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**Matthew-Acts**

*by David Brown*

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

## MATTHEW

*Commentary by* **DAVID BROWN**

### INTRODUCTION

THE *author* of this Gospel was a publican or tax gatherer, residing at Capernaum, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. As to his identity with the “Levi” of the second and third Gospels, and other particulars, see on ~~4009~~ Matthew 9:9. Hardly anything is known of his apostolic labors. That, after preaching to his countrymen in Palestine, he went to the East, is the general testimony of antiquity; but the precise scene or scenes of his ministry cannot be determined. That he died a natural death may be concluded from the belief of the best-informed of the Fathers — that of the apostles only three, James the Greater, Peter, and Paul, suffered martyrdom. That the first Gospel was written by this apostle is the testimony of all antiquity.

For the *date* of this Gospel we have only internal evidence, and that far from decisive. Accordingly, opinion is much divided. That it was the first issued of all the Gospels was universally believed. Hence, although in the order of the Gospels, those by the two apostles were placed first in the oldest manuscripts of the *Old Latin* version, while in all the *Greek* manuscripts, with scarcely an exception, the order is the same as in our Bibles, the Gospel according to Matthew is “in every case” placed first. And as this Gospel is of all the four the one which bears the most evident marks of having been prepared and constructed with a special view to the Jews — who certainly first required a written Gospel, and would be the first to make use of it — there can be no doubt that it was issued before any of the others. That it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem is equally certain; for as HUG observes [*Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 316, FOSDICK’s translation], when he reports our Lord’s prophecy of that awful event, on coming to the warning about “the abomination of desolation” which they should “see standing in the holy place,” he interposes (contrary to his invariable practice, which is to *relate* without *remark*) a call to his readers to read intelligently — “Whoso readeth, let

him understand” (<sup>4145</sup>Matthew 24:15) — a call to attend to the divine signal for flight which could be intended only for those who lived before the event. But how long before that event this Gospel was written is not so clear. Some internal evidences seem to imply a very early date. Since the Jewish Christians were, for five or six years, exposed to persecution from their own countrymen — until the Jews, being persecuted by the Romans, had to look to themselves — it is not likely (it is argued) that they should be left so long without some written Gospel to reassure and sustain them, and Matthew’s Gospel was eminently fitted for that purpose. But the digests to which Luke refers in his Introduction (see on <sup>4100</sup>Luke 1:1) would be sufficient for a time, especially as the living voice of the “eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word” was yet sounding abroad. Other considerations in favor of a very early date — such as the tender way in which the author seems studiously to speak of Herod Antipas, as if still reigning, and his writing of Pilate apparently as if still in power — seem to have no foundation in fact, and cannot therefore be made the ground of reasoning as to the date of this Gospel. Its Hebraic structure and hue, though they prove, as we think, that this Gospel must have been published at a period considerably anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, are no evidence in favor of so early a date as A.D. 37 or 38 — according to some of the Fathers, and, of the moderns, TILLEMONT, TOWNSON, OWEN, BIRKS, TREGELLES. On the other hand, the date suggested by the statement of IRENAEUS [*Against Heresies*, 3.1], that Matthew put forth his Gospel while Peter and Paul were at Rome preaching and founding the Church — or after A.D. 60 — though probably the majority of critics are in favor of it, would seem rather too late, especially as the second and third Gospels, which were doubtless published, as well as this one, before the destruction of Jerusalem, had still to be issued. Certainly, such statements as the following, “Wherefore that field is called the field of blood *unto this day*” (<sup>4178</sup>Matthew 27:8); “And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews *until this day*” (<sup>4185</sup>Matthew 28:15), bespeak a date considerably later than the events recorded. We incline, therefore, to a date intermediate between the earlier and the later dates assigned to this Gospel, without pretending to greater precision.

We have adverted to the strikingly Jewish character and coloring of this Gospel. The facts which it selects, the points to which it gives prominence, the cast of thought and phraseology, all bespeak the Jewish point of view *from* which it was written and *to* which it was directed. This has been noticed from the beginning, and is universally acknowledged. It is of the greatest consequence to the right interpretation of it; but the tendency among some even of the best of the Germans to infer, from this special design of

the first Gospel, a certain laxity on the part of the Evangelist in the treatment of his facts, must be guarded against.

But by far the most interesting and important point connected with this Gospel is the *language* in which it was written. It is believed by a formidable number of critics that this Gospel was originally written in what is loosely called *Hebrew*, but more correctly *Aramaic*, or *Syro-Chaldaic*, the native tongue of the country at the time of our Lord; and that the *Greek* Matthew which we now possess is a translation of that work, either by the Evangelist himself or some unknown hand. The evidence on which this opinion is grounded is wholly external, but it has been deemed conclusive by GROTIUS, MICHAELIS (and his translator), MARSH, TOWNSON, CAMPBELL, OLSHAUSEN, CRESWELL, MEYER, EBRARD, LANGE, DAVIDSON, CURETON, TREGELLES, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, etc. The evidence referred to cannot be given here, but will be found, with remarks on its unsatisfactory character, in the *Introduction to the Gospels* prefixed to our larger *Commentary*, pp. 28-31.

But how stand the facts as to our *Greek* Gospel? We have not a title of historical evidence that it is a *translation*, either by Matthew himself or anyone else. All antiquity refers to it as the work of Matthew the publican and apostle, just as the other Gospels are ascribed to their respective authors. This *Greek* Gospel was from the first received by the Church as an integral part of the one quadriform *Gospel*. And while the Fathers often advert to the two Gospels which we have from apostles, and the two which we have from men not apostles — in order to show that as that of Mark leans so entirely on Peter, and that of Luke on Paul, these are really no less apostolical than the other two — though we attach less weight to this circumstance than they did, we cannot but think it striking that, in thus speaking, they never drop a hint that the full apostolic authority of the *Greek* Matthew had ever been questioned on the ground of its not being the *original*. Further, not a trace can be discovered in this Gospel itself of its being a translation. MICHAELIS tried to detect, and fancied that he had succeeded in detecting, one or two such. Other Germans since, and DAVIDSON and CURETON among ourselves, have made the same attempt. But the entire failure of all such attempts is now generally admitted, and candid advocates of a *Hebrew* original are quite ready to own that none such are to be found, and that but for external testimony no one would have imagined that the *Greek* was not the original. This they regard as showing how perfectly the translation has been executed; but those who know best what translating from one language into another is will be the readiest to own that this is tantamount to giving up the question. This Gospel proclaims its own originality in a number of striking points; such as its

manner of quoting from the Old Testament, and its phraseology in some peculiar cases. But the close *verbal coincidences* of our *Greek* Matthew with the next two Gospels must not be quite passed over. There are but two possible ways of explaining this. Either the translator, sacrificing verbal fidelity in his version, intentionally conformed certain parts of his author's work to the second and third Gospels — in which case it can hardly be called Matthew's Gospel at all — or our *Greek* Matthew is itself the original.

Moved by these considerations, some advocates of a *Hebrew* original have adopted the theory of a *double original*; the external testimony, they think, requiring us to believe in a *Hebrew* original, while internal evidence is decisive in favor of the originality of the *Greek*. This theory is espoused by GUERICKS, OLSHAUSEN, THIERSCH, TOWNSON, TREGELLES, etc. But, besides that this looks too like an artificial theory, invented to solve a difficulty, it is utterly void of historical support. There is not a vestige of testimony to support it in Christian antiquity. This ought to be decisive against it.

It remains, then, that our *Greek* Matthew is the original of that Gospel, and that no other original ever existed. It is greatly to the credit of DEAN ALFORD, that after maintaining, in the first edition of his *Greek Testament* the theory of a *Hebrew* original, he thus expresses himself in the second and subsequent editions: "On the whole, then, I find myself constrained to abandon the view maintained in my first edition, and to adopt that of a Greek original."

One argument has been adduced on the other side, on which not a little reliance has been placed; but the determination of the main question does not, in our opinion, depend upon the point which it raises. It has been very confidently affirmed that the *Greek* language was not sufficiently understood by the Jews of Palestine when Matthew published his Gospel to make it at all probable that he would write a Gospel, for their benefit in the first instance, in that language. Now, as this merely alleges the improbability of a *Greek* original, it is enough to place against it the evidence already adduced, which is positive, in favor of the sole originality of our *Greek* Matthew. It is indeed a question how far the *Greek* language was understood in Palestine at the time referred to. But we advise the reader not to be drawn into that question as essential to the settlement of the other one. It is an element in it, no doubt, but not an essential element. There are extremes on both sides of it. The old idea, that our Lord hardly ever spoke anything but *Syro-Chaldaic*, is now pretty nearly exploded. Many, however, will not go the length, on the other side, of HUG (in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 326, etc.) and ROBERTS ("Discussions of the Gospels," etc. pp. 25, etc.). For ourselves, though we

believe that our Lord, in all the more public scenes of His ministry, spoke in *Greek*, all we think it necessary here to say is that there is no ground to believe that *Greek* was so little understood in Palestine as to make it improbable that Matthew would write his Gospel exclusively in that language — so improbable as to outweigh the evidence that he did so. And when we think of the number of digests or short narratives of the principal facts of our Lord's history which we know from Luke (~~1:1-4~~ Luke 1:1-4) were floating about for some time before he wrote his Gospel, of which he speaks by no means disrespectfully, and nearly all of which would be in the mother tongue, we can have no doubt that the Jewish Christians and the Jews of Palestine generally would have from the first reliable written matter sufficient to supply every necessary requirement until the publican-apostle should leisurely draw up the first of the four Gospels in a language to them not a strange tongue, while to the rest of the world it was *the* language in which the entire quadriform Gospel was to be for all time enshrined. The following among others hold to this view of the sole originality of the *Greek* Matthew: ERASMUS, CALVIN, BEZA, LIGHTFOOT, WETSTEIN, LARDNER, HUG, FRITZSCHE, CREDNER, DE WETTE, STUART, DA COSTA, FAIRBAIRN, ROBERTS.

