He had declared how falsely the workers of wickedness claimed admission on account of the teaching in their streets and that they would be excluded from the fellowship, not only of the fathers, but of all the prophets whom they called their own we see peculiar meaning in the reference to Jerusalem as the place where all the prophets perished. One, Who in no way indulged in illusions, but knew that He had an appointed time, during which He would work, and at the end of which He would perish and where He would so perish, could not be deterred either by the intrigues of the Pharisees nor by the thought of what a Herod might attempt not do, which latter was in far other hands. But the thought of Jerusalem of what it was, what it might have been, and what would come to it may well have forced from the lips of Him, Who wept over it, a cry of mingled anguish, love, and warning. It may, indeed, be, that these very words, which are reported by Matthew in another, and manifestly most suitable, connection, are here quoted by Luke, because they fully express the thought to which Christ here first gave distinct utterance. But some such words, we can scarcely doubt, He did speak even now, when pointing to His near Decease in Jerusalem.

3. The next in order of the Discourses recorded by Luke is that which prefaced the Parable of the Great Supper expounded in a previous chapter. The Rabbinic views on the Sabbath Law have been so fully explained, that a very brief commentation will here suffice. It appears, that the Lord condescended to accept the invitation to a Sabbath meal in the house of one of the Rulers of the Pharisees' perhaps one of the Rulers of the Synagogue in which they had just worshipped, and where Christ may have taught. Without here discussing the motives for this invitation, its acceptance was certainly made use of to watch Him. And the man with the dropsy had, no doubt, been introduced for a treacherous purpose, although it is not necessary to suppose that he himself had been privy to it. On the other hand, it is characteristic of the gracious Lord, that, with full knowledge of their purpose, He sat down with such companions, and that He did His Work of power and love unrestrained by their evil thoughts. But, even so, He must turn their wickedness also to good account. Yet we mark, that He first dismissed the man healed of the dropsy before He reproved the Pharisees. It was better so for the sake of the guests, and for the healed man himself, whose mind quite new and blessed Sabbath thoughts would fill, to which all controversy would be jarring.

And, after his departure, the Lord first spake to them, as was His wont, concerning their misapplication of the Sabbath Law, to which, indeed, their own practice gave the lie. They deemed it unlawful to heal on the Sabbath day, though, when He read their thoughts and purposes as against Him, they would not answer His question on the point. And yet, if a son, or even an ox of any of them, had fallen into a pit they would have found some valid legal reason for pulling him out! Then, as to their Sabbath feast, and their invitation to Him, when thereby they wished to lure Him to evil and, indeed, their much-boasted hospitality: all was characteristic of these Pharisees only external show, with utter absence of all real love; only self-assumption, pride, and self-righteousness, together with contempt of all who were regarded as religiously or intellectually beneath them chiefly of the unlearned and sinners those in the streets and lanes of their city, whom they considered as the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Even among themselves there was strife about the first places' such as, perhaps, Christ had on that occasion witnessed, amidst mock professions of humility, when, perhaps, the master of the house had afterwards, in true Pharisaic fashion, proceeded to re-arrange the guests according to their supposed dignity. And even the Rabbis had given advice to the same effect as Christ's and of this His words may have reminded them.

But further addressing him who had so treacherously bidden Him to this feast, Christ showed how the principle of Pharisaism consisted in self-seeking, to the necessary exclusion of all true love.

Referring, for the fuller explanation of His meaning, to a previous chapter, we content ourselves here with the remark, that this self-seeking and self-righteousness appeared even in what, perhaps, they most boasted of their hospitality. For, if in an earlier Jewish record we read the beautiful words: Let thy house be open towards the street, and let the poor be the sons of thy house we have, also, this

later comment on them, that Job had thus had his house opened to the four quarters of the globe for the poor, and that, when his calamities befell him, he remonstrated with God on the ground of his merits in this respect, to which answer was made, that he had in this matter come very far short of the merits of Abraham. So entirely self-introspective and self-seeking did Rabbinism become, and so contrary was its outcome to the spirit of Christ, the inmost meaning of Whose Work, as well as Words, was entire self-forgetfulness and self-surrender in love.

4. In the fourth Discourse recorded by Luke, we pass from the parenthetical account of that Sabbath-meal in the house of the Ruler of the Pharisees back to where the narrative of the Pharisees threat about Herod and the reply of Jesus had left us. And, if proof were required of the great influence exercised by Jesus, and which, as we have suggested, led to the attempt of the Pharisees to induce Christ to leave Peraea, it would be found in the opening notice, as well as in the Discourse itself which He spoke. Christ did depart from that place, though not yet from Peraea; but with Him went great multitudes. And, in view of their professed adhesion, it was needful, and now more emphatically than ever, to set before them all that discipleship really involved, alike of cost and of strength the two latter points being illustrated by brief Parables (in the wider sense of that term). Substantially, it was only what Christ had told the Twelve, when He sent them on their first Mission. Only it was now cast in a far stronger mould, as befitted the altered circumstances, in the near prospect of Christ's condemnation, with all that this would involve to His followers.

At the outset we mark, that we are not here told what constituted the true disciple, but what would prevent a man from becoming such. Again, it was now no longer (as in the earlier address to the Twelve), that he who loved the nearest and dearest of earthly kin more than Christ and hence clave to such rather than to Him was not worthy of Him; nor that he who did not take his cross and follow after Him was not worthy of the Christ. Since then the enmity had ripened, and discipleship become impossible without actual renunciation of the nearest relationship, and, more than that, of life itself. Of course, the term hate does not imply hatred of parents or relatives, or of life, in the ordinary sense. But it points to this, that, as outward separation, consequent upon men's antagonism to Christ, was before them in the near future, so, in the present, inward separation, a renunciation in mind and heart, preparatory to that outwardly, was absolutely necessary. And this immediate call was illustrated in twofold manner. A man who was about to begin building a tower, must count the cost of his undertaking. It was not enough that he was prepared to defray the expense of the foundations; he must look to the cost of the whole. So must they, in becoming disciples, look not on what was involved in the present following of Christ, but remember the cost of the final acknowledgement of Jesus. Again, if a king went to war, common prudence would lead him to consider whether his forces were equal to the great contest before him; else it were far better to withdraw in time, even though it involved humiliation, from what, in view of his weakness, would end in miserable defeat. So, and much more, must the intending disciple make complete inward surrender of all, deliberately counting the cost, and, in view of the coming trial, ask himself whether he had, indeed, sufficient inward strength the force of love to Christ to conquer. And thus discipleship, then, and, in measure, to all time, involves the necessity of complete inward surrender of everything for the love of Christ, so that if, and when, the time of outward trial comes, we may be prepared to conquer in the fight. He fights well, who has first fought and conquered within.

Or else, and here Christ breaks once more into that pithy Jewish proverb only, oh! how aptly, applying it to His disciples Salt is good; salt, if it have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? We have preferred quoting the proverb in its Jewish form, to show its popular origin. Salt in such condition was neither fit to improve the land, nor, on the other hand, to be mixed with the manure. The disciple who had lost his distinctiveness would neither benefit the land, nor was he even fit, as it were, for the dunghill, and could only be cast out. And so, let him that hath ears to hear, hear the warning!

5. We have still to consider the last Discourses of Christ before the raising of Lazarus. As being addressed to the disciples, we have to connect them with the Discourse just commented upon. In point of fact, part of these admonitions had already been spoken on a previous occasion, and that

more fully, to the disciples in Galilee. Only we must again bear in mind the difference of circumstances. Here, they immediately precede the raising of Lazarus, and they form the close of Christ's public Ministry in Peraea. Hence they come to us as Christ's parting admonitions to His Peraean followers.

Thus viewed, they are intended to impress on the new disciples these four things: to be careful to give no offence; to be careful to take no offence; to be simple and earnest in their faith, and absolutely to trust its all-prevailing power; and yet, when they had made experience of it, not to be elated, but to remember their relation to their Master, that all was in His service, and that, after all, when everything had been done, they were but unprofitable servants. In other words, they urged upon the disciples holiness, love, faith, and service of self-surrender and humility.

Most of these points have been already considered, when explaining the similar admonitions of Christ in Galilee. The four parts of this Discourse are broken by the prayer of the Apostles, who had formerly expressed their difficulty in regard to these very requirements: Add unto us faith. It was upon this that the Lord spake to them, for their comfort, of the absolute power of even the smallest faith, and of the service and humility of faith. The latter was couched in a Parabolic form, well calculated to impress on them those feelings which would keep them lowly. They were but servants; and, even though they had done their work, the Master expected them to serve Him, before they sat down to their own meal and rest. Yet meal and rest there would be in the end. Only, let there not be self-elation, nor weariness, nor impatience; but let the Master and His service be all in all. Surely, if ever there was emphatic protest against the fundamental idea of Pharisaism, as claiming merit and reward, it was in the closing admonition of Christ's public Ministry in Peraea: When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.

And with these parting words did He most effectually and forever separate, in heart and spirit, the Church from the Synagogue.

Chapter 21 The Death and the Raising of Lazarus

The Question of Miracles and of this Miracle of Miracles Views of Negative Criticism on this History Jewish Burying-Rites and Sepulchres

(John 11:1-54.)

From listening to the teaching of Christ, we turn once more to follow His working. It will be remembered, that the visit to Bethany divides the period from the Feast of the Dedication to the last Paschal week into two parts. It also forms the prelude and preparation for the awful events of the End. For, it was on that occasion that the members of the Sanhedrin formally resolved on His Death. It now only remained to settle and carry out the plans for giving effect to their purpose.

This is one aspect of it. There is yet another and more solemn one. The raising of Lazarus marks the highest point (not in the Manifestation, but) in the ministry of our Lord; it is the climax in a history where all is miraculous the Person, the Life, the Words, the Work. As regards Himself, we have here the fullest evidence alike of His Divinity and Humanity; as regards those who witnessed it, the highest manifestation of faith and of unbelief. Here, on this height, the two ways finally meet and part. And from this high point not only from the resolution of the Sanhedrists, but from the raising of Lazarus we have our first clear outlook on the Death and Resurrection of Christ, of which the raising of Lazarus was the typical prelude. From this height, also, have we an outlook upon the gathering of the Church at His empty Tomb, where the precious words spoken at the grave of Lazarus received their full meaning till Death shall be no more. But chiefly do we now think of it as the Miracle of Miracles in

the history of the Christ He had, indeed, before this raised the dead; but it had been in far-off Galilee, and in circumstances essentially different. But now it would be one so well known as Lazarus, at the very gates of Jerusalem, in the sight of all men, and amidst surroundings which admitted not of mistake or doubt. If this Miracle be true, we instinctively feel all is true; and Spinoza was right in saying, that if he could believe the raising of Lazarus, he would tear to shreds his system, and humbly accept the creed of Christians.

But is it true? We have reached a stage in this history when such a question, always most painful, might seem almost uncalled for. For, gradually and with increasing clearness, we have learned the trustworthiness of the Evangelic records; and, as we have followed Him, the conviction has deepened into joyous assurance, that He, Who spake, lived, and wrought as none other, is in very deed the Christ of God. And yet we ask ourselves here this question again, on account of its absolute and infinite importance; because this may be regarded as the highest and decisive moment in this History; because, in truth, it is to the historical faith of the Church what the great Confession of Peter was to that of the disciples. And, although such an inquiry may seem like the jarring of a discord in Heaven's own melody, we pursue it, feeling that, in so doing, we are not discussing what is doubtful, but rather setting forth the evidence of what is certain, for the confirmation of the faith of our hearts, and, as we humbly trust, for the establishment of the faith as it is in Jesus.

At the outset, we must here once more meet, however briefly, the preliminary difficulty in regard to Miracles, of which the raising of Lazarus is, we shall not say, the greatest for comparison is not possible on such a point but the most notable. Undoubtedly, a Miracle runs counter, not only to our experience, but to the facts on which our experience is grounded; and can only be accounted for by a direct Divine interposition, which also runs counter to our experience, although it cannot logically be said to run counter to the facts on which that experience is grounded. Beyond this it is impossible to go, since the argument on other grounds than of experience, be it phenomenal [observation and historical information] or real [knowledge of laws and principles] would necessitate knowledge alike of all the laws of Nature and of all the secrets of Heaven.

On the other hand (as indicated in a previous part), to argue this point only on the ground of experience (phenomenal or real), were not only reasoning *à priori*, but in a vicious circle. It would really amount to this: A thing has not been, because it cannot be; and it cannot be, because, so far as I know, it is not and has not been. But, to deny on such *à priori* prejudgment the possibility of Miracles, ultimately involves a denial of a Living, Reigning God. For, the existence of a God implies at least the possibility, in certain circumstances it may be the rational necessity, of Miracles. And the same grounds of experience, which tell against the occurrence of a Miracle, would equally apply against belief in a God. We have as little ground in experience (of a physical kind) for the one as for the other. This is not said to deter inquiry, but for the sake of our argument. For, we confidently assert and challenge experiment of it, that disbelief in a God, or Materialism, involves infinitely more difficulties, and that at every step and in regard to all things, than the faith of the Christian.