On two other questions regarding this Gospel it would have been desirable to say something, had not our available space been already exhausted: The *characteristics*, both in language and matter, by which it is distinguished from the other three, and its *relation to the second and third Gospels*. On the latter of these topics — whether one or more of the Evangelists made use of the materials of the other Gospels, and, if so, which of the Evangelists drew from which — the opinions are just as numerous as the possibilities of the case, every conceivable way of it having one or more who plead for it. The most popular opinion until recently — and perhaps the most popular still — is that the second Evangelist availed himself more or less of the materials of the first Gospel, and the third of the materials of both the first and second Gospels. Here we can but state our own belief, that each of the first three Evangelists wrote independently of both the others; while the fourth, familiar with the first three, wrote to supplement them, and, even where he travels along the same line, wrote quite independently of them. This judgment we express, with all deference for those who think otherwise, as the result of a close study of each of the Gospels in immediate juxtaposition and comparison with the others. On the former of the two topics noticed, the linguistic peculiarities of each of the Gospels have been handled most closely and ably by CREDNER [*Einleitung (Introduction to the New Testament)*], of whose results a good summary will be found in DAVIDSON'S *Introduction to the New Testament*. The other peculiarities of the Gospels have been most felicitously and beautifully

brought out by DA COSTA in his *Four Witnesses*, to which we must simply refer the reader, though it contains a few things in which we cannot concur.

# CHAPTER 1

## ⋈ MATTHEW 1:1-17.

### GENEALOGY OF CHRIST. (⋈ LUKE 3:23-38).

**1. The book of the generation** — an expression purely Jewish; meaning, “table of the genealogy.” In ⋈ Genesis 5:1 the same expression occurs in this sense. We have here, then, the title, not of this whole Gospel of Matthew, but only of the first seventeen verses.

**of Jesus Christ** — For the meaning of these glorious words, see on ⋈ Matthew 1:16; ⋈ Matthew 1:21. “Jesus,” the name given to our Lord at His circumcision (⋈ Luke 2:21), was that by which He was familiarly known while on earth. The word “Christ” — though applied to Him as a proper name by the angel who announced His birth to the shepherds (⋈ Luke 2:11), and once or twice used in this sense by our Lord Himself (⋈ Matthew 23:8,10 ⋈ Mark 9:41) — only began to be so used by others about the very close of His earthly career (⋈ Matthew 26:68 ⋈ 27:17). The full form, “Jesus Christ,” though once used by Himself in His Intercessory Prayer (⋈ John 17:3), was never used by others till after His ascension and the formation of churches in His name. Its use, then, in the opening words of this Gospel (and in ⋈ Matthew 1:17,18) is in the style of the late period when our Evangelist wrote, rather than of the events he was going to record.

**the son of David, the son of Abraham** — As Abraham was the *first* from whose family it was predicted that Messiah should spring (⋈ Genesis 22:18), so David was the *last*. To a Jewish reader, accordingly, these behoved to be the two great starting-points of any true genealogy of the promised Messiah; and thus this opening verse, as it stamps the first Gospel as one peculiarly Jewish, would at once tend to conciliate the writer’s people. From the nearest of those two fathers came that familiar name of the promised Messiah, “the son of David” (⋈ Luke 20:41), which was applied to Jesus, either in devout acknowledgment of His rightful claim to it (⋈ Matthew 9:27 ⋈ 20:31), or in the way of insinuating inquiry whether such were the case (see on ⋈ John 4:29; ⋈ Matthew 12:23).



**2. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren** — Only the fourth son of Jacob is here named, as it was from his loins that Messiah was to spring (<sup><440></sup>Genesis 49:10).

**3-6. And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; 4. And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; 5. And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; 6. And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her of Urias** — Four women are here introduced; two of them Gentiles by birth — *Rachab* and *Ruth*; and three of them with a blot at their names in the Old Testament — *Thamar*, *Rachab*, and *Bathsheba*. This feature in the present genealogy — herein differing from that given by Luke — comes well from him who styles himself in his list of the Twelve, what none of the other lists do, “Matthew *the publican*”; as if thereby to hold forth, at the very outset, the unsearchable riches of that grace which could not only fetch in “them that are afar off,” but teach down even to “publicans and harlots,” and raise them to “sit with the princes of his people.” David is here twice emphatically styled “David the king,” as not only the first of that royal line from which Messiah was to descend, but the one king of all that line from which the throne that Messiah was to occupy took its name — “the throne of David.” The angel Gabriel, in announcing Him to His virgin-mother, calls it “the throne of David His father,” sinking all the intermediate kings of that line, as having no importance save as links to connect the first and the last king of Israel as father and son. It will be observed that Rachab is here represented as the great-grandmother of David (see <sup><400></sup>Ruth 4:20-22 <sup><4321></sup>1 Chronicles 2:11-15) — a thing not beyond possibility indeed, but extremely improbable, there being about four centuries between them. There can hardly be a doubt that one or two intermediate links are omitted.

**7-8. And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; 8. And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias** — or Uzziah. Three kings are here omitted — *Ahaziah*, *Joash*, and *Amaziah* (<sup><4311></sup>1 Chronicles 3:11,12). Some omissions behoved to be made, to compress the whole into three fourteens (<sup><4017></sup>Matthew 1:17). The reason why these, rather than other names, are omitted, must be sought in *religious* considerations — either in the connection of those kings with the house of Ahab (as LIGHTFOOT, EBRARD, and ALFORD view it); in their slender right to be regarded as true links in the theocratic chain (as LANGE takes it); or in some similar disqualification.

**11. And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren** — Jeconiah was Josiah’s grandson, being the son of Jehoiakim, Josiah’s second son (<sup><4315></sup>

Chronicles 3:15); but Jehoiakim might well be sunk in such a catalogue, being a mere puppet in the hands of the king of Egypt (<sup><4404></sup>2 Chronicles 36:4). The “brethren” of Jechonias here evidently mean his uncles — the chief of whom, Mattaniah or Zedekiah, who came to the throne (<sup><12417></sup>2 Kings 24:17), is, in <sup><4430></sup>2 Chronicles 36:10, as well as here, called “his brother.”

**about the time they were carried away to Babylon** — literally, “of their migration,” for the Jews avoided the word “captivity” as too bitter a recollection, and our Evangelist studiously respects the national feeling.

**12. And after they were brought to Babylon** — after the migration of Babylon.

**Jechonias begat Salathiel** — So <sup><13817></sup>1 Chronicles 3:17. Nor does this contradict <sup><4020></sup>Jeremiah 22:30, “Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man (Coniah, or Jeconiah) childless”; for what follows explains in what sense this was meant — “for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David.” He *was* to have seed, but no *reigning* child.

**and Salathiel** — or Shealtiel.

**begat Zorobabel** — So <sup><4542></sup>Ezra 3:2 <sup><16216></sup>Nehemiah 12:1 <sup><3004></sup>Haggai 1:1. But it would appear from <sup><13189></sup>1 Chronicles 3:19 that Zerubbabel was Salathiel’s grandson, being the son of Pedaiah, whose name, for some reason unknown, is omitted.

**13-15. And Zorobabel begat Abiud**, etc. — None of these names are found in the Old Testament; but they were doubtless taken from the public or family registers, which the Jews carefully kept, and their accuracy was never challenged.

**16. And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus** — From this it is clear that the genealogy here given is not that of Mary, but of Joseph; nor has this ever been questioned. And yet it is here studiously proclaimed that Joseph was not the natural, but only the legal father of our Lord. His birth of a virgin was known only to a few; but the acknowledged descent of his legal father from David secured that the descent of Jesus Himself from David should never be questioned. See on <sup><4020></sup>Matthew 1:20.

**who is called Christ** — signifying “anointed.” It is applied in the Old Testament to the *kings* (<sup><9816></sup>1 Samuel 24:6,10); to the *priests* (<sup><8005></sup>Leviticus 4:5,16, etc.); and to the *prophets* (<sup><11916></sup>1 Kings 19:16) — these all being anointed with oil, the symbol of the needful spiritual gifts to consecrate them to their respective offices; and it was applied, in its most sublime and comprehensive sense, to the promised Deliverer, inasmuch as He was to be

consecrated to an office embracing all three by the immeasurable anointing of the Holy Ghost (<sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 61:1; compare <sup><483></sup>John 3:34).

**17. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away** — or migration.

**into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon** — the migration of Babylon.

**unto Christ are fourteen generations** — that is, the whole may be conveniently divided into three fourteens, each embracing one marked era, and each ending with a notable event, in the Israelitish annals. Such artificial aids to memory were familiar to the Jews, and much larger gaps than those here are found in some of the Old Testament genealogies. In <sup><4500></sup>Ezra 7:1-5 no fewer than six generations of the priesthood are omitted, as will appear by comparing it with <sup><4003></sup>1 Chronicles 6:3-15. It will be observed that the last of the three divisions of fourteen appears to contain only thirteen distinct names, including Jesus as the last. LANGE thinks that this was meant as a tacit hint that *Mary* was to be supplied, as the thirteenth link of the last chain, as it is impossible to conceive that the Evangelist could have made any mistake in the matter. But there is a simpler way of accounting for it. As the Evangelist himself (<sup><4017></sup>Matthew 1:17) reckons David twice — as the last of the first fourteen and the first of the second — so, if we reckon the second fourteen to end with Josiah, who was coeval with the “carrying away into captivity” (<sup><4015></sup>Matthew 1:11), and third to begin with Jeconiah, it will be found that the last division, as well as the other two, embraces fourteen names, including that of our Lord.

## <sup><4018></sup>MATTHEW 1:18-25.

### BIRTH OF CHRIST.

**18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise** — or, “thus.”

**When as his mother Mary was espoused** — rather, “betrothed.”

**to Joseph, before they came together, she was found** — discovered to be.

**with child of the Holy Ghost** — It was, of course, the fact only that was discovered; the explanation of the fact here given is the Evangelist’s own. That the Holy Ghost is a living conscious Person is plainly implied here, and is elsewhere clearly taught (<sup><4018></sup>Acts 5:3,4, etc.): and that, in the unity of the Godhead, He is distinct both from the Father and the Son, is taught with

equal distinctness (<sup><1819></sup>Matthew 28:19 <sup><134></sup>2 Corinthians 13:14). On the miraculous conception of our Lord, see on <sup><113></sup>Luke 1:35.

**19. Then Joseph her husband** — Compare <sup><112></sup>Matthew 1:20, “Mary, thy wife.” Betrothal was, in Jewish law, valid marriage. In giving Mary up, therefore, Joseph had to take legal steps to effect the separation.

**being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example** — to expose her (see <sup><1223></sup>Deuteronomy 22:23,24)

**was minded to put her away privily** — that is, privately by giving her the required writing of divorcement (<sup><1341></sup>Deuteronomy 24:1), in presence of only two or three witnesses, and without cause assigned, instead of having her before a magistrate. That some communication had passed between him and his betrothed, directly or indirectly, on the subject, after she returned from her three months’ visit to Elizabeth, can hardly be doubted. Nor does the purpose to divorce her necessarily imply disbelief, on Joseph’s part, of the explanation given him. Even supposing him to have yielded to it some reverential assent — and the Evangelist seems to convey as much, by ascribing the proposal to screen her to the *justice* of his character — he might think it altogether unsuitable and incongruous in such circumstances to follow out the marriage.

**20. But while he thought on these things** — Who would not feel for him after receiving such intelligence, and before receiving any light from above? As he brooded over the matter alone, in the stillness of the night, his domestic prospects darkened and his happiness blasted for life, his mind slowly making itself up to the painful step, yet planning how to do it in the way least offensive — at the last extremity the Lord Himself interposes.

**behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph thou son of David** — This style of address was doubtless advisedly chosen to remind him of what all the families of David’s line so early coveted, and thus it would prepare him for the marvellous announcement which was to follow.

**fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost** — Though a dark cloud now overhangs this relationship, it is unsullied still.

**21. And she shall bring forth a son** — Observe, it is not said, “she shall bear *thee* a son,” as was said to Zacharias of his wife Elizabeth (<sup><1113></sup>Luke 1:13).

**and thou** — as his legal father.

**shalt call his name JESUS** — from the *Hebrew* meaning “Jehovah the Savior”; in *Greek* JESUS — to the awakened and anxious sinner sweetest and most fragrant of all names, expressing so melodiously and briefly His whole saving office and work!

**for he shall save** — The “He” is here emphatic — He it is that shall save; He personally, and by personal acts (as WEBSTER and WILKINSON express it).

**his people** — the lost sheep of the house of Israel, in the first instance; for they were the only people He then had. But, on the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, the saved people embraced the “redeemed unto God by His blood out of every kindred and people and tongue and nation.”

**from their sins** — in the most comprehensive sense of salvation from sin (~~4008~~ Revelation 1:5 ~~4055~~ Ephesians 5:25-27).

**22. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet** — (~~2374~~ Isaiah 7:14).

**saying** — as follows.

**23. Behold, a virgin** — It should be “*the* virgin” meaning that particular virgin destined to this unparalleled distinction.

**shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us** — Not that He was to have this for a proper name (like “Jesus”), but that He should come to be known *in this character*, as God manifested in the flesh, and the living bond of holy and most intimate fellowship between God and men from henceforth and for ever.

**24. Then Joseph, being raised from sleep** — and all his difficulties now removed.

**did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife** — With what deep and reverential joy would this now be done on his part; and what balm would this minister to his betrothed one, who had till now lain under suspicions of all others the most trying to a chaste and holy woman — suspicions, too, arising from what, though to her an honor unparalleled, was to all around her wholly unknown!

**25. And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS** — The word “till” does not necessarily imply that they lived on a different footing afterwards (as will be evident from the use of the same word in ~~0658~~ 1 Samuel 15:35 ~~0659~~ 2 Samuel 6:23

<sup>4123</sup>Matthew 12:20); nor does the word “first-born” decide the much-disputed question, whether Mary had any children to Joseph after the birth of Christ; for, as LIGHTFOOT says, “The law, in speaking of the first-born, regarded not whether any were born *after* or no, but only that none were born before.” (See on <sup>4135</sup>Matthew 13:55,56).

# CHAPTER 2

## ~~THE~~ MATTHEW 2:1-12.

### VISIT OF THE MAGI TO JERUSALEM AND BETHLEHEM.

*The Wise Men Reach Jerusalem — The Sanhedrim, on Herod's Demand, Pronounce Bethlehem to Be Messiah's Predicted Birthplace (~~THE~~ Matthew 2:1-6).*

**1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea** — so called to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, near the Sea of Galilee (~~GEN~~ Joshua 19:15); called also *Beth-lehem-judah*, as being in that tribe (~~LEV~~ Judges 17:7); and *Ephrath* (~~GEN~~ Genesis 35:16); and combining both, *Beth-lehem Ephratah* (~~MIK~~ Micah 5:2). It lay about six miles southwest of Jerusalem. But how came Joseph and Mary to remove thither from Nazareth, the place of their residence? Not of their own accord, and certainly not with the view of fulfilling the prophecy regarding Messiah's birthplace; nay, they stayed at Nazareth till it was almost too late for Mary to travel with safety; nor would they have stirred from it at all, had not an order which left them no choice forced them to the appointed place. A high hand was in all these movements. (See on ~~LUK~~ Luke 2:1-6).

**in the days of Herod the king** — styled the Great; son of Antipater, an Edomite, made king by the Romans. Thus was “the scepter departing from Judah” (~~GEN~~ Genesis 49:10), a sign that Messiah was now at hand. As Herod is known to have died in the year of Rome 750, in the fourth year before the commencement of our Christian era, the birth of Christ must be dated four years before the date usually assigned to it, even if He was born within the year of Herod's death, as it is next to certain that He was.

**there came wise men** — literally, “Magi” or “Magians,” probably of the learned class who cultivated astrology and kindred sciences. Balaam's prophecy (~~NUM~~ Numbers 24:17), and perhaps Daniel's (~~DAN~~ Daniel 9:24, etc.), might have come down to them by tradition; but nothing definite is known of them.

**from the east** — but whether from Arabia, Persia, or Mesopotamia is uncertain.

**to Jerusalem** — as the Jewish metropolis.

**2. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?** — From this it would seem they were not themselves Jews. (Compare the language of the Roman governor, <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 18:33, and of the Roman soldiers, <sup>Ⓜ</sup>Matthew 27:29, with the very different language of the Jews themselves, <sup>Ⓜ</sup>Matthew 27:42, etc.). The Roman historians, SÜETONIUS and TACITUS, bear witness to an expectation, prevalent in the East, that out of Judea should arise a sovereign of the world.

**for we have seen his star in the east** — Much has been written on the subject of this star; but from all that is here said it is perhaps safest to regard it as simply a luminous meteor, which appeared under special laws and for a special purpose.

**and are come to worship him** — to do Him homage, as the word signifies; the nature of that homage depending on the circumstances of the case. That not civil but religious homage is meant here is plain from the whole strain of the narrative, and particularly <sup>Ⓜ</sup>Matthew 2:11. Doubtless these simple strangers expected all Jerusalem to be full of its new-born King, and the time, place, and circumstances of His birth to be familiar to every one. Little would they think that the first announcement of His birth would come from themselves, and still less could they anticipate the startling, instead of transporting, effect which it would produce — else they would probably have sought their information regarding His birthplace in some other quarter. But God overruled it to draw forth a noble testimony to the predicted birthplace of Messiah from the highest ecclesiastical authority in the nation.

**3. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled** — viewing this as a danger to his own throne: perhaps his guilty conscience also suggested other grounds of fear.

**and all Jerusalem with him** — from a dread of revolutionary commotions, and perhaps also of Herod's rage.

**4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together** — The class of the “chief priests” included the high priest for the time being, together with all who had previously filled this office; for though the then head of the Aaronic family was the only rightful high priest, the Romans removed them at pleasure, to make way for creatures of their own. In this class probably were included also the heads of the four and twenty courses of the priests. The “scribes” were at first merely transcribers of the law and synagogue readers; afterwards interpreters of the law, both civil and religious, and so both lawyers and divines. The first of these classes, a proportion of the second, and “the elders” — that is, as LIGHTFOOT thinks, “those elders of the laity that were not of the Levitical



tribe” — constituted the supreme council of the nation, called the *Sanhedrim*, the members of which, at their full complement, numbered seventy-two. That this was the council which Herod now convened is most probable, from the solemnity of the occasion; for though the elders are not mentioned, we find a similar omission where all three were certainly meant (compare <sup><185></sup>Matthew 26:59 <sup><200></sup>27:1). As MEYER says, it was all the theologians of the nation whom Herod convened, because it was a theological response that he wanted.

**he demanded of them** — as the authorized interpreters of Scripture.

**where Christ** — the Messiah.

**should be born** — according to prophecy.

**5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea** — a prompt and involuntary testimony from the highest tribunal; which yet at length condemned Him to die.

**for thus it is written by the prophet** — (<sup><300></sup>Micah 5:2).

6. And thou, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda — the “in” being familiarly left out, as we say, “London, Middlesex.”