But we instinctively feel that such a Miracle as the raising of Lazarus calls for more than merely logical formulas. Heart and mind crave for higher than questions of what may be logically possible or impossible. We want, so to speak, living evidence, and we have it. We have it, first of all, in the Person of the Incarnate God, Who not only came to abolish death, but in Whose Presence the continuance of disease and death was impossible. And we have it also in the narrative of the event itself. It were, indeed, an absurd demand to prove a Miracle, since to do so were to show that it was not a Miracle. But we may be rationally asked these three things: first, to show, that no other explanation is rationally possible than that which proceeds on the ground of its being a Miracle; secondly, to show, that such a view of it is consistent with itself and with all the details of the narrative; and, thirdly, that it is harmonious with what precedes and what follows the narrative. The second and third of these arguments will be the outcome of our later study of the history of this event; the first, that no other explanation of the narrative is rationally possible, must now be briefly attempted.

We may here dismiss, as what would not be entertained by any one familiar with historical inquiries,

the idea that such a narrative could be an absolute invention, ungrounded on any fact. Again, we may put aside as repugnant to, at least English, common sense, the theory that the narrative is consistent with the idea that Lazarus was not really dead (so, the Rationalists). Nor would any one, who had the faintest sympathy with the moral standpoint of the Gospels, entertain the view of M. Renan, that it was all a pious fraud concocted between all parties, and that, in order to convert Jerusalem by a signal miracle, Lazarus had himself dressed up as a dead body and laid in the family tomb. Scarcely more rational is M. Renan's latest suggestion, that it was all a misunderstanding: Martha and Mary having told Jesus the wish of friends, that He should do some notable miracle to convince the Jews, and suggesting that they would believe if one rose from the dead, when He had replied, that they would not believe even if Lazarus rose from his grave and that tradition had transformed this conversation into an actual event! Nor, finally, would English common sense readily believe (with Baur), that the whole narrative was an ideal composition to illustrate what must be regarded as the metaphysical statement: I am the Resurrection and the Life. Among ourselves, at least, no serious refutation of these and similar views can be necessary.

Nor do the other theories advanced require lengthened discussion. The mythical explanation of Strauss is, that as the Old Testament had recorded instances of raising from the dead, so Christian tradition must needs ascribe the same to the Messiah. To this (without repeating the detailed refutation made by Renan and Baur), it is sufficient to reply: The previous history of Christ had already offered such instances, why needlessly multiply them? Besides, if it had been a legend such full and minute details would not have been introduced, and while the human element would have been suppressed, the miraculous would have been far more accentuated. Only one other theory on the subject requires notice: that the writer of the Fourth Gospel, or rather early tradition, had transformed the Parable of Dives and Lazarus into an actual event. In answer, it is sufficient to say: first, that (as previously shown) there is no connection between the Lazarus of the Parable and him of Bethany; secondly, that, if it had been a Parable transformed, the characters chosen would not have been real persons, and that they were such is evident from the mention of the family in different circumstances in the three Synoptic Gospels, of which the writer of the Fourth Gospel was fully aware. Lastly, as Godet remarks, whereas the Parable closes by declaring that the Jews would not believe even if one rose from the dead, the Narrative closes on this wise: Many therefore of the Jews, which came to Mary and beheld that which He did, believed on Him.

In view of these proposed explanations, we appeal to the impartial reader, whether any of them rationally accounts for the origin and existence of this history in Apostolic tradition? On the other hand, everything is clear and consistent on the supposition of the historical truth of this narrative: the minuteness of details; the vividness and pictorialness of the narrative: the characteristic manner in which Thomas, Martha, and Mary speak and act, in accordance with what we read of them in the other Gospels or in other parts of this Gospel; the Human affection of the Christ; the sublime simplicity and majesty of the manner of the Miracle; and the effects of it on friend and foe. There is, indeed, this one difficulty (not objection), that the event is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels. But we know too little of the plan on which the Gospels, viewed as Lives of Christ, were constructed, to allow us to draw any sufficient inference from the silence of the Synoptists, whilst we do know that the Judæan and Jerusalem Ministry of Christ, except so far as it was absolutely necessary to refer to it, lay outside the plan of the Synoptic Gospels, and formed the special subject of that by John. Lastly, we should remember, that in the then state of thought the introduction of another narrative of raising from the dead could not have seemed to them of such importance as it appears to us in the present state of controversy more especially, since it was soon to be followed by another Resurrection, the importance and evidential value of which far overshadowed such an event as the raising of Lazarus. Their Galilean readers had the story of the raising of the widow's son at Nain, and of Jairus daughter at Capernaum; and the Roman world had not only all this, but the preaching of the Resurrection, and of pardon and life in the Name of the Risen One, together with ocular demonstration of the miraculous power of those who preached it. It remained for the beloved disciple, who alone stood under the

Cross, alone to stand on that height from which he had first full and intense outlook upon His Death, and the Life which sprang from it, and flowed into all the world.

We may now, undisturbed by preliminary objections, surrender ourselves to the sublimeness and solemnity of this narrative. Perhaps the more briefly we comment on it the better.

It was while in Peraea, that this message suddenly reached the Master from the well-remembered home at Bethany, the village of Mary' who, although the younger, is for obvious reasons first mentioned in this history and her sister Martha concerning their (younger) brother Lazarus: Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick! They are apparently the very words which the sisters bade their messenger tell. We note as an important fact to be stored in our memory, that the Lazarus, who had not even been mentioned in the only account preserved to us of a previous visit of Christ to Bethany, is described as he whom Christ loved. What a gap of untold events between the two visits of Christ to Bethany and what modesty should it teach us as regards inferences from the circumstance that certain events are not recorded in the Gospels! The messenger was apparently dismissed by Christ with this reply: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, in order that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. We must here bear in mind, that this answer was heard by such of the Apostles as were present at the time. They would naturally infer from it that Lazarus would not die, and that his restoration would glorify Christ, either as having foretold it, or prayed for it, or effected it by His Will. Yet its true meaning even, as we now see, its literal interpretation, was, that its final upshot was not to be the death of Lazarus, but that it was to be for the glory of God, in order that Christ as the Son of God might be made manife And we learn, how much more full are the Words of Christ than they often appear to us; and how truly, and even literally, they may bear quite another meaning than appears to our honest misapprehension of them a meaning which only the event, the future, will disclose.

And yet, probably at the very time when the messenger received his answer, and ere he could have brought it to the sisters, Lazarus was already dead! Nor and this should be especially marked did this awaken doubt in the minds of the sisters. We seem to hear the very words which at the time they said to each other when each of them afterwards repeated it to the Lord: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died. They probably thought the message had reached Him too late, that Lazarus would have lived if Christ had been appealed to in time, or had been able to come at any rate, if He had been there. Even in their keenest anguish, there was no failure of trust, no doubt, no close weighing of words on their part only the confidence of love. Yet all this while Christ knew that Lazarus had died, and still He continued two whole days where He was, finishing His work. And yet and this is significantly noted before anything else, alike in regard to His delay and to His after-conduct He loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. Had there been no after-history, or had it not been known to us, or before it became known, it might have seemed otherwise and in similar circumstances it often does seem otherwise to us. And again, what majestic calm, what Self-restraint of Human affections and sublime consciousness of Divine Power in this delay: it is once more Christ asleep, while the disciples are despairing, in the bark almost swamped in the storm! Christ is never in haste: least of all, on His errands of love. And He is never in haste, because He is always sure.

It was only after these two days that Christ broke silence as to His purposes and as to Lazarus. Though thoughts of him must have been present with the disciples, none dared ask aught, although not from misgiving, nor yet from fear. This also of faith and of confidence. At last, when His work in that part had been completed, He spoke of leaving, but even so not of going to Bethany, but into Judaea. For, in truth, His work in Bethany was not only geographically, but really, part of His work in Judaea; and He told the disciples of His purpose, just because He knew their fears and would teach them, not only for this but for every future occasion, what principle applied to them. For when, in their care and affection, they reminded the Rabbi' and the expression here almost jars on us that the Jews were even now seeking to stone Him, He replied by telling them, in figurative language, that we have each our working day from God, and that while it lasts no foe can shorten it or break up or work. The day had twelve hours, and while these lasted no mishap would befall him that walked in the way

[he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world]. It was otherwise when the day was past and the night had come. When our God-given day has set, and with it the light been withdrawn which hitherto prevented our stumbling then, if a man went in his own way and at his own time, might such mishap befall him, because figuratively as to light in the night-time, and really as to guidance and direction in the way, the light is not in him.

But this was only part of what Jesus said to His disciples in preparation for a journey that would issue in such tremendous consequences. He next spoke of Lazarus, their friend as fallen asleep' in the frequent Jewish (as well as Christian) figurative sense of it, and of His going there to wake him out of sleep. The disciples would naturally connect this mention of His going to Lazarus with His proposed visit to Judaea, and, in their eagerness to keep Him from the latter, interposed that there could be no need for going to Lazarus, since sleep was, according to Jewish notions, one of the six, or, according to others, five symptoms or crises in recovery from dangerous illness. And when the Lord then plainly stated it, Lazarus died adding, what should have aroused their attention, that for their sakes He was glad He had not been in Bethany before the event, because now that would come which would work faith in them, and proposed to go to the dead Lazarus even then, their whole attention was so absorbed by the certainty of danger to their loved Teacher, that Thomas had only one thought: since it was to be so, let them go and die with Jesus. So little had they understood the figurative language about the twelve hours on which God's sun shone to light us on our way; so much did they need the lesson of faith to be taught them in the raising of Lazarus!

We already know the quiet happy home of Bethany. When Jesus reached it, He found' probably from those who met Him by the way that Lazarus had been already four days in the grave. According to custom, he would be buried the same day that he had died. Supposing his death to have taken place when the message for help was first delivered, while Jesus continued after that two whole days in the place where He was, this would leave about a day for His journey from Peraea to Bethany. We do not, indeed, know the exact place of His stay; but it must have been some well-known centre of activity in Peraea, since the sisters of Bethany had no difficulty in sending their messenger. At the same time we also infer that, at least at this period, some kind of communication must have existed between Christ and His more intimate disciples and friends, such as the family of Bethany by which they were kept informed of the general plan of His Mission-journeys, and of any central station of His temporary sojourn. If Christ at that time occupied such a central station, we can the more readily understand how some of His Galilean disciples may, for a brief space, have been absent at their Galilean homes when the tidings about Lazarus arrived. Their absence may explain the prominent position taken by Thomas; perhaps, also, in part, the omission of this narrative from the Synoptic Gospels. One other point may be of interest. Supposing the journey to Bethany to have occupied a day, we would suggest the following as the order of events. The messenger of the Sisters left Bethany on the Sunday (it could not have been on the Sabbath), and reached Jesus on the Monday. Christ continued in Peraea other two days, till Wednesday, and arrived at Bethany on Thursday. On Friday the meeting of the Sanhedrists against Christ took place, while He rested in Bethany on the Friday, and, of course, on the Sabbath, and returned to Peraea and Ephraim on the Sunday.

This may be a convenient place for adding to the account already given, in connection with the burying of the widow's son at Nain, such further particulars of the Jewish observances and rites, as may illustrate the present history. Referring to the previous description, we resume, in imagination, our attendance at the point where Christ met the bier at Nain and again gave life to the dead. But we remember that, as we are now in Judaea, the hired mourners both mourning-men (for there were such) and mourning women would follow, and not, as in Galilee, precede, the body. From the narrative we infer that the burial of Lazarus did not take place in a common burying-ground, which was never nearer a town than 50 cubits, dry and rocky places being chosen in preference. Here the graves must be at least a foot and a half apart. It was deemed a dishonour to the dead to stand on, or walk over, the turf of a grave. Roses and other flowers seem to have been planted on graves. But cemeteries, or common burying-places, appear in earliest times to have been used only for the poor,

or for strangers. In Jerusalem there were also two places where executed criminals were buried. All these, it is needless to say, were outside the City. But there is abundant evidence, that every place had not its own burying ground; and that, not unfrequently, provision had to be made for the transport of bodies. Indeed, a burying place is not mentioned among the ten requisites for every fully organised Jewish community. The names given, both to the graves and to the burying place itself, are of interest. As regards the former, we mention such as the house of silence; the house of stone; the hostelry or, literally, place where you spend the night; the couch; the resting-place; the valley of the multitude or of the dead. The cemetery was called the house of graves; or the court of burying; and the house of eternity. By a euphemism, to die was designated as going to rest been completed; being gathered to the world or to the home of light; being withdrawn or hidden. Burial without coffin seems to have continued the practice for a considerable time, and rules are given how a pit, the size of the body, was to be dug, and surrounded by a wall of loose stones to prevent the falling in of earth. When afterwards earth-burials had to be vindicated against the Parsee idea of cremation, Jewish divines more fully discussed the question of burial, and described the committal of the body to the ground as a sort of expiation. It was a curious later practice, that children who had died a few days after birth were circumcised on their graves. Children not a month old were buried without coffin or mourning, and, as some have thought, in a special place. In connection with a recent controversy it is interesting to learn that, for the sake of peace, just as the poor and sick of the Gentiles might be fed and nursed as well as those of the Jews, so their dead might be buried with those of the Jews, though not in their graves. On the other hand, a wicked person should not be buried close to a sage. Suicides were not accorded all the honours of those who had died a natural death, and the bodies of executed criminals were laid in a special place, whence the relatives might after a time remove their bones. The burial terminated by casting earth on the grave.