**art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor**, etc. — This quotation, though differing verbally, agrees substantially with the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint*. For says the prophet, “Though thou be little, yet out of thee shall come the Ruler” — this honor more than compensating for its natural insignificance; while our Evangelist, by a lively turn, makes him say, “Thou art *not the least*: for out of thee shall come a Governor” — this distinction lifting it from the lowest to the highest rank. The “thousands of Juda,” in the prophet, mean the subordinate divisions of the tribe: our Evangelist, instead of these, merely names the “princes” or heads of these families, including the districts which they occupied

**that shall rule** — or “feed,” as in the *Margin*.

**my people Israel** — In the Old Testament, kings are, by a beautiful figure, styled “shepherds” (<sup><350></sup>Ezekiel 34:1-10, etc.). The classical writers use the same figure. The pastoral rule of Jehovah and Messiah over His people is a representation pervading all Scripture, and rich in import. (See <sup><420></sup>Psalms 23:1-6 <sup><350></sup>Isaiah 40:11 <sup><350></sup>Ezekiel 37:24 <sup><430></sup>John 10:11 <sup><430></sup>Revelation 7:17). That this prophecy of Micah referred to the Messiah, was admitted by the ancient Rabbins.

*The Wise Men Despatched to Bethlehem by Herod to See the Babe, and Bring Him Word, Make a Religious Offering to the Infant King, but Divinely Warned, Return Home by Another Way*  
(~~and~~ Matthew 2:7-12).

**7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men** — Herod has so far succeeded in his murderous design: he has tracked the spot where lies his victim, an unconscious babe. But he has another point to fix — the date of His birth — without which he might still miss his mark. The one he had got from the Sanhedrim; the other he will have from the sages; but secretly, lest his object should be suspected and defeated. So he

**inquired of them diligently** — rather, “precisely.”

**what time the star appeared** — presuming that this would be the best clue to the age of the child. The unsuspecting strangers tell him all. And now he thinks he is succeeding to a wish, and shall speedily clutch his victim; for at so early an age as they indicate, He would not likely have been removed from the place of His birth. Yet he is wary. He sends them as messengers from himself, and bids them come to *him*, that he may follow their pious example.

**8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently** — “Search out carefully.”

**for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also** — The cunning and bloody hypocrite! Yet this royal mandate would meantime serve as a safe conduct to the strangers.

**9. When they had heard the king, they departed** — But where were ye, O Jewish ecclesiastics, ye chief priests and scribes of the people? Ye could tell Herod where Christ should be born, and could hear of these strangers from the far East that the Desire of all nations had actually come; but I do not see you trooping to Bethlehem — I find these devout strangers journeying thither all alone. Yet God ordered this too, lest the news should be blabbed, and reach the tyrant’s ears, before the Babe could be placed beyond his reach. Thus are the very errors and crimes and cold indifferences of men all overruled.

**and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east** — implying apparently that it had disappeared in the interval.

**went before them, and stood over where the young child was** — Surely this could hardly be but by a luminous meteor, and not very high.

**10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy** — The language is very strong, expressing exuberant transport.

**11. And when they were come into the house** — not the stable; for as soon as Bethlehem was emptied of its strangers, they would have no difficulty in finding a dwelling-house.

**they saw** — The received text has “found”; but here our translators rightly depart from it, for it has no authority.

**the young child with Mary his mother** — The blessed Babe is naturally mentioned first, then the mother; but Joseph, though doubtless present, is not noticed, as being but the head of the house.

**and fell down and worshipped him** — Clearly this was no civil homage to a petty Jewish king, whom these star-guided strangers came so far, and inquired so eagerly, and rejoiced with such exceeding joy, to pay, but a lofty spiritual homage. The next clause confirms this.

**and when they had opened their treasures they presented** — rather, “offered.”

**unto him gifts** — This expression, used frequently in the Old Testament of the oblations presented to God, is in the New Testament employed seven times, and always in a *religious* sense of *offerings to God*. Beyond doubt, therefore, we are to understand the presentation of these gifts by the Magi as a *religious offering*.

**gold, frankincense, and myrrh** — Visits were seldom paid to sovereigns without a present (<sup>1</sup>1 Kings 10:2, etc.; compare <sup>1720</sup>Psalm 72:10,11,15 <sup>2008</sup>Isaiah 60:3,6). “Frankincense” was an aromatic used in sacrificial offerings: “myrrh” was used in perfuming ointments. These, with the “gold” which they presented, seem to show that the offerers were persons in affluent circumstances. That the gold was presented to the infant King in token of His royalty; the frankincense in token of His divinity, and the myrrh, of His sufferings; or that they were designed to express His divine and human natures; or that the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ are to be seen in these gifts; or that they were the offerings of three individuals respectively, each of them kings, the very names of whom tradition has handed down — all these are, at the best, precarious suppositions. But that the feelings of these devout givers are to be seen in the richness of their gifts, and that the gold, at least, would be highly serviceable to the parents of the blessed Babe in their unexpected journey to Egypt and stay there — that much at least admits of no dispute.

**12. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed** — or, “withdrew.”

**to their own country another way** — What a surprise would this vision be to the sages, just as they were preparing to carry the glad news of what they had seen to the *pious* king! But the Lord knew the bloody old tyrant better than to let him see their face again.

## MATTHEW 2:13-25.

**THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT — THE MASSACRE AT BETHLEHEM — THE RETURN OF JOSEPH AND MARY WITH THE BABE, AFTER HEROD’S DEATH, AND THEIR SETTLEMENT AT NAZARETH. (<sup><123></sup>LUKE 2:39).**

*The Flight into Egypt (<sup><123></sup>Matthew 2:13-15).*

**13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother** — Observe this form of expression, repeated in <sup><124></sup>Matthew 2:14 — another indirect hint that Joseph was no more than the Child’s *guardian*. Indeed, personally considered, Joseph has no spiritual significance, and very little place at all, in the Gospel history.

**and flee into Egypt** — which, being near, as ALFORD says, and a Roman province independent of Herod, and much inhabited by Jews, was an easy and convenient refuge. Ah! blessed Savior, on what a checkered career hast Thou entered here below! At Thy birth there was no room for Thee in the inn; and now all Judea is too hot for Thee. How soon has the sword begun to pierce through the Virgin’s soul (<sup><125></sup>Luke 2:35)! How early does she taste the reception which this mysterious Child of hers is to meet with in the world! And whither is He sent? To “the house of bondage?” Well, it once was that. But Egypt was a house of refuge before it was a house of bondage, and now it has but returned to its first use.

**and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him** — Herod’s murderous purpose was formed before the Magi had reached Bethlehem.

**14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt** — doubtless the same night.

**15. And was there until the death of Herod** — which took place not very long after this of a horrible disease; the details of which will be found in JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 17.6.1,5,7,8].

**that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying** — (<sup><3100></sup>Hosea 11:1).

**Out of Egypt have I called my son** — Our Evangelist here quotes directly from the *Hebrew*, warily departing from the *Septuagint*, which renders the words, “From Egypt have I recalled his children,” meaning Israel’s children. The prophet is reminding his people how dear Israel was to God in the days of his youth; how Moses was bidden to say to Pharaoh, “Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My *son*, My first-born; and I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay *thy* son, even thy first-born” (<sup><1042></sup>Exodus 4:22,23); how, when Pharaoh refused, God having slain all *his* first-born, “called His own son out of Egypt,” by a stroke of high-handed power and love. Viewing the words in this light, even if our Evangelist had not applied them to the recall from Egypt of God’s own beloved, Only-begotten Son, the application would have been irresistibly made by all who have learnt to pierce beneath the surface to the deeper relations which Christ bears to His people, and both to God; and who are accustomed to trace the analogy of God’s treatment of each respectively.

**16. Then Herod**, etc. — As Deborah sang of the mother of Sisera: “She looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Have they not sped?” so Herod wonders that his messengers, with pious zeal, are not hastening with the news that all is ready to receive him as a worshipper. What can be keeping them? Have they missed their way? Has any disaster befallen them? At length his patience is exhausted. He makes his inquiries and finds they are already far beyond his reach on their way home.

**when he saw that he was mocked** — was trifled with.

**of the wise men** — No, Herod, thou art not mocked of the wise men, but of a Higher than they. He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh at thee; the Lord hath thee in derision. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong (<sup><3100></sup>Psalm 2:4 <sup><882></sup>Job 5:12,13). That blessed Babe shall die indeed, but not by thy hand. As He afterwards told that son of thine — as cunning and as unscrupulous as thyself — when the Pharisees warned Him to depart, for *Herod would seek to kill Him* — “Go ye, and tell that *fox*, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem” (~~2033~~ Luke 13:32,33). Bitter satire!

**was exceeding wroth** — To be made a fool of is what none like, and proud kings cannot stand. Herod burns with rage and is like a wild bull in a net. So he

**sent forth** — a band of hired murderers.

**and slew all the children** — male children.

**that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof** — environs.

**from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently** — carefully.

**inquired of the wise men** — In this ferocious step Herod was like himself — as crafty as cruel. He takes a large sweep, not to miss his mark. He thinks this will surely embrace his victim. And so it had, if He had been there. But He is gone. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than thou shalt have that Babe into thy hands. Therefore, Herod, thou must be content to want Him: to fill up the cup of thy bitter mortifications, already full enough — until thou die not less of a broken heart than of a loathsome and excruciating disease. Why, ask skeptics and skeptical critics, is not this massacre, if it really occurred, recorded by JOSEPHUS, who is minute enough in detailing the cruelties of Herod? To this the answer is not difficult. If we consider how small a town Bethlehem was, it is not likely there would be many male children in it from two years old and under; and when we think of the number of fouler atrocities which JOSEPHUS has recorded of him, it is unreasonable to make anything of his silence on this.

**17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying** — (~~2015~~ Jeremiah 31:15, from which the quotation differs but verbally).