But, as already stated, Lazarus was, as became his station, not laid in a cemetery, but in his own private tomb in a cave probably in a garden, the favourite place of interment. Though on terms of close friendship with Jesus, he was evidently not regarded as an apostate from the Synagogue. For, every indignity was shown at the burial of an apostate; people were even to array themselves in white festive garments to make demonstration of joy. Here, on the contrary, as we gather from the sequel, every mark of sympathy, respect, and sorrow had been shown by the people in the district and by friends in the neighbouring Jerusalem. In such case it would be regarded as a privilege to obey the Rabbinic direction of accompanying the dead, so as to show honour to the departed and kindness to the survivors. As the sisters of Bethany were disciples we may well believe that some of the more extravagant demonstrations of grief were, if not dispensed with, yet modified. We can scarcely believe, that the hired mourners would alternate between extravagant praises of the dead and calls upon the attendants to lament; or that, as was their wont, they would strike on their breast, beat their hands, and dash about their feet, or break into wails and mournings songs, alone or in chorus. In all probability, however, the funeral oration would be delivered as in the case of all distinguished persons either in the house, or at one of the stations where the bearers changed, or at the burying-place; perhaps, if they passed it, in the Synagogue. It has previously been noted, what extravagant value was, in later times, attached to these orations, as indicating both a man's life on earth and his place in heaven. The dead was supposed to be present, listening to the words of the speaker and watching the expression on the face of the hearers. It would serve no good purpose to reproduce fragments from these orations. Their character is sufficiently indicated by the above remarks.

When thinking of these tombs in gardens, we so naturally revert to that which for three days held the Lord of Life, that all details become deeply interesting. And it is, perhaps, better to give them here rather than afterwards to interrupt, by such inquiries, our solemn thoughts in presence of the Crucified Chri. Not only the rich, but even those moderately well-to-do, had tombs of their own, which probably were acquired and prepared long before they were needed, and treated and inherited as private and personal property. In such caves, or rock-hewn tombs, the bodies were laid, having been anointed with many spices, with myrtle, aloes, and, at a later period, also with hyssop, rose-oil, and rose-water.

The body was dressed and, at a later period, wrapped, if possible, in the worn cloths in which originally a Roll of the Law had been held. The tombs were either rock-hewn or natural caves or else large walled vaults, with niches along the sides. Such a cave or vault of 4 cubits (6 feet) width, 6 cubits (9 feet) length, and 4 cubits (6 feet) height, contained niches for eight bodies three on each of the longitudinal sides, and two at the end opposite the entrance. Each niche was 4 cubits (6 feet) long, and had a height of seven and a width of six handbreadths. As these burying niches were hollowed out in the walls they were called Kukhin. The larger caves or vaults were 6 cubits (9 feet) wide, and 8 cubits (12 feet) long, and held thirteen bodies four along each side-wall, three opposite to, and one on either side of the entrance. These figures apply, of course, only to what the Law required, when a vault had been contracted for. When a person constructed one for himself, the dimensions of the walls and the number of Kukhin might, of course, vary. At the entrance to the vault was a court 6 cubits (9 feet) square, to hold the bier and its bearers. Sometimes two caves opened on this court. But it is difficult to decide whether the second cave spoken of, was intended as an ossuary (ossarium). Certain it is, that after a time the bones were collected and put into a box or coffin, having first been anointed with wine and oil, and being held together by wrappings of cloths. This circumstance explains the existence of the mortuary chests, or osteophagi, so frequently found in the tombs of Palestine by late explorers, who have been unable to explain their meaning. This unclearness is much to be regretted, when we read, for example, of such a chest as found in a cave near Bethany. One of the explorers has discovered on them fragments of Hebrew inscriptions. Up to the present, only few Hebrew memorial inscriptions have been discovered in Palestine. The most interesting are those in or near Jerusalem, dating from the first century b.c. to the first a.d. There are, also, many inscriptions found on Jewish tombs out of Palestine (in Rome, and other places), written in bad Greek or Latin, containing, perhaps, a Hebrew word, and generally ending with shalom, peace and adorned with Jewish symbols, such as the Seven-branched Candlestick, the Ark, the festive emblems of the Feast of Tabernacles, and others. In general, the advice not to read such inscriptions, as it would affect the sight, seems to imply the common practice of having memorial inscriptions in Hebrew. They appear to have been graven either on the lid of the mortuary chest, or on the Golel, or great stone rolled at the entrance to the vault, or to the court leading into it, or else on the inside walls of yet another erection, made over the vaults of the wealthy, and which was supposed to complete the burying-place, or Qebher.

These small buildings surmounting the graves may have served as shelter to those who visited the tombs. They also served as monuments of which we read in the Bible, in the Apocrypha, and in Josephus. In Rabbinic writings they are frequently mentioned, chiefly by the name Nephesh, soul person' transferred in the sense of monument or, by the more Scriptural name of bamah, or, by the Greco-Aramaic, or the Hebrew designation for a building generally. But of gravestones with inscriptions we cannot find any record in Talmudic works. At the same time, the place where there was a vault or a grave was marked by a stone, which was kept whitened, to warn the passer-by against defilement.

We are now able fully to realise all the circumstances and surroundings in the burial and raising of Lazarus.

Jesus had come to Bethany. But in the house of mourning they knew it not. As Bethany was only about fifteen furlongs or about two miles from Jerusalem, many from the City, who were on terms of friendship with what was evidently a distinguished family, had come in obedience to one of the most binding Rabbinic directions that of comforting the mourners. In the funeral procession the sexes had been separated, and the practice probably prevailed even at that time for the women to return alone from the grave. This may explain why afterwards the women went and returned alone to the Tomb of our Lord. The mourning, which began before the burial, had been shared by the friends who sat silent on the ground, or were busy preparing the mourning meal. As the company left the dead, each had taken leave of the deceased with a Depart in peace! Then they had formed into lines, through which the mourners passed amidst expressions of sympathy, repeated (at least seven times) as the

procession halted on the return to the house of mourning. Then began the mourning in the house, which really lasted thirty days, of which the first three were those of greatest, the others, during the seven days, or the special week of sorrow, of less intense mourning. But on the Sabbath, as God's holy day, all mourning was intermitted and so they rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment.

In that household of disciples this mourning would not have assumed such violent forms, as when we read that the women were in the habit of tearing out their hair, or of a Rabbi who publicly scourged himself. But we know how the dead would be spoken of. In death the two worlds were said to meet and kiss. And now they who had passed away beheld God. They were at rest. Such beautiful passages as Ps. cxii. 6, Prov. x. 7, Is. xi. 10, last clause, and Is. lvii. 2, were applied to them. Nay, the holy dead should be called living. In truth, they knew about us, and unseen still surrounded us. Nor should they ever be mentioned without adding a blessing on their memory.

In this spirit, we cannot doubt, the Jews were now comforting the sisters. They may have repeated words like those quoted as the conclusion of such a consolatory speech: May the Lord of consolations (comfort you! Blessed be He Who comforteth the mourners! But they could scarcely have imagined how literally a wish like this was about to be fulfilled. For, already, the message had reached Martha, who was probably in one of the outer apartments of the house: Jesus is coming! She hastened to meet the Master. Not a word of complaint, not a murmur, nor doubt, escaped her lips only what during those four bitter days these two sisters must have been so often saying to each other, when the luxury of solitude was allowed them, that if He had been there their brother would not have died. And even now when it was all too late when they had not received what they had asked of Him by their messenger, it must have been, because He had not asked it, though he had said that this sickness was not unto death; or else because he had delayed to work it till He would come. And still she held fast by it, that even now God would give Him whatsoever He asked. Or, did they mean more: were they such words of unconscious prophecy, or sight and sound of heavenly things, as sometimes come to us in our passion of grief, or else winged thoughts of faith too soon beyond our vision? They could not have been the expression of any real hope of the miracle about to take place, or Martha would not have afterwards sought to arrest Him, when He bade them roll away the stone. And yet is not even so, that, when that comes to us which our faith had once dared to suggest, if not to hope, we feel as if it were all too great and impossible, that a very physical cannot be separates us from it?

It was in very truth and literality that the Lord meant it, when He told Martha her brother would rise again, although she understood His Words of the Resurrection at the Last Day. In answer, Christ pointed out to her the connection between Himself and the Resurrection; and, what He spoke, that He did when He raised Lazarus from the dead. The Resurrection and the Life are not special gifts either to the Church or to humanity, but are connected with the Christ the outcome of Himself. The Resurrection of the Just and the General Resurrection are the consequence of the relation in which the Church and humanity in general stand to the Christ. Without the Christ there would have been no Resurrection. Most literally He is the Resurrection and the Life and this, the new teaching about the Resurrection, was the object and the meaning of the raising of Lazarus. And thus is this raising of Lazarus the outlook, also, upon His own Resurrection, Who is the first-fruits from the dead.

And though the special, then present, application, or rather manifestation of it, would be in the raising of Lazarus yet this teaching, that accompanied it, is to all believers: He that believeth in Me, even if [though] he die, shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever (unto the AEon) where possibly we might, for commentation, mentally insert the sign of a pause between the words die and for ever or unto the AEon. It is only when we think of the meaning of Christ's previous words, as implying that the Resurrection and the Life are the outcome of Himself, and come to us only through Him and in Him, that we can understand the answer of Martha to His question: Believest thou this? Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God [with special reference to the original message of Christ], He that cometh into the world [the Coming One into the world the

world's promised, expected, come Saviour].

What else passed between them we can only gather from the context. It seems that the Master called for Mary. This message Martha now hastened to deliver, although secretly. Mary was probably sitting in the chamber of mourning, with its upset chairs and couches, and other melancholy tokens of mourning, as was the custom; surrounded by many who had come to comfort them; herself, we can scarcely doubt, silent, her thoughts far away in that world to, and of which the Master was to her the Way, the Truth, and the Life. As she heard of His coming and call, she rose quickly and the Jews followed her, under the impression that she was again going to visit, and to sweep at the tomb of her brother. For, it was the practice to visit the grave, especially during the first three days. When she came to Jesus, where He still stood, outside Bethany, she was forgetful of all around. It was, as if sight of Him melted what had frozen the tide of her feelings. She could only fall at His Feet, and repeat the poor words with which she and her sister had these four weary days tried to cover the nakedness of their sorrow: poor words of consolation, and poor words of faith, which she did not, like her sister, make still poorer of by adding the poverty of her hope to that of her faith the poverty of the future to that of the past and present. To Martha that had been the maximum, to Mary it was the minimum of her faith; for the rest, it was far, far better to add nothing more, but simply to worship at His Feet.

It must have been a deeply touching scene: the outpouring of her sorrow, the absoluteness of her faith, the mute appeal of her tears. And the Jews who witnessed it were moved as she, and wept with her. What follows is difficult to understand; still more difficult to explain: not only from the choice of language, which is peculiarly difficult, but because its difficulty springs from the yet greater difficulty of expressing what it is intended to describe. The expression, groaned in spirit cannot mean that Christ was moved with indignation in the spirit since this could not have been the consequence of witnessing the tears of Mary and what, we feel sure, was the genuine emotion of the Jews. Of the various interpretations, that commends itself most to us, which would render the expression: He vehemently moved His Spirit and troubled Himself. One, whose insight into such questions is peculiarly deep, has reminded us that the miracles of the Lord were not wrought by the simple word of power, but that in a mysterious way the element of sympathy entered into them. He took away the sufferings and diseases of men in some sense by taking them upon Himself. If, with this most just view of His Condescension to, and union with, humanity as its Healer, by taking upon Himself its diseases, we combine the statement formerly made about the Resurrection, as not a gift or boon but the outcome of Himself we may, in some way, not understand, but be able to gaze into, the unfathomed depth of that Theanthropic fellow-suffering which was both vicarious and redemptive, and which, before He became the Resurrection to Lazarus, shook His whole inner Being, when, in the words of John, He vehemently moved His Spirit and troubled Himself.