**18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not** — These words, as they stand in Jeremiah, undoubtedly relate to the Babylonish captivity. Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, was buried in the neighborhood of Bethlehem (~~0359~~ Genesis 35:19), where her sepulcher is still shown. She is figuratively represented as rising from the tomb and uttering a double lament for the loss of her children — first, by a bitter captivity, and now by a bloody death. And a foul deed it was. O ye mothers of Bethlehem! methinks I hear you asking why your innocent babes should be the ram

caught in the thicket, while Isaac escapes. I cannot tell you, but one thing I know, that ye shall, some of you, live to see a day when that Babe of Bethlehem shall be Himself the Ram, caught in another sort of thicket, in order that your babes may escape a worse doom than they now endure. And if these babes of yours be now in glory, through the dear might of that blessed Babe, will they not deem it their honor that the tyrant's rage was exhausted upon themselves instead of their infant Lord?

**19. But when Herod was dead** — Miserable Herod! Thou thoughtest thyself safe from a dreaded Rival; but it was He only that was safe from thee; and thou hast not long enjoyed even this fancied security. See on <sup>Ⓜ25</sup>Matthew 2:15.

**behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt** — Our translators, somewhat capriciously, render the same expression “*the* angel of the Lord,” <sup>Ⓜ123</sup>Matthew 1:20 <sup>Ⓜ123</sup>2:13; and “*an* angel of the Lord,” as here. As the same angel appears to have been employed on all these high occasions — and most likely he to whom in Luke is given the name of “Gabriel,” <sup>Ⓜ123</sup>Luke 1:19,26 — perhaps it should in every instance except the first, be rendered “*the* angel.”

**20. Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel** — not to the land of Judea, for he was afterward expressly warned not to settle there, nor to Galilee, for he only went thither when he found it unsafe to settle in Judea but to “the land of Israel,” in its most general sense; meaning the Holy Land at large — the particular province being not as yet indicated. So Joseph and the Virgin had, like Abraham, to “go out, not knowing whither they went,” till they should receive further direction.

**for they are dead which sought the young child's life** — a common expression in most languages where only one is meant, who here is Herod. But the words are taken from the strikingly analogous case in <sup>Ⓜ123</sup>Exodus 4:19, which probably suggested the plural here; and where the command is given to Moses to return *to* Egypt for the same reason that the greater than Moses was now ordered to be brought back *from* it — the death of him who sought his life. Herod died in the seventieth year of his age, and thirty-seventh of his reign.

**21. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel** — intending, as is plain from what follows, to return to Bethlehem of Judea, there, no doubt, to rear the Infant King, as at His own royal city, until the time should come when they would expect Him to occupy Jerusalem, “the city of the Great King.”



**22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod** — Archelaus succeeded to Judea, Samaria, and Idumea; but Augustus refused him the title of *king* till it should be seen how he conducted himself; giving him only the title of *ethnarch* [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 17.11,4]. Above this, however, he never rose. The people, indeed, recognized him as his father's successor; and so it is here said that he “*reigned* in the room of his father Herod.” But, after ten years' defiance of the Jewish law and cruel tyranny, the people lodged heavy complaints against him, and the emperor banished him to Vienne in Gaul, reducing Judea again to a Roman province. Then the “scepter” clean “departed from Judah.”

**he was afraid to go thither** — and no wonder, for the reason just mentioned.

**notwithstanding** — or more simply, “but.”

**being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside** — withdrew.

**into the parts of Galilee** — or the Galilean parts. The whole country west of the Jordan was at this time, as is well known, divided into three provinces — GALILEE being the northern, JUDEA the southern, and SAMARIA the central province. The province of Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, the brother of Archelaus, his father having left him that and Perea, on the east side of the Jordan, as his share of the kingdom, with the title of *tetrarch*, which Augustus confirmed. Though crafty and licentious, according to JOSEPHUS — precisely what the Gospel history shows him to be (see on <sup>4064</sup>Mark 6:14-30; <sup>4063</sup>Luke 13:31-35) — he was of a less cruel disposition than Archelaus; and Nazareth being a good way off from the seat of government, and considerably secluded, it was safer to settle there.

**23. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth** — a small town in Lower Galilee, lying in the territory of the tribe of Zebulun, and about equally distant from the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Sea of Galilee on the east. Note — If, from <sup>4062</sup>Luke 2:39, one would conclude that the parents of Jesus brought Him straight back to Nazareth after His presentation in the temple — as if there had been no visit of the Magi, no flight to Egypt, no stay there, and no purpose on returning to settle again at Bethlehem — one might, from our Evangelist's way of speaking here, equally conclude that the parents of our Lord had never been at Nazareth until now. Did we know exactly the sources from which the matter of each of the Gospels was drawn up, or the mode in which these were used, this apparent discrepancy would probably disappear at once. In neither case is there any inaccuracy. At the same time it is difficult, with these facts before us, to conceive that either of these two Evangelists wrote his Gospel with



that of the other before him — though many think this a precarious inference.

**that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene** — better, perhaps, “Nazarene.” The best explanation of the origin of this name appears to be that which traces it to the word *netzer* in <sup><2110></sup>Isaiah 11:1 — the small *twig*, *sprout*, or sucker, which the prophet there says, “shall come forth from the stem (or rather, ‘stump’) of Jesse, the branch which should fructify from his roots.” The little town of Nazareth, mentioned neither in the Old Testament nor in JOSEPHUS, was probably so called from its insignificance: a weak twig in contrast to a stately tree; and a special contempt seemed to rest upon it — “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (<sup><2046></sup>John 1:46) — over and above the general contempt in which all Galilee was held, from the number of Gentiles that settled in the upper territories of it, and, in the estimation of the Jews, debased it. Thus, in the providential arrangement by which our Lord was brought up at the insignificant and opprobrious town called *Nazareth*, there was involved, first, a local humiliation; next, an allusion to Isaiah’s prediction of His lowly, twig-like upspringing from the branchless, dried-up stump of Jesse; and yet further, a standing memorial of that humiliation which “the prophets,” in a number of the most striking predictions, had attached to the Messiah.

# CHAPTER 3

## ⌌MATTHEW 3:1-12.

### PREACHING AND MINISTRY OF JOHN. (⌌MARK 1:1-8 ⌌LUKE 3:1-18).

For the proper introduction to this section, we must go to ⌌Luke 3:1,2. Here, as BENGEL well observes, the curtain of the New Testament is, as it were, drawn up, and the greatest of all epochs of the Church commences. Even our Lord's own age is determined by it (⌌Luke 3:23). No such elaborate chronological precision is to be found elsewhere in the New Testament, and it comes fitly from him who claims it as the peculiar recommendation of his Gospel, that "he had traced down all things with precision from the very first" (⌌Matthew 1:3). Here evidently commences his proper narrative.

### ⌌LUKE 3:1:

*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar* — not the fifteenth from his full accession on the death of Augustus, but from the period when he was associated with him in the government of the empire, three years earlier, about the end of the year of Rome 779, or about four years before the usual reckoning.

*Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea* — His proper title was *procurator*, but with more than the usual powers of that office. After holding it for about ten years, he was summoned to Rome to answer to charges brought against him; but ere he arrived, Tiberius died (A.D. 35), and soon after miserable Pilate committed suicide.

*And Herod being tetrarch of Galilee* — (See on ⌌Mark 6:14).

*and his brother Philip* — a very different and very superior Philip to the one whose name was *Herod Philip*, and whose wife, Herodias, went to live with Herod Antipas (see on ⌌Mark 6:17).

*tetrarch of Ituraea* — lying to the northeast of Palestine, and so called from *Itur* or *Jetur*, Ishmael's son (⌌1 Chronicles 1:31), and anciently belonging to the half-tribe of Manasseh.

*and of the region of Trachonitis* — lying farther to the northeast, between Iturea and Damascus; a rocky district infested by robbers, and committed by Augustus to Herod the Great to keep in order.

*and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene* — still more to the northeast; so called, says ROBINSON, from *Abila*, eighteen miles from Damascus.

## LUKE 3:2:

*Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests* — The former, though deposed, retained much of his influence, and, probably, as *sagan* or deputy, exercised much of the power of the high priesthood along with Caiaphas, his son-in-law (<sup>4883</sup>John 18:13 <sup>4006</sup>Acts 4:6). In David's time both Zadok and Abiathar acted as high priests (<sup>4055</sup>2 Samuel 15:35), and it seems to have been the fixed practice to have two (<sup>4258</sup>2 Kings 25:18).

*the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness* — Such a way of speaking is never once used when speaking of Jesus, because He was Himself *The Living Word*; whereas to all merely creature-messengers of God, the word they spoke was a foreign element. See on <sup>4883</sup>John 3:31. We are now prepared for the opening words of Matthew.

**1. In those days** — of Christ's secluded life at Nazareth, where the last chapter left Him.

**came John the Baptist, preaching** — about six months before his Master.

**in the wilderness of Judea** — the desert valley of the Jordan, thinly peopled and bare in pasture, a little north of Jerusalem.

**2. And saying, Repent ye** — Though the word strictly denotes a *change of mind*, it has respect here (and wherever it is used in connection with salvation) primarily to that *sense of sin* which leads the sinner to flee from the wrath to come, to look for relief only from above, and eagerly to fall in with the provided remedy.

**for the kingdom of heaven is at hand** — This sublime phrase, used in none of the other Gospels, occurs in this peculiarly Jewish Gospel nearly thirty times; and being suggested by Daniel's grand vision of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days, to receive His investiture in a world-wide kingdom (<sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13,14), it was fitted at once both to meet the national expectations and to turn them into the right channel. A kingdom for which *repentance* was the proper preparation behooved to be essentially spiritual. Deliverance from sin, the great blessing of Christ's kingdom (<sup>4021</sup>Matthew 1:21), can be valued by those only to

whom sin is a burden (<sup><4012></sup>Matthew 9:12). John's great work, accordingly, was to awaken this feeling and hold out the hope of a speedy and precious remedy.

**3. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying** — (<sup><4118></sup>Matthew 11:3).

**The voice of one crying in the wilderness** — (See on <sup><4112></sup>Luke 3:2); the scene of his ministry corresponding to its rough nature.

**Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight** — This prediction is quoted in all the four Gospels, showing that it was regarded as a great outstanding one, and the predicted forerunner as the connecting link between the old and the new economies. Like the great ones of the earth, the Prince of peace was to have His immediate approach proclaimed and His way prepared; and the call here — taking it generally — is a call to put out of the way whatever would obstruct His progress and hinder His complete triumph, whether those hindrances were public or personal, outward or inward. In Luke (<sup><4115></sup>Luke 3:5,6) the quotation is thus continued: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Levelling and smoothing are here the obvious figures whose sense is conveyed in the first words of the proclamation — "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*" The idea is that every obstruction shall be so removed as to reveal to the whole world the salvation of God in Him whose name is the "Savior." (Compare <sup><4118></sup>Psalms 98:3 <sup><2111></sup>Isaiah 11:10 <sup><2406></sup>49:6 <sup><2520></sup>52:10 <sup><4131></sup>Luke 2:31,32 <sup><4137></sup>Acts 13:47).

**4. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair** — woven of it. **and a leathern girdle about his loins** — the prophetic dress of Elijah (<sup><1108></sup>2 Kings 1:8; and see <sup><3830></sup>Zechariah 13:4).

**and his meat was locusts** — the great, well-known Eastern locust, a food of the poor (<sup><4112></sup>Leviticus 11:22).

**and wild honey** — made by wild bees (<sup><4125></sup>1 Samuel 14:25,26). This dress and diet, with the shrill cry in the wilderness, would recall the stern days of Elijah.

**5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan** — From the metropolitan center to the extremities of the Judean province the cry of this great preacher of repentance and herald of the approaching Messiah brought trooping penitents and eager expectants.

**6. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins** — probably confessing aloud. This baptism was at once a public seal of their felt need of deliverance from sin, of their expectation of the coming Deliverer, and of their readiness to welcome Him when He appeared. The baptism itself startled, and was intended to startle, them. They were familiar enough with the *baptism of proselytes* from heathenism; but this *baptism of Jews* themselves was quite new and strange to them.

**7. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them** — astonished at such a spectacle.

**O generation of vipers** — “Viper brood,” expressing the deadly influence of both sects alike upon the community. Mutually and entirely antagonistic as were their religious principles and spirit, the stem prophet charges both alike with being the poisoners of the nation’s religious principles. In <sup><0236</sup>Matthew 12:34 <sup><0239</sup>23:33, this strong language of the Baptist is anew applied by the faithful and true Witness to the Pharisees specifically — the only party that had zeal enough actively to diffuse this poison.

**who hath warned you** — given you the hint, as the idea is.

**to flee from the wrath to come?** — “What can have brought *you* hither?” John more than suspected it was not so much their own spiritual anxieties as the popularity of his movement that had drawn them thither. What an expression is this, “The wrath to come!” God’s “wrath,” in Scripture, is His righteous displeasure against sin, and consequently against all in whose skirts sin is found, arising out of the essential and eternal opposition of His nature to all moral evil. This is called “the *coming* wrath,” not as being wholly future — for as a merited sentence it lies on the sinner already, and its effects, both inward and outward, are to some extent experienced even now — but because the impenitent sinner will not, until “the judgment of the great day,” be concluded under it, will not have sentence publicly and irrevocably passed upon him, will not have it discharged upon him and experience its effects without mixture and without hope. In this view of it, it is a wrath *wholly* to come, as is implied in the noticeably different form of the expression employed by the apostle in <sup><0300</sup>1 Thessalonians 1:10. Not that even true penitents came to John’s baptism with all these views of “the wrath to come.” But what he says is that this was the *real import of the step itself*. In this view of it, how striking is the word he employs to express that step — *fleeing* from it — as of one who, beholding a tide of fiery wrath rolling rapidly towards him, sees in instant flight his only escape!

**8. Bring forth therefore fruits** — the true reading clearly is “fruit”;

**meet for repentance** — that is, such fruit as *befits* a true penitent. John now being gifted with a knowledge of the human heart, like a true minister of righteousness and lover of souls here directs them how to evidence and carry out their repentance, supposing it genuine; and in the following verses warns them of their danger in case it were not.

**9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father** — that pillow on which the nation so fatally reposed, that rock on which at length it splintered

**for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham** — that is, “Flatter not yourselves with the fond delusion that God stands in need of you, to make good His promise of a seed to Abraham; for I tell you that, though you were all to perish, God is as able to raise up a seed to Abraham out of those stones as He was to take Abraham himself out of the rock whence he was hewn, out of the hole of the pit whence he was digged” (<sup>2509</sup>Isaiah 51:1). Though the stem speaker may have pointed as he spoke to the pebbles of the bare clay hills that lay around (so STANLEY’S *Sinai and Palestine*), it was clearly the calling of the *Gentiles* at that time stone-dead in their sins, and quite as unconscious of it — into the room of unbelieving and disinherited Israel that he meant thus to indicate (see <sup>4248</sup>Matthew 21:43 <sup>5112</sup>Romans 11:20,30).

**10. And now also** — And even already.

**the axe is laid unto** — “lieth at.”

**the root of the trees** — as it were ready to strike: an expressive figure of impending judgment, only to be averted in the way next described.

**therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire** — Language so personal and individual as this can scarcely be understood of any national judgment like the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, with the breaking up of the Jewish polity and the extrusion of the chosen people from their peculiar privileges which followed it; though this would serve as the dark shadow, cast before, of a more terrible retribution to come. The “fire,” which in another verse is called “unquenchable,” can be no other than that future “torment” of the impenitent whose “smoke ascendeth up for ever and ever,” and which by the Judge Himself is styled “everlasting punishment” (<sup>4256</sup>Matthew 25:46). What a strength, too, of just indignation is in that word “cast” or “flung into the fire!”

The third Gospel here adds the following important particulars in <sup>4260</sup>Luke 3:10-16.

◀180**LUKE 3:10:**

*And the people* — the multitudes.

*asked him, saying, What shall we do then?* — that is, to show the sincerity of our repentance.

◀181**LUKE 3:11:**

*He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat* — provisions, victuals.

*let him do likewise* — This is directed against the reigning avarice and selfishness. (Compare the corresponding precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, ▶160Matthew 5:40-42).

◀182**LUKE 3:12:**

*Then came also the publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master* — Teacher.

*what shall we do?* — In what special way is the genuineness of our repentance to be manifested?

◀183**LUKE 3:13:**

*And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you* — This is directed against that extortion which made the publicans a byword. (See on ▶166Matthew 5:46; ▶260Luke 15:1).

◀184**LUKE 3:14:**

*And the soldiers* — rather, “And soldiers” — the word means “soldiers on active duty.”

*likewise demanded* — asked.

*of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man* — Intimidate. The word signifies to “shake thoroughly,” and refers probably to the extorting of money or other property.

*neither accuse any falsely* — by acting as informers vexatiously on frivolous or false pretexts.

*and be content with your wages* — or “rations.” We may take this, say WEBSTER and WILKINSON, as a warning against mutiny, which the officers attempted to suppress by largesses and donations. And thus the “fruits”

which would evidence their repentance were just resistance to the reigning sins — particularly of the *class* to which the penitent belonged — and the manifestation of an opposite spirit.

### LUKE 3:15:

*And as the people were in expectation* — in a state of excitement, looking for something new

*and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not* — rather, “whether he himself might be the Christ.” The structure of this clause implies that they could hardly think it, but yet could not help asking themselves whether it might not be; showing both how successful he had been in awakening the expectation of Messiah’s immediate appearing, and the high estimation and even reverence, which his own character commanded.

### LUKE 3:16:

*John answered* — either to that deputation from Jerusalem, of which we read in JOHN John 1:19, etc., or on some other occasion, to remove impressions derogatory to his blessed Master, which he knew to be taking hold of the popular mind.

*saying unto them all* — in solemn protestation.

(We now return to the first Gospel.)

**11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance** — (See on MATTHEW Matthew 3:6);

**but he that cometh after me is mightier than I** — In Mark and Luke this is more emphatic — “But there cometh the Mightier than I” (MARK Mark 1:7 LUKE Luke 3:16).

**whose shoes** — sandals.

**I am not worthy to bear** — The sandals were tied and untied, and borne about by the meanest servants.

**he shall baptize you** — the emphatic “He”: “He it is,” to the exclusion of all others, “that shall baptize you.”

**with the Holy Ghost** — “So far from entertaining such a thought as laying claim to the honors of Messiahship, the meanest services I can render to that “Mightier than I that is coming after me” are too high an honor for me; I am but the servant, but the Master is coming; I administer



but the outward symbol of purification; His it is, as His sole prerogative, to dispense the inward reality. Beautiful spirit, distinguishing this servant of Christ throughout!

**and with fire** — To take this as a distinct baptism from that of the Spirit — a baptism of the impenitent with hell-fire — is exceedingly unnatural. Yet this was the view of ORIGEN among the Fathers; and among moderns, of NEANDER, MEYER, DE WETTE, and LANGE. Nor is it much better to refer it to the fire of the great day, by which the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Clearly, as we think, it is but the *fiery* character of the Spirit's operations upon the soul-searching, consuming, refining, sublimating — as nearly all good interpreters understand the words. And thus, in two successive clauses, the two most familiar emblems — *water* and *fire* — are employed to set forth the same purifying operations of the Holy Ghost upon the soul.

**12. Whose fan** — winnowing fan.

**is in his hand** — ready for use. This is no other than the preaching of the Gospel, even now beginning, the effect of which would be to separate the solid from the spiritually worthless, as wheat, by the winnowing fan, from the chaff. (Compare the similar representation in <sup><301></sup>Malachi 3:1-3).