And now every trait is in accord. Where have ye laid him? So truly human as if He, Who was about to raise the dead, needed the information where he had been laid; so truly human, also, in the underlying tenderness of the personal address, and in the absorption of the whole Theanthropic energy on the mighty burden about to be lifted and lifted away. So, also, as they bade Him come and see, were the tears that fell from Him (not like the violent lamentation that burst from Him at sight and prophetic view of doomed Jerusalem. Yet we can scarcely think that the Jews rightly interpreted it, when they ascribed it only to His love for Lazarus. But surely there was not a touch either of malevolence or of irony, only what we feel to be quite natural in the circumstances, when some of them asked it aloud: Could not this One, Which opened the eyes of the blind, have wrought so that [in order] this one also should not die? Scarcely was it even unbelief. They had so lately witnessed in Jerusalem that Miracle, such as had not been heard since the world began; that it seemed difficult to understand how, seeing there was the will (in His affection for Lazarus), there was not the power not to raise him from the dead, for that did not occur to them, but to prevent his dying. Was there, then, a barrier in death? And it was this, and not indignation, which once more caused that Theanthropic recurrence upon Himself, when again He vehemently moved His Spirit.

And now they were at the cave which was Lazarus tomb. He bade them roll aside the great stone which covered its entrance. Amidst the awful pause which preceded obedience, one voice only was raised. It was that of Martha. Jesus had not spoken of raising Lazarus. But what was about to be done? She could scarcely have thought that He merely wished to gaze once more upon the face of the dead. Something nameless had seized her. She dared not believe; she dared not disbelieve. Did she, perhaps, not dread a failure, but feel misgivings, when thinking of Christ as in presence of commencing corruption before these Jews and yet, as we so often, still love Him even in unbelief? It was the common Jewish idea that corruption commenced on the fourth day, that the drop of gall, which had fallen from the sword of the Angel and caused death, was then working its effect, and that, as the face changed, the soul took its final leave from the resting-place of the body. Only one sentence Jesus spake of gentle reproof, of reminder of what He had said to her just before, and of the message He had sent when first He heard of Lazarus illness, but, oh so full of calm majesty and consciousness of Divine strength. And now the stone was rolled away. We all feel that the fitting thing here was prayer yet not petition, but thanksgiving that the Father heard Him, not as regarded the raising of Lazarus, which was His Own Work, but in the ordering and arranging of all the circumstances alike the petition and the thanksgiving having for their object them that stood by, for He knew that the Father always heard Him: that so they might believe, that the Father had sent Him. Sent of the Father not come of Himself, not sent of Satan and sent to do His Will!

And in doing this Will, He was the Resurrection and the Life. One loud command spoken into that silence; one loud call to that sleeper; one flash of God's Own Light into that darkness, and the wheels of life again moved at the outgoing of The Life. And, still bound hand and foot with graveclothes [bands Takhrikhin], and his face with the napkin, Lazarus stood forth, shuddering and silent, in the cold light of earth's day. In that multitude, now more pale and shuddering than the man bound in the graveclothes, the Only One majestically calm was He, Who before had been so deeply moved and troubled Himself, as He now bade them Loose him, and let him go.

We know no more. Holy Writ in this also proves its Divine authorship and the reality of what is here recorded. The momentarily lifted veil has again fallen over the darkness of the Most Holy Place, in which is only the Ark of His Presence and the cloudy incense of our worship. What happened afterwards, how they loosed him, what they said, what thanks, or praise, or worship, the sisters spoke, and what were Lazarus first words, we know not. And better so. Did Lazarus remember aught of the late past, or was not rather the rending of the grave a real rending from the past: the awakening so sudden, the transition so great, that nothing of the bright vision remained, but its impress just as a marvellously beautiful Jewish legend has it, that before entering this world, the soul of a child has seen all of heaven and hell, of past, present, and future; but that, as the Angel strikes it on the mouth to waken it into this world, all of the other has passed from the mind? Again we say: We know not and it is better so.

And here abruptly breaks off this narrative. Some of those who had seen it believed on Him; others hurried back to Jerusalem to tell it to the Pharisees. Then was hastily gathered a meeting of the Sanhedrists, not to judge Him, but to deliberate what was to be done. That He was really doing these miracles, there could be no question among them. Similarly, all but one or two had no doubt as to the source of these miracles. If real, they were of Satanic agency and all the more tremendous they were, the more certainly so. But whether really of Satanic power, or merely a Satanic delusion, one thing, at least, was evident, that, if He were let alone, all men would believe on Him? And then, if He headed the Messianic movement of the Jews as a nation, alike the Jewish City and Temple, and Israel as a nation, would perish in the fight with Rome. But what was to be done? They had not the courage of, though the wish for, judicial murder, till he who was the High Priest, Caiaphas, reminded them of the well-known Jewish adage, that it is better one man should die, than the community perish. Yet, even so, he who spoke was the High Priest; and for the last time, ere in speaking the sentence he spoke it forever as against himself and the office he held, spake through him God's Voice, not as regards the counsel of murder, but this, that His Death should be for that

nation' nay, as John adds, not only for Israel, but to gather into one fold all the now scattered children of God.

This was the last prophecy in Israel; with the sentence of death on Israel's true High Priest died prophecy in Israel, died Israel's High Priesthood. It had spoken sentence upon itself.

This was the first Friday of dark resolve. Henceforth it only needed to concert plans for carrying it out. Some one, perhaps Nicodemus, sent word of the secret meeting and resolution of the Sanhedrists.

That Friday and the next Sabbath Jesus rested in Bethany, with the same majestic calm which He had shown at the grave of Lazarus. Then He withdrew, far away to the obscure bounds of Peraea and Galilee, to a city of which the very location is now unknown. And there He continued with His disciples, withdrawn from the Jews till He would make His final entrance into Jerusalem .

Chapter 22 On The Journey to Jerusalem

Departure from Ephraim by way of Samaria and Galilee Healing of Ten Lepers Prophetic Discourse of the Coming Kingdom On Divorce: Jewish Views of It The Blessing to Little Children

(Matthew 19:1,2; Mark 10:1; Luke 17:11; Luke 17:12-19; Matthew 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17.)

The brief time of rest and quiet converse with His disciples in the retirement of Ephraim was past, and the Saviour of men prepared for His last journey to Jerusalem. All the three Synoptic Gospels mark this, although with varying details. From the mention of Galilee by Matthew, and by Luke of Samaria and Galilee or more correctly, between (along the frontiers of) Samaria and Galilee we may conjecture that, on leaving Ephraim, Christ made a very brief detour along the northern frontier to some place at the southern border of Galilee perhaps to meet at a certain point those who were to accompany him on his final journey to Jerusalem. This suggestion, for it is no more, is in itself not improbable, since some of Christ's immediate followers might naturally wish to pay a brief visit to their friends in Galilee before going up to Jerusalem. And it is further confirmed by the notice of Mark, that among those who had followed Christ there were many women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem. For, we can scarcely suppose that these many women had gone with Him in the previous autumn from Galilee to the Feast of Tabernacles, nor that they were with Him at the Feast of the Dedication, or had during the winter followed Him through Peraea, nor yet that they had been at Bethany. All these difficulties are obviated if, as suggested, we suppose that Christ had passed from Ephraim along the border of Samaria to a place in Galilee, there to meet such of His disciples as would go up with Him to Jerusalem. The whole company would then form one of those festive bands which travelled to the Paschal Feast, nor would there be anything strange or unusual in the appearance of such a band, in this instance under the leadership of Jesus.

Another and deeply important notice, furnished by SS. Matthew and Mark, is, that during this journey through Peraea, great multitudes resorted to, and followed Him, and that He healed and taught them. This will account for the incidents and Discourses by the way, and also how, from among many deeds, the Evangelists may have selected for record what to them seemed the most important or novel, or else best accorded with the plans of their respective narratives.

Thus, to begin with, Luke alone relates the very first incident by the way, and the first Discourse. Nor is it difficult to understand the reason of this. To one who, like Matthew, had followed Christ in His Galilean Ministry, or, like Mark, had been the penman of Peter, there would be nothing so peculiar or novel in the healing of lepers as to introduce this on the overcrowded canvas of the last days. Indeed, they had both already recorded what may be designated as a typical healing of lepers. But Luke had not recorded such healing before; and the restoration of ten at the same time would seem

to the beloved physician matter, not only new in his narrative, but of the deepest importance. Besides, we have already seen, that the record of the whole of this East-Jordan Ministry is peculiar to Luke; and we can scarcely doubt that it was the result of personal inquiries made by the Evangelist on the spot, in order to supplement what might have seemed to him a gap in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. This would explain his fulness of detail as regards incidents, and, for example, the introduction of the history of Zacchaeus, which to Mark, or rather to Peter, but especially to Matthew (himself once a publican), might appear so like that which they had so often witnessed and related, as scarcely to require special narration. On the same ground we account for the record by Luke of Christ's Discourse predictive of the Advent of the Messianic Kingdom. This Discourse is evidently in its place at the beginning of Christ's last journey to Jerusalem. But the other two Evangelists merge it in the account of the fuller teaching on the same subject during the last days of Christ's sojourn on earth.

It is a further confirmation of our suggestion as to the road taken by Jesus, that of the ten lepers whom, at the outset of His journey, He met when entering into a village, one was a Samaritan. It may have been that the district was infested with leprosy; or these lepers may, on tidings of Christ's approach, have hastily gathered there. It was, as fully explained in another place, in strict accordance with Jewish Law, that these lepers remained both outside the village and far from Him to Whom they now cried for mercy. And, without either touch or even command of healing, Christ bade them go and show themselves as healed to the priests. For this it was, as will be remembered, not necessary to repair to Jerusalem. Any priest might declare unclean or clean provided the applicants presented themselves singly, and not in company, for his inspection. And they went at Christ's bidding, even before they had actually experienced the healing! So great was their faith, and, may we not almost infer, the general belief throughout the district, in the power of the Master. And as they went, the new life coursed in their veins. Restored health began to be felt, just as it ever is, not before, nor yet after believing, but in the act of obedience of a faith that has not yet experienced the blessing.

But now the characteristic difference between these men appeared. Of the ten, equally recipients of the benefit, the nine Jews continued their way presumably to the priests while the one Samaritan in the number at once turned back, with a loud voice glorifying God. The whole event may not have occupied many minutes, and Jesus with his followers may still have stood on the same spot whence He bade the ten lepers go show themselves to the priests. He may have followed them with his eyes, as, but a few steps on their road of faith, health overtook them, and the grateful Samaritan, with voice of loud thanksgiving, hastened back to his Healer. No longer now did he remain afar off, but in humblest reverence fell on his face at the Feet of Him to Whom he gave thanks. This Samaritan had received more than new bodily life and health: he had found spiritual life and healing.

But why did the nine Jews not return? Assuredly, they must have had some faith when first seeking help from Christ, and still more when setting out for the priests before they had experienced the healing. But perhaps, regarding it from our own standpoint, we may overestimate the faith of these men. Bearing in mind the views of the Jews at the time, and what constant succession of miraculous cures without a single failure had been witnessed these years, it cannot seem strange that lepers should apply to Jesus. Not yet perhaps did it, in the circumstances, involve very much greater faith to go to the priests at His bidding implying, of course, that they were or would be healed. But it was far different to turn back and to fall down at His feet in lowly worship and thanksgiving. That made a man a disciple.

Many questions here suggest themselves: Did these nine Jews separate from the one Samaritan when they felt healed, common misfortune having made them companions and brethren, while the bond was snapped so soon as they felt themselves free of their common sorrow? The History of the Church and of individual Christians furnishes, alas! not a few analogous instances. Or did these nine Jews, in their legalism and obedience to the letter, go on to the priests, forgetful that, in obeying the letter, they violated the spirit of Christ's command? Of this also there are, alas! only too many parallel cases which will occur to the mind. Or was it Jewish pride, which felt it had a right to the blessings,

and attributed them, not to the mercy of Christ, but to God; or, rather, to their own relation as Israel to God? Or, what seems to us the most probable, was it simply Jewish ingratitude and neglect of the blessed opportunity now within their reach a state of mind too characteristic of those who know not the time of their visitation' and which led up to the neglect, rejection, and final loss of the Christ? Certain it is, that the Lord emphasised the terrible contrast in this between the children of the household and this stranger. And here another important lesson is implied in regard to the miraculous in the Gospels. The history shows how little spiritual value or efficacy they attach to miracles, and how essentially different in this respect their tendency is from all legendary stories. The lesson conveyed in this case is, that we may expect, and even experience, miracles, without any real faith in the Christ; with belief, indeed, in His Power, but without surrender to His Rule. According to the Gospels, a man might either seek benefit from Christ, or else receive Christ through such benefit. In the one case, the benefit sought was the object, in the other, the means; in the one, it was the goal, in the other, the road to it; in the one, it gave healing, in the other, brought salvation; in the one, it ultimately led away from, in the other, it led to Christ and to discipleship. And so Christ now spake it to this Samaritan: Arise, go thy way; thy faith has made thee whole. But to all time there are here to the Church lessons of most important distinction.

2. The Discourse concerning the Coming of the Kingdom, which is reported by Luke immediately after the healing of the ten lepers, 17 will be more conveniently considered in connection with the fuller statement of the same truths at the close of our Lord's Ministry. It was probably delivered a day or so after the healing of the lepers, and marks a farther stage in the Peraean journey towards Jerusalem. For, here we meet once more the Pharisees as questioners. This circumstance, as will presently appear, is of great importance, as carrying us back to the last mention of an interpellation by the Pharisees.

3. This brings us to what we regard as, in point of time, the next Discourse of Christ on this journey, recorded both by Matthew, and, in briefer form, by Mark. These Evangelists place it immediately after their notice of the commencement of this journey. For reasons previously indicated, Luke inserts the healing of the lepers and the prophetic Discourse, while the other two Evangelists omit them. On the other hand, Luke omits the Discourse here reported by Matthew and Mark, because, as we can readily see, its subject matter would, from the standpoint of his Gospel, not appear of such supreme importance as to demand insertion in a narrative of selected events. The subject matter of that Discourse is, in answer to Pharisaic tempting and exposition of Christ's teaching in regard to the Jewish law and practice of divorce. The introduction of this subject in the narratives of Matthew and Mark seems, to say the least, abrupt. But the difficulty is entirely removed, or, rather, changed into undesigned evidence, when we fit it into the general history. Christ had advanced farther on His journey, and now once more encountered the hostile Pharisees. It will be remembered that He had met them before in the same part of the country, and answered their taunts and objections, among other things, by charging them with breaking in spirit that Law of which they professed to be the exponents and representatives. And this He had proved by reference to their views and teaching on the subject of divorce. This seems to have rankled in their minds. Probably they also imagined, it would be easy to show on this point a marked difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of Moses and the Rabbis, and to enlist popular feeling against Him. Accordingly, when these Pharisees again encountered Jesus, now on his journey to Judaea, they resumed the subject precisely where it had been broken off when they had last met Him, only now with the object of tempting Him. Perhaps it may also have been in the hope that, by getting Christ to commit Himself against divorce in Peraea the territory of Herod they might enlist against Him, as formerly against the Baptist, the implacable hatred of Herodias.

But their main object evidently was to involve Christ in controversy with some of the Rabbinic Schools. This appears from the form in which they put the question, whether it was lawful to put away a wife for every cause? Mark, who gives only a very condensed account, omits this clause; but in Jewish circles the whole controversy between different teachers turned upon this point. All held that

divorce was lawful, the only question being as to its grounds. We will not here enter on the unsavoury question of Divorce among the Jews, to which the Talmud devotes a special tractate. There can, however, be no question that the practice was discouraged by many of the better Rabbis, alike in word and by their example; nor yet, that the Jewish Law took the most watchful care of the interests of the woman. In fact, if any doubt were raised as to the legal validity of the letter of divorce, the Law always pronounced against the divorce. At the same time, in popular practice, divorce must have been very frequent; while the principles underlying Jewish legislation on the subject are most objectionable. These were in turn due to a comparatively lower estimate of woman, and to an unspiritual view of the marriage-relation. Christianity has first raised woman to her proper position, not by giving her a new one, but by restoring and fully developing that assigned to her in the Old Testament. Similarly, as regards marriage, the New Testament which would have us to be, in one sense, eunuchs for the Kingdom of God has also fully restored and finally developed what the Old Testament had already implied. And this is part of the lesson taught in this Discourse, both to the Pharisees and to the disciples.

To begin with, divorce (in the legal sense) was regarded as a privilege accorded only to Israel, not to the Gentiles. On the question: what constituted lawful grounds of divorce, the Schools were divided. Taking their departure from the sole ground of divorce mentioned in Deut. xxiv. 1: a matter of shame [literally, nakedness] the School of Shammai applied the expression only to moral transgressions, and, indeed, exclusively to unchastity. It was declared that, if a woman were as mischievous as the wife of Ahab, or [according to tradition] as the wife of Korah, it were well that her husband should not divorce her, except it be on the ground of adultery. At the same time this must not be regarded as a fixed legal principle, but rather as an opinion and good counsel for conduct. The very passages, from which the above quotations are made, also afford only too painful evidence of the laxity of views and practices current. And the Jewish Law unquestionably allowed divorce on almost any grounds; the difference being, not as to what was lawful, but on what grounds a man should set the Law in motion, and make use of the absolute liberty which it accorded him. Hence, it is a serious mistake on the part of Commentators to set the teaching of Christ on this subject by the side of that of Shammai.

But the School of Hillel proceeded on different principles. It took the words, matter of shame in the widest possible sense, and declared it sufficient ground for divorce if a woman had spoiled her husband's dinner. Rabbi Akiba thought, that the words, if she find no favour in his eyes implied that it was sufficient if a man had found another woman more attractive than his wife. All agreed that moral blame made divorce a duty, and that in such cases a woman should not be taken back. According to the Mishnah, if they transgressed against the Law of Moses or of Israel. The former is explained as implying a breach of the laws of tithing, of setting apart the first of the dough, and of purification. The latter is explained as referring to such offences as that of going in public with uncovered head, of spinning in the public streets, or entering into talk with men, to which others add, that of brawling, or of disrespectfully speaking of her husband's parents in his presence. A troublesome, or quarrelsome wife might certainly be sent away; and ill repute, or childlessness (during ten years) were also regarded as valid grounds of divorce.

Incomparably as these principles differ from the teaching of Christ, it must again be repeated, that no real comparison is possible between Christ and even the strictest of the Rabbis, since none of them actually prohibited divorce, except in case of adultery, nor yet laid down those high eternal principles which Jesus enunciated. But we can understand how, from the Jewish point of view, tempting Him they would put the question, whether it was lawful to divorce a wife for every cause. Avoiding their cavils, the Lord appealed straight to the highest authority God's institution of marriage. He, Who at the beginning [from the first, originally, had made them male and female, had in the marriage-relation joined them together to the breaking of every other, even the nearest, relationship, to be one flesh that is, to a union which was unity. Such was the fact of God's ordering. It followed, that they were one and what God had willed to be one, man might not put asunder. Then followed the natural Rabbinic objection, why, in such case, Moses had commanded a bill of divorcement. Our Lord replied

by pointing out that Moses had not commanded divorce, only tolerated it on account of their hardness of heart, and in such case commanded to give a bill of divorce for the protection of the wife. And this argument would appeal the more forcibly to them, that the Rabbis themselves taught that a somewhat similar concession had been made by Moses in regard to female captives of war, as the Talmud has it, on account of the evil impulse. But such a separation, our Lord continued, had not been provided for in the original institution, which was a union to unity. Only one thing could put an end to that unity its absolute breach. Hence, to divorce one's wife (or husband) while this unity lasted, and to marry another, was adultery, because, as the divorce was null before God, the original marriage still subsisted and, in that case, the Rabbinic Law would also have forbidden it. The next part of the Lord's inference, that whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery is more difficult of interpretation. Generally, it is understood as implying that a woman divorced for adultery might not be married. But it has been argued, that, as the literal rendering is, whoso marrieth her when put away it applies to the woman whose divorce had just before been prohibited, and not, as is sometimes thought, to a woman divorced [under any circumstances]. Be this as it may, the Jewish Law, which regarded marriage with a woman divorced under any circumstances as unadvisable, absolutely forbade that of the adulterer with the adulteress.

Whatever, therefore, may be pleaded, on account of the hardness of heart in modern society, in favour of the lawfulness of relaxing Christ's law of divorce, which confines dissolution of marriage to the one ground (of adultery), because then the unity of God's making has been broken by sin such a retrocession was at least not in the mind of Christ, nor can it be considered lawful, either by the Church or for individual disciples. But, that the Pharisees had rightly judged, when tempting Him what the popular feeling on the subject would be, appears even from what His disciples [not necessarily the Apostles] afterwards said to Him. They waited to express their dissent till they were alone with Him in the house and then urged that, if it were as Christ had taught, it would be better not to marry at all. To which the Lord replied, that this saying of the disciples, it is not good to marry could not be received by all men, but only by those to whom it was given. For, there were three cases in which abstinence from marriage might lawfully be contemplated. In two of these it was, of course, natural; and, where it was not so, a man might, for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake' that is, in the service of God and of Christ have all his thoughts, feelings, and impulses so engaged that others were no longer existent. For, we must here beware of a twofold misunderstanding. It is not bare abstinence from marriage, together, perhaps, with what the German Reformers called *immunda continentia* (unchaste continency), which is here commended, but such inward preoccupation with the Kingdom of God as would remove all other thoughts and desires. It is this which requires to be given of God; and which he that is able to receive it' who has the moral capacity for it is called upon to receive. Again, it must not be imagined that this involves any command of celibacy: it only speaks of such who in the active service of the Kingdom feel, that their every thought is so engrossed in the work, that wishes and impulses to marriage are no longer existent in them.

4. The next incident is recorded by the three Evangelists. It probably occurred in the same house where the disciples had questioned Christ about His teaching on the Divinely sacred relationship of marriage. And the account of His blessing of infants and little children most aptly follows on the former teaching. It is a scene of unspeakable sweetness and tenderness, where all is in character alas! Even the conduct of the disciples as we remember their late inability to sympathise with the teaching of the Master. And it is all so utterly unlike what Jewish legend would have invented for its Messiah. We can understand how, when One Who so spake and wrought, rested in the house, Jewish mothers should have brought their little children and some their infants to Him, that He might touch put His Hands on them, and pray. What power and holiness must these mothers have believed to be in His touch and prayer; what life to be in, and to come from Him; and what gentleness and tenderness must His have been, when they dared so to bring these little ones! For, how utterly contrary it was to all Jewish notions, and how incompatible with the supposed dignity of a Rabbi, appears from the rebuke of the disciples. It was an occasion and an act when, as the fuller and more pictorial account

of Mark inform us, Jesus was much displeased' the only time this strong word is used of our Lord and said unto them: Suffer the little children to come to Me, hinder them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God. Then He gently reminded His own disciples of their grave error, by repeating what they had apparently forgotten, 64 that, in order to enter the Kingdom of God, it must be received as by a little child that here there could be no question of intellectual qualification, nor of distinction due to a great Rabbi, but only of humility, receptiveness, meekness, and a simple application to, and trust in, the Chri And so He folded these little ones in His Arms, put His Hands upon them, and blessed them, 65 and thus forever consecrated that child-life, which a parent's love and faith brought to Him; blessed it also by the laying-on of His Hands as it were, ordained it as we fully believe to all time, strength because of His enemies.

Chapter 23 The Last Incidents in Perea

The Young Ruler who went Away Sorrowful To Leave All for Christ Prophecy of His Passion The Request of Salome, and of James and John

(Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23; Matthew 19:23-30; Mark 10:23-31; Luke 18:24-30; Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34; Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45.)

As we near the goal, the wondrous story seems to grow in tenderness and pathos. It is as if all the loving condescension of the Master were to be crowded into these days; all the pressing need also, and the human weaknesses of His disciples. And with equal compassion does He look upon the difficulties of them who truly seek to come to Him, and on those which, springing from without, or even from self and sin, beset them who have already come. Let us try reverently to follow His steps, and learn of His words.