**and he will thoroughly purge his floor** — threshing-floor; that is, the visible Church.

**and gather his wheat** — His true-hearted saints; so called for their solid worth (compare <sup><309></sup>Amos 9:9 <sup><223></sup>Luke 22:31).

**into the garner** — “the kingdom of their Father,” as this “garner” or “barn” is beautifully explained by our Lord in the parable of the wheat and the tares (<sup><433></sup>Matthew 13:30,43).

**but he will burn up the chaff** — empty, worthless professors of religion, void of all solid religious principle and character (see <sup><508></sup>Psalms 1:4).

**with unquenchable fire** — Singular is the strength of this apparent contradiction of figures: — to be burnt up, but with a fire that is unquenchable; the one expressing the *utter destruction* of all that constitutes one's true life, the other the *continued consciousness of existence* in that awful condition.

Luke adds the following important particulars (<sup><188></sup>Luke 3:18-20):

### LUKE 3:18:

*And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people* — showing that we have here but an abstract of his teaching. Besides what we read in <sup>(~~Q12~~)</sup>John 1:29,33,34 <sup>(~~Q22~~)</sup>3:27-36, the incidental allusion to his having taught his disciples to pray (<sup>(~~Q10~~)</sup>Luke 11:1) — of which not a word is said elsewhere — shows how varied his teaching was.

### LUKE 3:19:

*But Herod the tetrarch, being reprov'd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done* — In this last clause we have an important fact, here only mentioned, showing how thoroughgoing was the fidelity of the Baptist to his royal hearer, and how strong must have been the workings of conscience in that slave of passion when, notwithstanding such plainness, he “did many things, and heard John gladly” (<sup>(~~Q10~~)</sup>Mark 6:20).

### LUKE 3:20:

*Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison* — This imprisonment of John, however, did not take place for some time after this; and it is here recorded merely because the Evangelist did not intend to recur to his history till he had occasion to relate the message which he sent to Christ from his prison at Machaerus (<sup>(~~Q17~~)</sup>Luke 7:18, etc.).

## MATTHEW 3:13-17.

**BAPTISM OF CHRIST AND DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT UPON HIM IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.** (<sup>(~~Q10~~)</sup>MARK 1:9-11  
<sup>(~~Q12~~)</sup>LUKE 3:21,22 <sup>(~~Q13~~)</sup>JOHN 1:31-34).

*Baptism of Christ* (<sup>(~~Q13~~)</sup>Matthew 3:13-15).

**13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him** — Moses rashly anticipated the divine call to deliver his people, and for this was fain to flee the house of bondage, and wait in obscurity for forty years more (<sup>(~~Q11~~)</sup>Exodus 2:11, etc.). Not so this greater than Moses. All but thirty years had He now spent in privacy at Nazareth, gradually ripening for His public work, and calmly awaiting the time appointed of the Father. Now it had arrived; and this movement from Galilee to Jordan is the step, doubtless, of deepest interest to all heaven since that first one which brought Him into the world. Luke (<sup>(~~Q12~~)</sup>Luke 3:21)

has this important addition — “Now *when all the people were baptized*, it came to pass, that Jesus being baptized,” etc. — implying that Jesus waited till all other applicants for baptism that day had been disposed of, ere He stepped forward, that He might not seem to be merely one of the crowd. Thus, as He rode into Jerusalem upon an ass “whereon yet never man sat” (~~1931~~ Luke 19:30), and lay in a sepulcher “wherein was never man yet laid” (~~1934~~ John 19:41), so in His baptism, too. He would be “separate from sinners.”

**14. But John forbade him** — rather, “was (in the act of) hindering him,” or “attempting to hinder him.”

**saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?** — (How John came to recognize Him, when he says he knew Him not, see ~~1935~~ John 1:31-34). The emphasis of this most remarkable speech lies all in the pronouns: “What! Shall the Master come for baptism to the servant — the sinless Savior to a sinner?” That thus much is in the Baptist’s words will be clearly seen if it be observed that he evidently regarded Jesus as *Himself needing no purification* but rather *qualified to impart it to those who did*. And do not all his other testimonies to Christ fully bear out this sense of the words? But it were a pity if, in the glory of this testimony to Christ, we should miss the beautiful spirit in which it was borne — “Lord, must *I* baptize *Thee*? Can I bring myself to do such a thing?” — reminding us of Peter’s exclamation at the supper table, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” while it has nothing of the false humility and presumption which dictated Peter’s next speech. “Thou shall never wash my feet” (~~1936~~ John 13:6,8).

**15. And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now** — “Let it pass for the present”; that is, “Thou recoilest, and no wonder, for the seeming incongruity is startling; but in the present case do as thou art bidden.”

**for thus it becometh us** — “us,” not in the sense of me and thee,” or “men in general,” but as in ~~1937~~ John 3:11.

**to fulfill all righteousness** — If this be rendered, with SCRIVENER, “every ordinance,” or, with CAMPBELL, “every institution,” the meaning is obvious enough; and the same sense is brought out by “all righteousness,” or compliance with everything enjoined, baptism included. Indeed, if this be the meaning, our version perhaps best brings out the force of the opening word “Thus.” But we incline to think that our Lord meant more than this. The import of circumcision and of baptism seems to be radically the same. And if our remarks on the circumcision of our Lord (see on ~~1938~~ Luke 2:21-24) are well founded, He would seem to have said, “Thus do I implege

Myself to the whole righteousness of the Law — thus symbolically do enter on and engage to fulfill it all.” Let the thoughtful reader weigh this.

**Then he suffered him** — with true humility, yielding to higher authority than his own impressions of propriety.

*Descent of the Spirit upon the Baptized Redeemer*  
(~~41816~~ Matthew 3:16,17).

**16. And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water** — rather, “from the water.” Mark has “out of the water” (~~4009~~ Mark 1:10). “and” — adds Luke (~~4021~~ Luke 3:21), “while He was praying”; a grand piece of information. Can there be a doubt about the burden of that prayer; a prayer sent up, probably, while yet in the water — His blessed head suffused with the baptismal element; a prayer continued likely as He stepped out of the stream, and again stood upon the dry ground; the work before Him, the needed and expected Spirit to rest upon Him for it, and the glory He would then put upon the Father that sent Him — would not these fill His breast, and find silent vent in such form as this? — “Lo, I come; I delight to do Thy will, O God. Father, glorify Thy name. Show Me a token for good. Let the Spirit of the Lord God come upon Me, and I will preach the Gospel to the poor, and heal the broken-hearted, and send forth judgment unto victory.” While He was yet speaking —

**lo, the heavens were opened** — Mark says, sublimely, “He saw the heavens cleaving” (~~4010~~ Mark 1:10).

**and he saw the Spirit of God descending** — that is, He only, with the exception of His honored servant, as he tells us himself (~~4012~~ John 1:32-34); the by-standers apparently seeing nothing.

**like a dove, and lighting upon him** — Luke says, “in a bodily shape” (~~4022~~ Luke 3:22); that is, the blessed Spirit, assuming the corporeal form of a dove, descended thus upon His sacred head. But why in this form? The Scripture use of this emblem will be our best guide here. “My dove, *my undefiled* is one,” says the Song of Solomon (~~2019~~ Song of Solomon 6:9). This is chaste purity. Again, “Be ye *harmless* as doves,” says Christ Himself (~~4006~~ Matthew 10:16). This is the same thing, in the form of inoffensiveness towards men. “A conscience void of offense toward God and toward men” (~~4016~~ Acts 24:16) expresses both. Further, when we read in the Song of Solomon (~~2014~~ Song of Solomon 2:14), “O my dove, that art in the *clefts* of the rocks, in the *secret places* of the stairs (see ~~2008~~ Isaiah 60:8), let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely” — it is shrinking modesty, meekness, gentleness, that is thus charmingly depicted. In a word — not to allude to

the historical emblem of the dove that flew back to the ark, bearing in its mouth the olive leaf of *peace* (<sup><0081></sup>Genesis 8:11) — when we read (<sup><0083></sup>Psalm 68:13), “Ye shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,” it is *beauteousness* that is thus held forth. And was not such that “holy, harmless, undefiled One,” the “separate from sinners?” “Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips; therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever!” But the fourth Gospel gives us one more piece of information here, on the authority of one who saw and testified of it: “John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and IT ABODE UPON HIM.” And lest we should think that this was an accidental thing, he adds that this last particular was expressly given him as part of the sign by which he was to recognize and identify Him as the Son of God: “And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending AND REMAINING ON HIM, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God” (<sup><013></sup>John 1:32-34). And when with this we compare the predicted descent of the Spirit upon Messiah (<sup><010></sup>Isaiah 11:2), “And *the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him*,” we cannot doubt that it was this permanent and perfect resting of the Holy Ghost upon the Son of God — now and henceforward in His *official* capacity — that was here visibly manifested.

**17. And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is** — Mark and Luke give it in the direct form, “Thou art.” (<sup><011></sup>Mark 1:11 <sup><012></sup>Luke 3:22).

**my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased** — The verb is put in the aorist to express absolute complacency, once and for ever felt towards Him. The English here, at least to modern ears, is scarcely strong enough. “I delight” comes the nearest, perhaps, to that ineffable *complacency* which is manifestly intended; and this is the rather to be preferred, as it would immediately carry the thoughts back to that august Messianic prophecy to which the voice from heaven plainly alluded (<sup><010></sup>Isaiah 42:1), “Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, IN WHOM MY SOUL DELIGHTETH.” Nor are the words which follow to be overlooked, “I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.” (The *Septuagint* perverts this, as it does most of the Messianic predictions, interpolating the word “Jacob,” and applying it to the Jews). Was this voice heard by the bystanders? From Matthew’s form of it, one might suppose it so designed; but it would appear that it was not, and probably John only heard and saw anything peculiar about that great baptism. Accordingly, the words, “Hear ye Him,” are not added, as at the Transfiguration.