As He was going forth into the way we owe this trait, as one and another in the same narrative, to Mark probably at early morn, as He left the house where He had forever folded into His Arms and blessed the children brought to Him by believing parents His progress was arrested. It was a young man a ruler probably of the local Synagogue, who came with all haste, running and with lowliest gesture [kneeling], to ask what to him, nay to us all, is the most important question. Remembering that, while we owe to Mark the most graphic touches, Matthew most fully reports the words that had been spoken, we might feel inclined to adopt that reading of them in Matthew which is not only most strongly supported, but at first sight seems to remove some of the difficulties of exposition. This reading would omit in the address of the young ruler the word good before Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? and would make Christ's reply read: Why askest thou Me concerning the good [that which is good]? One there is Who is good. This would meet not only the objection, that in no recorded instance was a Jewish Rabbi addressed as Good Master but the obvious difficulties connected with the answer of Christ, according to the common reading: Why callest thou Me good? none is good, save only One: God. But on the other side it must be urged, that the undoubted reading of the question and answer in Mark's and Luke's Gospels agrees with that of our Authorised Version, and hence that any difficulty of exposition would not be removed, only shifted, while the reply of Christ tallies far better with the words Good Master the strangeness of such an address from Jewish lips giving only the more reason for taking it up in the reply: Why callest thou Me good? none is good save only One: God. Lastly, the designation of God as the only One good agrees with one of the titles given Him in Jewish writings: The Good One of the world

The actual question of the young Ruler is one which repeatedly occurs in Jewish writings, as put to a Rabbi by his disciples. Amidst the different answers given, we scarcely wonder that they also pointed

to observance of the Law. And the saying of Christ seems the more adapted to the young Ruler when we recall this sentence from the Talmud: There is nothing else that is good but the Law. But here again the similarity is only of form, not of substance. For, it will be noticed, that, in the more full account by Matthew, Christ leads the young Ruler upwards through the table of the prohibitions of deeds to the first positive command of deed, and then, by a rapid transition, to the substitution for the tenth commandment in its negative form of this wider positive and all-embracing command: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Any Jewish Ruler but especially one so earnest, would have at once answered a challenge on the first four commandments by 'Yes' and that not self-righteously, but sincerely, though of course in ignorance of their real depth. And this was not the time for lengthened discussion and instruction; only for rapid awakening, to lead up, if possible, from earnestness and a heart-drawing towards the master to real discipleship. Best here to start from what was admitted as binding the ten commandments and to lead from that in them which was least likely to be broken, step by step, upwards to that which was most likely to awaken consciousness of sin.

And the young Ruler did not, as that other Pharisee, reply by trying to raise a Rabbinic disputation over the Who is neighbour to me? but in the sincerity of an honest heart answered that he had kept that is, so far as he knew them all these things from his youth. On this Matthew puts into his mouth the question What lack I yet? Even if, like the other two Evangelists, he had not reported it, we would have supplied this from what follows. There is something intensely earnest, genuine, generous, even enthusiastic, in the higher cravings of the soul in youth, when that youth has not been poisoned by the breath of the world, or stricken with the rottenness of vice. The soul longs for the true, the higher, the better, and, even if strength fails of attainment, we still watch with keen sympathy the form of the climber upwards. Much more must all this have been the case with a Jewish youth, especially in those days; one, besides, like this young Ruler, in whose case affluence of circumstances not only allowed free play, but tended to draw out and to give full scope to the finer feelings, and where wealth was joined with religiousness and the service of a Synagogue. There was not in him that pride of riches, nor the self-sufficiency which they so often engender; nor the pride of conscious moral purity and aim after righteousness before God and man; nor yet the pride of the Pharisee or of the Synagogue-Ruler. What he had seen and heard of the Christ had quickened to greatest intensity all in him that longed after God and heaven, and had brought him in this supreme moral earnestness, lowly, reverently, to the Feet of Him in Whom, as he felt, all perfectness was, and from Whom all perfectness came. He had not been first drawn to Christ, and thence to the pure, as were the publicans and sinners; but, like so many even as Peter, when in that hour of soul-agony he said: To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life he had been drawn to the pure and the higher, and therefore to Christ. To some the way to Christ is up the Mount of Transfiguration, among the shining Beings of another world; to some it is across dark Kedron, down the deep Garden of Gethsemane with its agonies. What matters it, if it equally lead to Him, and equally bring the sense of need and experience of pardon to the seeker after the better, and the sense of need and experience of holiness to the seeker after pardon?

And Jesus saw it all: down, through that intense upward look; inwards, through that question, What lack I yet? far deeper down than that young man had ever seen into his own heart even into depths of weakness and need which he had never sounded, and which must be filled, if he would enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus saw what he lacked; and what He saw, He showed him. For, looking at him in his sincerity and earnestness, He loved him' as He loves those that are His Own. One thing was needful for this young man: that he should not only become His disciple, but that, in so doing, he should come and follow Christ. We can all perceive how, for one like this young man, such absolute and entire coming and following Christ was needful. And again, to do this, it was in the then circumstances both of this young man and of Christ necessary, that he should go and part with all that he had. And what was an outward, was also, as we perceive it, an inward necessity; and so, as ever, Providence and Grace would work together. For, indeed, to many of us some outward step is often not merely the means of but absolutely needful for, spiritual decision. To some it is the first open

profession of Christ; to others, the first act of self-denial, or the first distinct No'-saying; to some, it may be, it is the first prayer, or else the first act of self-consecration. Yet it seems, as if it needed not only the word of God but a stroke of some Moses'-rod to make the water gush forth from the rock. And thus would this young Ruler have been perfect; and what he had given to the poor have become, not through merit nor by way of reward, but really treasure in heaven.

What he lacked was earth's poverty and heaven's riches; a heart fully set on following Christ: and this could only come to him through willing surrender of all. And so this was to him alike the means, the test, and the need. To him it was this; to us it may be something quite other. Yet each of us has a lack something quite deep down in our hearts, which we may never yet have known, and which we must know and give up, if we would follow Christ. And without forsaking, there can be no following. This is the law of the Kingdom and it is such, because we are sinners, because sin is not only the loss of the good, but the possession of something else in its place.

There is something deeply pathetic in the mode in which Mark describes it: he was sad' the word painting a dark gloom that overshadowed the face of the young man. Did he then not lack it, this one thing? We need scarcely here recall the almost extravagant language in which Rabbinism describes the miseries of poverty; we can understand his feelings without that. Such a possibility had never entered his mind: the thought of it was terribly startling. That he must come and follow Christ, then and there, and in order to do so, sell all that he had and give it away among the poor, and be poor himself, a beggar, that he might have treasure in heaven; and that this should come to him as the one thing needful from that Master in Whom he believed, from Whose lips he would learn the one thing needful, and who but a little before had been to him the All in All! It was a terrible surprise, a sentence of death to his life, and of life to his death. And that it should come from His lips, at Whose Feet he had run to kneel, and Who held for him the keys of eternal life! Rabbinism had never asked this; if it demanded almsgiving, it was in odious boastfulness; while it was declared even unlawful to give away all one's possessions at most, only a fifth of them might be dedicated.

And so, with clouded face he gazed down into what he lacked within; but also gazed up in Christ on what he needed. And, although we hear no more of him, who that day went back to his rich home very poor, because very sorrowful we cannot but believe that he, whom Jesus loved, yet found in the poverty of earth the treasure of heaven.

Nor was this all. The deep pity of Christ for him, who had gone that day, speaks also in his warning to his disciples. But surely those are not only riches in the literal sense which make it so difficult for a man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven so difficult, as to amount almost to that impossibility which was expressed in the common Jewish proverb, that a man did not even in his dreams see an elephant pass through the eye of a needle. But when in their perplexity the disciples put to each other the saddened question: Who then can be saved? He pointed them onward, then upward, as well as inward, teaching them that, what was impossible of achievement by man in his own strength, God would work by His Almighty Grace.

It almost jars on our ears, and prepares us for still stranger and sadder to come, when Peter, perhaps as spokesman of the rest, seems to remind the Lord that they had forsaken all to follow Him.

Matthew records also the special question which Simon added to it: What shall we have therefore? and hence his Gospel alone makes mention of the Lord's reply, in so far as it applied only to the Apostles. For, that reply really bore on two points: on the reward which all who left everything to follow Christ would obtain; and on the special acknowledgment awaiting the Apostles of Christ. In regard to the former we mark, that it is twofold. They who had forsaken all for His sake and the Gospel's for the Kingdom of God's sake' and these three expressions explain and supplement each other would receive in this time manifold more of new, and better, and closer relationships of a spiritual kind for those which they had surrendered, although, as Mark significantly adds, to prevent all possible mistakes, with persecutions. But by the side of this stands out unclouded and bright the promise for the world to come of everlasting life. As regarded the Apostles personally, some mystery lies on the special promise to them. We could quite understand, that the distinction of rule to be bestowed on

them might have been worded in language taken from the expectations of the time, in order to make the promise intelligible to them. But, unfortunately, we have no explanatory information to offer. The Rabbis, indeed, speak of a renovation or regeneration of the world (which was to take place after the 7,000 or else 5,000 years of the Messianic reign. Such a renewal of all things is not only foretold by the prophets, and dwelt upon in later Jewish writings, but frequently referred to in Rabbinic literature. But as regards the special rule or judgment of the Apostles, or ambassadors of the Messiah, we have not, and, of course, cannot expect any parallel in Jewish writings. That the promise of such rule and judgment to the Apostles is not peculiar to what is called the Judaic Gospel of Matthew, appears from its renewal at a later period, as recorded by Luke. Lastly, that it is in accordance with Old Testament promise, will be seen by a reference to Dan. vii. 9, 10, 14, 27; and there are few references in the New Testament to the blessed consummation of all things in which such renewal of the world, and even the rule and judgment of the representatives of the Church, are not referred to. However mysterious, therefore, in their details, these things seem clear, and may without undue curiosity or presumption be regarded as the teaching of our Lord: the renewal of earth; the share in His rule and judgment which He will in the future give to His saints; the special distinction which He will bestow on His Apostles, corresponding to the special gifts, privileges, and rule with which He had endowed them on earth, and to their nearness to, and their work and sacrifices for Him; and, lastly, we may add, the preservation of Israel as a distinct, probably tribal, nation. 35 As for the rest, as so much else, it is behind the veil and, even as we see it, better for the Church that the veil has not been further lifted.

The reference to the blessed future with its rewards was followed by a Parable, recorded, as, with one exception, all of that series, only by Matthew. It will best be considered in connection with the last series of Christ's Parables. But it was accompanied by what, in the circumstances, was also a most needful warning. Thoughts of the future Messianic reign, its glory, and their own part in it might have so engrossed the minds of the disciples as to make them forgetful of the terrible present, immediately before them. In such case they might not only have lapsed into that most fatal Jewish error of a Messiah-King, Who was not Saviour, the Crown without the Cross, but have even suffered shipwreck of their faith, when the storm broke on the Day of His Condemnation and Crucifixion. If ever, it was most needful in that hour of elation to remind and forewarn them of what was to be expected in the immediate future. How truly such preparation was required by the disciples, appears from the narrative itself.

There was something sadly mysterious in the words with which Christ had closed His Parable, that the last should be first and the first last and it had carried dark misgivings to those who heard it. And now it seemed all so strange! Yet the disciples could not have indulged in illusions. His own sayings on at least two previous occasions, however ill or partially understood, must have led them to expect at any rate grievous opposition and tribulations in Jerusalem, and their endeavour to deter Christ from going to Bethany to raise Lazarus proves, that they were well aware of the danger which threatened the Master in Judaea. Yet not only was He now going up to Jerusalem but there was that in His bearing which was quite unusual. As Mark writes, He was going before them' we infer, apart and alone, as One, busy with thoughts all engrossing, Who is setting Himself to do His great work, and goes to meet it. And going before them was Jesus; and they were amazed [utterly bewildered, viz. the Apostles]; and those who were following, were afraid. It was then that Jesus took the Apostles apart, and in language more precise than ever before, told them how all things that were written by the prophets shall be accomplished on the Son of Man not merely, that all that had been written concerning the Son of Man should be accomplished, but a far deeper truth, all-comprehensive as regards the Old Testament: that all its true prophecy ran up into the sufferings of the Christ. As the three Evangelists report it, the Lord gave them full details of His Betrayal, Crucifixion, and Resurrection. And yet we may, without irreverence, doubt whether on that occasion He had really entered into all those particulars. In such case it would seem difficult to explain how, as Luke reports, they understood none of these things, and the saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things

which were spoken; and again, how afterwards the actual events and the Resurrection could have taken them so by surprise. Rather do we think, that the Evangelists report what Jesus had said in the light of after-events. He did tell them of His Betrayal by the leaders of Israel, and that into the hands of the Gentiles; of His Death and Resurrection on the third day yet in language which they could, and actually did, misunderstand at the time, but which, when viewed in the light of what really happened, was perceived by them to have been actual prediction of those terrible days in Jerusalem and of the Resurrection-morning. At the time they may have thought that it pointed only to His rejection by Jews and Gentiles, to Sufferings and Death and then to a Resurrection, either of His Mission or to such a reappearance of the Messiah, after His temporary disappearance, as Judaism expected.

But all this time, and with increasing fierceness, were terrible thoughts contending in the breast of Judas; and beneath the tramp of that fight was there only a thin covering of earth, to hide and keep from bursting forth the hellish fire of the master-passion within.

One other incident, more strange and sad than any that had preceded, and the Peraean stay is forevered. It almost seems, as if the fierce blast of temptation, the very breath of the destroyer, were already sweeping over the little flock, as if the twilight of the night of betrayal and desertion were already falling around. And now it has fallen on the two chosen disciples, James and John the sons of thunder and one of them, the beloved disciple! Peter, the third in that band most closely bound to Christ, had already had his fierce temptation, and would have it more fiercely to the uprooting of life, if the Great High Priest had not specially interceded for him. And, as regards these two sons of Zebedee and of Salome, we know what temptation had already beset them, how John had forbidden one to cast out devils, because he followed not with them, and how both he and his brother, James, would have called down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans who would not receive Christ. It was essentially the same spirit that now prompted the request which their mother Salome preferred, not only with their full concurrence, but, as we are expressly told, with their active participation. There is the same faith in the Christ, the same allegiance to Him, but also the same unhallowed earnestness, the same misunderstanding and, let us add, the same latent self-exaltation, as in the two former instances, in the present request that, as the most honoured of His guests, and also as the nearest to Him, they might have their places at His Right Hand and at His Left in His Kingdom. Terribly incongruous as is any appearance of self-seeking at that moment and with that prospect before them, we cannot but feel that there is also an intenseness of faith and absoluteness of love almost sublime, when the mother steps forth from among those who follow Christ to His Suffering and Death, to proffer such a request with her sons, and for them.

And so the Saviour seems to have viewed it. With unspeakable patience and tenderness, He, Whose Soul is filled with the terrible contest before Him, bears with the weakness and selfishness which could cherish such thoughts and ambitions even at such a time. To correct them, He points to that near prospect, when the Highest is to be made low. Ye know not what ye ask! The King is to be King through suffering are they aware of the road which leads to that goal? Those nearest to the King of sorrows must reach the place nearest to Him by the same road as He. Are they prepared for it; prepared to drink that cup of soul-agony, which the Father will hand to Him to submit to, to descend into that baptism of consecration, when the floods will sweep over Him? In their ignorance, and listening only to the promptings of their hearts, they imagine that they are. Nay, in some measure it would be so; yet, finally to correct their mistake: to sit at His Right and at His Left Hand, these were not marks of mere favour for Him to bestow in His own words: it is not Mine to give except to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.

But as for the other ten, when they heard of it, it was only the pre-eminence which, in their view, James and John had sought, which stood out before them, to their envy, jealousy, and indignation. And so, in that tremendously solemn hour would the fierce fire of controversy have broken out among them, who should have been most closely united; would jealousy and ambition have filled those who should have been most humble, and fierce passions, born of self, the world and Satan, have distracted them, whom the thought of the great love and the great sacrifice should have filled. It was

the rising of that storm on the sea, the noise and tossing of those angry billows, which He hushed into silence when He spoke to them of the grand contrast between the princes of the Gentiles as they lord it over them or the great among them as they domineer over men, and their own aims how, whosoever would be great among them, must seek his greatness in service not greatness through service, but the greatness of service; and, whosever would be chief or rather first among them, let it be in service. And had it not been thus, was it not, would it not be so in the Son of Man and must it not therefore be so in them who would be nearest to Him, even His Apostles and disciples? The Son of Man let them look back, let them look forward He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. And then, breaking through the reserve that had held Him, and revealing to them the inmost thoughts which had occupied Him when He had been alone and apart, going before them on the way, He spoke for the first time fully what was the deepest meaning of His Life, Mission, and Death: to give His Life a ransom for many to pay with His Life-Blood the price of their redemption, to lay down His Life for them: in their room and stead, and for their salvation.

These words must have sunk deep into the heart of one at least in that company. A few days later, and the beloved disciple tells us of this Ministry of His Love at the Last Supper, and ever afterwards, in his writings or in his life, does he seem to bear them about with him, and to re-echo them. Ever since also have they remained the foundation-truth, on which the Church has been built: the subject of her preaching, and the object of her experience.

Chapter 24 In Jericho and at Bethany

Jericho A Guest with Zacchaeus The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus The Plot at Jerusalem At Bethany, and in the House of Simon the Leper

(Luke 19:1-10; Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43; John 11:55-12:1; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:2-11.)

Once more, and now for the last time, were the fords of Jordan passed, and Christ was on the soil of Judaea proper. Behind Him were Peraea and Galilee; behind Him the Ministry of the Gospel by Word and Deed; before Him the final Act of His Life, towards which all had consciously tended. Rejected as the Messiah of His people, not only in His Person but as regarded the Kingdom of God, which, in fulfilment of prophecy and of the merciful Counsel of God, He had come to establish, He was of set purpose going up to Jerusalem, there to accomplish His Decease, to give His Life a Ransom for many. And He was coming, not, as at the Feast of Tabernacles, privately, but openly, at the head of His Apostles, and followed by many disciples a festive band going up to the Paschal Feast, of which Himself was to be the Lamb of sacrifice.

The first station reached was Jericho, the City of Palms a distance of only about six hours from Jerusalem. The ancient City occupied not the site of the present wretched hamlet, but lay about half an hour to the north-west of it, by the so-called Elisha-Spring. A second spring rose an hour further to the north-north-west. The water of these springs, distributed by aqueducts, gave, under a tropical sky, unsurpassed fertility to the rich soil along the plain of Jericho, which is about twelve or fourteen miles wide. The Old Testament history of the City of Palms is sufficiently known. It was here also that King Zedekiah had, on his flight, been seized by the Chaldeans, and thither a company of 345 men returned under Zerubbabel. In the war of liberation under the Maccabees the Syrians had attempted to fortify Jericho. These forts were afterwards destroyed by Pompey in his campaign. Herod the Great had first plundered, and then partially rebuilt, fortified, and adorned Jericho. It was here that he died. His son Archelaus also built there a palace. At the time of which we write, it was, of course, under Roman dominion. Long before, it had recovered its ancient fame for fertility and its prosperity.

Josephus describes it as the richest part of the country, and calls it a little Paradise. Antony had bestowed the revenues of its balsam-plantations as an Imperial gift upon Cleopatra, who in turn sold them to Herod. Here grew palm-trees of various kinds, sycamores, the cypress-flower, the myrobalsamum, which yielded precious oil, but especially the balsam-plant. If to these advantages of climate, soil, and productions we add, that it was, so to speak, the key of Judaea towards the east, that it lay on the caravan-road from Damascus and Arabia, that it was a great commercial and military centre, and lastly, its nearness to Jerusalem, to which it formed the last station on the road of the festive pilgrims from Galilee and Peraea it will not be difficult to understand either its importance or its prosperity.

We can picture to ourselves the scene, as our Lord on that afternoon in early spring beheld it. There it was, indeed, already summer, for, as Josephus tells us, even in winter the inhabitants could only bear the lightest clothing of linen. We are approaching it from the Jordan. It is protected by walls, flanked by four forts. These walls, the theatre, and the amphitheatre, have been built by Herod; the new palace and its splendid gardens are the work of Archelaus. All around wave groves of feathery palms, rising in stately beauty; stretch gardens of roses, and especially sweet-scented balsam-plantations, the largest behind the royal gardens, of which the perfume is carried by the wind almost out to sea, and which may have given to the city its name (Jericho, the perfumed). It is the Eden of Palestine, the very fairyland of the old world. And how strangely is this gem set! Deep down in that hollowed valley, through which tortuous Jordan winds, to lose his waters in the slimy mass of the Sea of Judgment. The river and the Dead Sea are nearly equidistant from the town, about six miles. Far across the river rise the mountains of Moab, on which lies the purple and violet colouring. Towards Jerusalem and northwards stretch those bare limestone hills, the hiding-place of robbers along the desolate road towards the City. There, and in the neighbouring wilderness of Judaea, are also the lonely dwellings of anchorites, while over all this strangely varied scene has been flung the many-coloured mantle of a perpetual summer. And in the streets of Jericho a motley throng meets: pilgrims from Galilee and Peraea, priests who have a station here, traders from all lands, who have come to purchase or to sell, or are on the great caravan-road from Arabia and Damascus robbers and anchorites, wild fanatics, soldiers, courtiers, and busy publicans for Jericho was the central station for the collection of tax and custom, both on native produce and on that brought from across Jordan. And yet it was a place for dreaming also, under that glorious summer-sky, in those scented groves when these many figures from far-off lands and that crowd of priests, numbering, according to tradition, half those in Jerusalem, seemed fleeting as in a vision, and (as Jewish legend had it) the sound of Temple music came from Moriah, borne in faint echoes on the breeze, like the distant sound of many waters.

It was through Jericho that Jesus, having entered was passing. Tidings of the approach of the festive band, consisting of His disciples and Apostles, and headed by the Master Himself, must have preceded Him, these six miles from the fords of Jordan. His Name, His Works, His Teaching perhaps Himself, must have been known to the people of Jericho, just as they must have been aware of the feelings of the leaders of the people, perhaps of the approaching great contest between them and the Prophet of Nazareth. Was He a good man; had He wrought those great miracles in the power of God or by Satanic influence was He the Messiah or the Antichrist; would He bring salvation to the world, or entail ruin on His own nation? Conquer or be destroyed? Was it only one more in the long list of delusions and illusions, or was the long-promised morning of heaven's own day at last to break? Close by was Bethany, whence tidings had come; most incredible yet unquestioned and unquestionable, of the raising of Lazarus, so well known to all in that neighbourhood. And yet the Sanhedrin it was well known had resolved on His death! At any rate there was no concealment about Him; and here, in face of all, and accompanied by His followers humble and unlettered, it must be admitted, but thoroughly convinced of His superhuman claims, and deeply attached Jesus was going up to Jerusalem to meet His enemies!

It was the custom, when a festive band passed through a place, that the inhabitants gathered in the streets to bid their brethren welcome. And on that afternoon, surely, scarce any one in Jericho but

would go forth to see this pilgrim-band. Men curious, angry, half-convinced; women, holding up their babes, it may be for a passing blessing, or pushing forward their children that in after years they might say they had seen the Prophet of Nazareth; traders, soldiers, a solid wall of onlookers before their gardens was this crowd along the road by which Jesus was to pass. Would He only pass through the place, or be the guest of some of the leading priests in Jericho; would He teach, or work any miracle, or silently go on His way to Bethany? Only one in all that crowd seemed unwelcome; alone, and out of place. It was the chief of the Publicans' the head of the tax and customs department. As his name shows, he was a Jew; but yet that very name Zacchaeus, Zakkai the just or pure sounded like mockery. We know in what repute Publicans were held, and what opportunities of wrongdoing and oppression they possessed. And from his after confession it is only too evident, that Zacchaeus had to the full used them for evil. And he had got that for which he had given up alike his nation and his soul: he was rich. If, as Christ had taught, it was harder for any rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, what of him who had gotten his riches by such means?

And yet Zacchaeus was in the crowd that had come to see Jesus. What had brought him? Certainly, not curiosity only. Was it the long working of conscience; or a dim, scarcely self-avowed hope of something better; or had he heard Him before; or of Him, that He was so unlike those harsh leaders and teachers of Israel, who refused all hope on earth and in heaven to such as him, that Jesus received nay, called to Him the publicans and sinners? Or was it only the nameless, deep, irresistible inward drawing of the Holy Ghost, which may perhaps have brought us, as it has brought many, we know not why or how, to the place and hour of eternal decision for God, and of infinite grace to our souls? Certain it is, that, as so often in such circumstances, Zacchaeus encountered only hindrances which seemed to render his purpose almost impossible. The narrative is singularly detailed and pictorial. Zacchaeus, trying to push his way through the press and repulsed; Zacchaeus, little of stature and unable to look over the shoulders of others: it reads almost like a symbolical story of one who is seeking to see Jesus but cannot push his way because of the crowd whether of the self-righteous, or of his own conscious sins, that seem to stand between him and the Saviour, and which will not make room for him, while he is unable to look over them because he is, so to speak, little of stature.

Needless questions have been asked as to the import of Zacchaeus wish to see who Jesus was. It is just this vagueness of desire, which Zacchaeus himself does not understand, which is characteristic. And, since he cannot otherwise succeed, he climbs up one of those wide spreading sycamores in a garden, perhaps close to his own house, along the only road by which Jesus can pass to see Him. Now the band is approaching, through that double living wall: first, the Saviour, viewing that crowd, with, ah! how different thoughts from theirs surrounded by His Apostles, the face of each expressive of such feelings as were uppermost; conspicuous among them, he who carried the bag with furtive, uncertain, wild glance here and there, as one who seeks to gather himself up to a terrible deed. Behind them are the disciples, men and women, who are going up with Him to the Fea Of all persons in that crowd the least noted, the most hindered in coming and yet the one most concerned, was the Chief Publican. It is always so it is ever the order of the Gospel, that the last shall be fir Yet never more self-unconscious was Zacchaeus than at the moment when Jesus was entering that garden-road, and passing under the overhanging branches of that sycamore, the crowd closing up behind, and following as He went along. Only one thought without ulterior conscious object, temporal or spiritual filled his whole being. The present absolutely held him when those wondrous Eyes, out of which heaven itself seemed to look upon earth, were upturned, and that Face of infinite grace, never to be forgotten, beamed upon him the welcome of recognition, and He uttered the self-spoken invitation in which the invited was the real Inviter, the guest the true Ho Did Jesus know Zacchaeus before or was it only all open to His Divine gaze as He looked up and saw him? This latter seems, indeed, indicated by the must of His abiding in the house of Zacchaeus as if His Father had so appointed it, and Jesus come for that very purpose. And herein, also, seems this story spiritually

symbolical.

As bidden by Christ, Zacchaeus made haste and came down. Under the gracious influence of the Holy Ghost he received Him rejoicing. Nothing was as yet clear to him, and yet all was joyous within his soul. In that dim twilight of the new day, and at this new creation, the Angels sang and the Sons of God shouted together, and all was melody and harmony in his heart. But a few steps farther, and they were at the house of the Chief Publican. Strange hostelry this for the Lord; yet not stranger in that Life of absolute contrasts than that first hostelry, the same, even as regards its designation in the Gospel, as when the manger had been His cradle; not so strange, as at the Sabbath-feast of the Pharisee Rulers of the Synagogue. But now the murmur of disappointment and anger ran through the accompanying crowd which perhaps had not before heard what had passed between Jesus and the Publican, certainly, had not understood, or else not believed its import because He was gone to be guest with a man that was a sinner. Oh, terribly fatal misunderstanding of all that was characteristic of the Mission of the Christ! oh, terribly fatal blindness and jealousy! But it was this sudden shock of opposition which awoke Zacchaeus to full consciousness. The hands so rudely and profanely thrust forward only served to rend the veil. It often needs some such sudden shock of opposition, some sudden sharp contest, to waken the new convert to full consciousness, to bring before him, in clear outline, alike the past and the present. In that moment Zacchaeus saw it all: what his past had been, what his present was, what his future must be. Standing forth, not so much before the crowd as before the Lord, and not ashamed, nay, scarcely conscious of the confession it implied so much is the sorrow of the past in true repentance swallowed up by the joy of the present Zacchaeus vowed fourfold restoration, as by a thief, of what had become his through false accusation, as well as the half of all his goods to the poor. And so the whole current of his life had been turned, in those few moments, through his joyous reception of Christ, the Saviour of sinners; and Zacchaeus the public robber, the rich Chief of the Publicans, had become an almsgiver.

It was then, when it had been all done in silence, as mostly all God's great works, that Jesus spake it to him, for his endless comfort, and in the hearing of all, for their and our teaching: This day became arose there salvation to this house forasmuch as truly and spiritually, this one also is a son of Abraham. And, as regards this man, and all men, so long as time endureth: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

The Evangelistic record passes with significant silence over that night in the house of Zacchaeus. It forms not part of the public history of the Kingdom of God, but of that joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not. It was in the morning, when the journey in company with His disciples was resumed, that the next public incident occurred in the healing of the blind by the wayside. The small divergences in the narratives of the three Evangelists are well known. It may have been that, as Matthew relates, there were two blind men sitting by the wayside, and that Luke and Mark mention only one the latter by name as Bar Timaeus' because he was the spokesman. But, in regard to the other divergence, trifling as it is, that Luke places the incident at the arrival, the other two Evangelists at the departure of Jesus from Jericho, it is better to admit our inability to conciliate these differing notes of time, than to make clumsy attempts at harmonising them. We can readily believe that there may have been circumstances unknown to us, which might show these statements to be not really diverging. And, if it were otherwise, it would in no way affect the narrative itself. Historical information could only have been derived from local sources; and we have already seen reason to infer that Luke had gathered his from personal inquiry on the spot. And it may have been, either that the time was not noted, or wrongly noted, or that this miracle, as the only one in Jericho, may have been reported to him before mention was made of the reception by Christ of Zacchaeus. In any case, it shows the independence of the account of Luke from that of the other two Evangelists.

Little need be said of the incident itself: it is so like the other Deeds of His Life. So to speak it was left in Jericho as the practical commentary, and the seal on what Christ had said and done the previous evening in regard to Zacchaeus. Once more the crowd was following Jesus, as in the morning He resumed the journey with His disciples. And, there by the wayside, begging, sat the blind men there,

where Jesus was passing. As they heard the tramp of many feet and the sound of many voices, they learned that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. It is all deeply touching, and deeply symbolical. But what must their faith have been, when there, in Jericho, they not only owned Him as the true Messiah, but cried in the deep significance of that special mode of address, as coming from Jewish lips: Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me! It was quite in accordance with what one might almost have expected certainly with the temper of Jericho, as we learned it on the previous evening, when many of the multitude they which went before would have bidden that cry for help be silent as an unwarrantable intrusion and interruption, if not a needless and meaningless application. But only all the louder and more earnest rose the cry, as the blind felt that they might forever be robbed of the opportunity that was slipping past. And He, Who listens to every cry of distress, heard this. He stood still, and commanded the blind to be called. Then it was that the sympathy of sudden hope seized the multitude the wonder about to be wrought fell, so to speak, in its heavenly influences upon them, as they comforted the blind in the agony of rising despair with the words, He calleth thee. As so often, we are indebted to Mark for the vivid sketch of what passed. We can almost see Bartimaeus as, on receiving Christ's summons, he casts aside his upper garment and hastily comes. That question: what he would that Jesus should do unto him, must have been meant for those around more than for the blind. The cry to the son of David had been only for mercy. It might have been for alms though, as the address, so the gift bestowed in answer, would be right royal after the order of David. But our general cry for mercy must ever become detailed when we come into the Presence of the Christ. And the faith of the blind rose to the full height of the Divine possibilities opened before them. Their inward eyes had received capacity for The Light, before that of earth lit up their long darkness. In the language of Matthew, Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. This is one aspect of it. The other is that given by Mark and Luke, in recording the words with which He accompanied the healing: Thy faith has saved thee.

And these two results came of it: all the people, when they saw it gave praise unto God; and, as for Bartimaeus, though Jesus had bidden him go thy way yet, immediately he received his sight he followed Jesus in the way glorifying God. And this is Divine disobedience, or rather the obedience of the spirit as against the observance of the letter.

The arrival of the Paschal band from Galilee and Peraea was not in advance of many others. In truth, most pilgrims from a distance would probably come to the Holy City some days before the Feast, for the sake of purification in the Temple, since those who for any reason needed such and there would be few families that did not require it generally deferred it till the festive season brought them to Jerusalem. We owe this notice, and that which follows, to John, and in this again recognise the Jewish writer of the Fourth Gospel. It was only natural that these pilgrims should have sought for Jesus, and, when they did not find Him, discuss among themselves the probability of His coming to the Feast. His absence would, after the work which He had done these three years, the claim which He made, and the defiant denial of it by the priesthood and the Sanhedrin, have been regarded as a virtual surrender to the enemy. There was a time when He need not have appeared at the Feast when, as we see it, it was better He should not come. But that time was past. The chief priests and the Pharisees also knew it, and they had given commandment that, if any one knew where He was, he would show it, that they might take Him. It would be better to ascertain where He lodged, and to seize Him before He appeared in public, in the Temple.

But it was not as they had imagined. Without concealment Christ came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom He had raised from the dead. He came there six days before the Passover and yet His coming was such that they could not take Him. They might as well take Him in the Temple; nay, more easily. For, the moment His stay in Bethany became known, much people of the Jews came out, not only for His sake, but to see that Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. And, of those who so came, many went away believing. And how, indeed, could it be otherwise? Thus one of their plans was frustrated, and the evil seemed only to grow worse. The Sanhedrin could perhaps not be moved to such flagrant outrage of all Jewish Law, but the chief priests who had no such scruples, consulted

how they might put Lazarus also to death.

Yet, not until His hour had come could man do aught against Christ or His disciples. And, in contrast to such scheming, haste and search, we mark the majestic calm and quiet of Him Who knew what was before Him. Jesus had arrived at Bethany six days before the Passover—that is, on a Friday. The day after was the Sabbath, and they made Him a supper. It was the special festive meal of the Sabbath. The words of John seem to indicate that the meal was a public one, as if the people of Bethany had combined to do Him this honour, and so share the privilege of attending the feast. In point of fact, we know from Matthew and Mark that it took place in the house of Simon the Leper—not, of course, an actual leper—but one who had been such. Perhaps his guestchamber was the largest in Bethany; perhaps the house was nearest to the Synagogue; or there may have been other reasons for it, unknown to us—least likely is the suggestion that Simon was the husband of Martha, or else her father. But all is in character. Among the guests is Lazarus: and, prominent in service, Martha; and Mary (the unnamed woman of the other two Gospels, which do not mention that household by name), is also true to her character. She had an alabaster of spikenard genuine which was very precious. It held a litra (or which was a Roman pound and its value could not have been less than nearly 9l. Remembering the price of Nard, as given by Pliny, and that the Syrian was only next in value to the Indian, which Pliny regarded as the best ointment of genuine Nard—unadulterated and unmixed with any other balsam (as the less expensive kinds were), such a price (300 dinars = nearly 9l.) would be by no means excessive; indeed, much lower than at Rome. But, viewed in another light, the sum spent was very large, remembering that 200 dinars (about 6l.) nearly sufficed to provide bread for 5,000 men with their families, and that the ordinary wages of a labourer amounted to only one dinar a day.

We can here offer only conjectures, But it is, at least, not unreasonable to suppose—remembering the fondness of Jewish women for such perfumes that Mary may have had that alabaster of very costly ointment from olden days, before she had learned to serve Christ. Then, when she came to know Him, and must have learned how constantly that Decease, of which He ever spoke, was before His Mind, she may have put it aside, kept it against the day of His burying. And now the decisive hour had come. Jesus may have told her, as He had told the disciples, what was before Him in Jerusalem at the Feast, and she would be far more quick to understand, even as she must have known far better than they, how great was the danger from the Sanhedrin. And it is this believing apprehension of the mystery of His Death on her part, and this preparation of deepest love for it—this mixture of sorrow, faith, and devotion—which made her deed so precious, that, wherever in the future the Gospel would be preached, this also that she had done would be recorded for a memorial of her. And the more we think of it, the better can we understand, how at that last feast of fellowship, when all the other guests realised not—no, not even His disciples—how near the end was, she would come beforehand to anoint His Body for the burying. Her faith made it a twofold anointing: that of the best Guest at the last feast, and that of preparation for that Burial which, of all others, she apprehended as so terribly near. And deepest humility now offered, what most earnest love had provided, and intense faith, in view of what was coming, applied. And so she poured the precious ointment over His Head, over His Feet then, stooping over them, wiped them with her hair, as if, not only in evidence of service and love, but in fellowship of His Death. And the house was filled—and to all time His House, the Church, is filled with the odour of the ointment.

It is ever the light which throws the shadows of objects—and this deed of faith and love now cast the features of Judas in gigantic dark outlines against the scene. He knew the nearness of Christ's Betrayal, and hated the more; she knew of the nearness of His precious Death, and loved the more. It was not that he cared for the poor, when, taking the mask of charity, he simulated anger that such costly ointment had not been sold, and the price given to the poor. For he was essentially dishonest, a thief and covetousness was the underlying master-passion of his soul. The money, claimed for the poor, would only have been used by himself. Yet such was his pretence of righteousness, such his influence as a man of prudence among the disciples, and such their sad weakness, that they, or at

least some expressed indignation among themselves and against her who had done the deed of love, which, when viewed in the sublimeness of a faith, that accepted and prepared for the death of a Saviour Whom she so loved, and to Whom this last, the best service she could, was to be devoted, would forever cause her to be thought of as an example of loving. There is something inexpressibly sad, yet so patient, gentle, and tender in Christ's Let her alone. Surely, never could there be waste in ministry of love to Him! Nay, there is unspeakable pathos in what He says of His near Burying, as if He would still their souls in view of it. That He, Who was ever of the poor and with them, Who for our sakes became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich, should have to plead for a last service of love to Himself, and for Mary, and as against a Judas, seems indeed, the depth of self-abasement. Yet, even so, has this falsely-spoken plea for the poor become a real plea, since He has left us this, as it were, as His last charge, and that by His own Death, that we have the poor always with us. And so do even the words of covetous dishonesty become, when passing across Him, transformed into the command of charity, and the breath of hell is changed into the summer-warmth of the Church's constant service to Christ in the ministry to His poor.