# CHAPTER 4

## ⌋MATTHEW 4:1-11.

**TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.** (⌋MARK 1:12,13 ⌋LUKE 4:1-13).

**1. Then** — an indefinite note of sequence. But Mark’s word (⌋Mark 1:12) fixes what we should have presumed was meant, that it was “immediately” after His baptism; and with this agrees the statement of Luke (⌋Luke 4:1).

**was Jesus led up** — that is, from the low Jordan valley to some more elevated spot.

**of the Spirit** — that blessed Spirit immediately before spoken of as descending upon Him at His baptism, and abiding upon Him. Luke, connecting these two scenes, as if the one were but the sequel of the other, says, “Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led,” etc. Mark’s expression has a startling sharpness about it — “Immediately the Spirit driveth Him” (⌋Mark 1:12), “putteth,” or “hurrieth Him forth,” or “impelleth Him.” (See the same word in ⌋Mark 1:43 ⌋5:40 ⌋Matthew 9:25 ⌋13:52 ⌋John 10:4). The thought thus strongly expressed is the mighty constraining impulse of the Spirit under which He went; while Matthew’s more gentle expression, “was led up,” intimates how purely voluntary on His own part this action was.

**into the wilderness** — probably the wild Judean desert. The particular spot which tradition has fixed upon has hence got the name of *Quarantana* or *Quarantaria*, from the forty days — “an almost perpendicular wall of rock twelve or fifteen hundred feet above the plain” [ROBINSON, *Palestine*]. The supposition of those who incline to place the temptation amongst the mountains of Moab is, we think, very improbable.

**to be tempted** — The *Greek* word (*peirazein*) means simply to *try* or make proof of; and when ascribed to God in His dealings with men, it means, and can mean no more than this. Thus, ⌋Genesis 22:1, “It came to pass that God did tempt Abraham,” or put his faith to a severe proof. (See ⌋Deuteronomy 8:2). But for the most part in Scripture the word is used in a bad sense, and means to entice, solicit, or provoke to sin. Hence the name here given to the wicked one — “the tempter” (⌋Matthew 4:3). Accordingly “to be tempted” here is to be understood both ways. The Spirit

conducted Him into the wilderness simply to have His faith *tried*; but as the agent in this trial was to be the wicked one, whose whole object would be to seduce Him from His allegiance to God, it was a *temptation* in the bad sense of the term. The unworthy inference which some would draw from this is energetically repelled by an apostle (<sup><5013></sup>James 1:13-17).

**of the devil. The word signifies a slanderer** — one who casts imputations upon another. Hence that other name given him (<sup><620></sup>Revelation 12:10), “The accuser of the brethren, who accuseth them before our God day and night.” Mark (<sup><4013></sup>Mark 1:13) says, “He was forty days tempted of *Satan*,” a word signifying an *adversary*, one who lies in wait for, or sets himself in opposition to another. These and other names of the same fallen spirit point to different features in his character or operations. What was the high design of this? First, as we judge, to give our Lord a taste of what lay before Him in the work He had undertaken; next, to make trial of the glorious equipment for it which He had just received; further, to give Him encouragement, by the victory now to be won, to go forward spoiling principalities and powers, until at length He should make a show of them openly, triumphing over them in His cross: that the tempter, too, might get a taste, at the very outset, of the new kind of material in *man* which he would find he had here to deal with; finally, that He might acquire experimental ability “to succor them that are tempted” (<sup><5018></sup>Hebrews 2:18). The temptation evidently embraced two stages: the one continuing throughout the forty days’ fast; the other, at the conclusion of that period.

## FIRST STAGE:

**2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights** — Luke says “When they were quite ended” (<sup><4002></sup>Luke 4:2).

**he was afterward an hungered** — evidently implying that the sensation of hunger was unfelt during all the forty days; coming on only at their close. So it was apparently with Moses (<sup><5028></sup>Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (<sup><4008></sup>1 Kings 19:8) for the same period. A supernatural power of endurance was of course imparted to the body, but this probably operated through a natural law — the absorption of the Redeemer’s Spirit in the dread conflict with the tempter. (See on <sup><4009></sup>Acts 9:9). Had we only this Gospel, we should suppose the temptation did not begin till after this. But it is clear, from Mark’s statement, that “He was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan” (<sup><4013></sup>Mark 1:13), and Luke’s, “being forty days tempted of the devil” (<sup><4002></sup>Luke 4:2), that there was a forty days’ temptation *before* the three specific temptations afterwards recorded. And this is what we have called the First Stage. What the precise nature and object of the forty days’ temptation were is not recorded. But two things seem plain enough. First,



the tempter had utterly failed of his object, else it had not been renewed; and the terms in which he opens his second attack imply as much. But further, the tempter's whole object during the forty days evidently was to get Him to distrust the heavenly testimony borne to Him at His baptism as THE SON OF GOD — to persuade Him to regard it as but a splendid illusion — and, generally, to dislodge from His breast the consciousness of His Sonship. With what plausibility the events of His previous history from the beginning would be urged upon Him in support of this temptation it is easy to imagine. And it makes much in support of this view of the forty days' temptation that the particulars of it are not recorded; for how the details of such a purely internal struggle could be recorded it is hard to see. If this be correct, how naturally does the SECOND STAGE of the temptation open! In Mark's brief notice of the temptation there is one expressive particular not given either by Matthew or by Luke — that "He was with the wild beasts" (~~4012~~ Mark 1:12), no doubt to add terror to solitude, and aggravate the horrors of the whole scene.

**3. And when the tempter came to him** — Evidently we have here a new scene.

**he said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread** — rather, "loaves," answering to "stones" in the plural; whereas Luke, having said, "Command this stone," in the singular, adds, "that it be made bread," in the singular (~~4018~~ Luke 4:3). The sensation of hunger, unfelt during all the forty days, seems now to have come on in all its keenness — no doubt to open a door to the tempter, of which he is not slow to avail himself; "Thou still clingest to that vainglorious confidence that Thou art the Son of God, carried away by those illusory scenes at the Jordan. Thou wast born in a stable; but Thou art the Son of God! hurried off to Egypt for fear of Herod's wrath; but Thou art the Son of God! a carpenter's roof supplied Thee with a home, and in the obscurity of a despicable town of Galilee Thou hast spent thirty years, yet still Thou art the Son of God! and a voice from heaven, it seems, proclaimed it in Thine ears at the Jordan! Be it so; but after *that*, surely Thy days of obscurity and trial should have an end. Why linger for weeks in this desert, wandering among the wild beasts and craggy rocks, unhonored, unattended, unpitied, ready to starve for want of the necessities of life? Is this befitting "the Son of God?" At the bidding of "the Son of God" surely those stones shall all be turned into loaves, and in a moment present an abundant repast."

**4. But he answered and said, It is written** — (~~4019~~ Deuteronomy 8:3).

**Man shall not live by bread alone** — more emphatically, as in the *Greek*, "Not by bread alone shall man live."



**but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God** — Of all passages in Old Testament Scripture, none could have been pitched upon more apposite, perhaps not one so apposite, to our Lord's purpose. "The Lord ... led thee (said Moses to Israel, at the close of their journeyings) these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only," etc., "Now, if Israel spent, not forty days, but forty years in a waste, howling wilderness, where there were no means of human subsistence, not starving, but divinely provided for, on purpose to prove to every age that human support depends not upon bread, but upon God's unfailing word of promise and pledge of all needful providential care, am I, distrusting this word of God, and despairing of relief, to take the law into My own hand? True, the Son of God is able enough to turn stones into bread: but what the Son of God is able to do is not the present question, but what is *man's duty* under want of the necessities of life. And as Israel's condition in the wilderness did not justify their unbelieving murmurings and frequent desperation, so neither would Mine warrant the exercise of the power of the Son of God in snatching despairingly at unwarranted relief. As man, therefore, I will await divine supply, nothing doubting that at the fitting time it will arrive." The *second* temptation in this Gospel is in Luke's the *third*. That Matthew's order is the right one will appear, we think, quite clearly in the sequel.

**5. Then the devil taketh him up** — rather, "conducteth Him."

**into the holy city** — so called (as in ~~2ND~~ Isaiah 48:2 ~~4TH~~ Nehemiah 11:1) from its being "the city of the Great King," the seat of the temple, the metropolis of all Jewish worship.

**and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple** — rather, "the pinnacle" — a certain well-known projection. Whether this refers to the highest summit of the temple, which bristled with golden spikes [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 5.5,6]; or whether it refers to another peak, on Herod's royal portico, overhanging the ravine of Kedron, at the valley of Hinnom — an immense tower built on the very edge of this precipice, from the top of which dizzy height JOSEPHUS says one could not look to the bottom [*Antiquities*, 15.11,5] — is not certain; but the latter is probably meant.

**6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God** — As this temptation starts with the same point as the first — our Lord's determination not to be disputed out of His Sonship — it seems to us clear that the one came

directly after the other; and as the remaining temptation shows that the hope of carrying that point was abandoned, and all was staked upon a desperate venture, we think that remaining temptation is thus shown to be the last; as will appear still more when we come to it.

**cast thyself down** — “from hence” (~~4009~~ Luke 4:9).

**for it is written** — (~~4911~~ Psalm 91:11,12). “But what is this I see?” exclaims stately BISHOP HALL. “Satan himself with a Bible under his arm and a text in his mouth!” Doubtless the tempter, having felt the power of God’s Word in the former temptation, was eager to try the effect of it from his own mouth (~~47114~~ 2 Corinthians 11:14).

**He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands** — rather, “on their hands.”

**they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone** — The quotation is, precisely as it stands in the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint*, save that after the first clause the words, “to keep thee in all thy ways,” are here omitted. Not a few good expositors have thought that this omission was intentional, to conceal the fact that this would *not* have been one of “His ways,” that is, of duty. But as our Lord’s reply makes no allusion to this, but seizes on the great principle involved in the promise quoted, so when we look at the promise itself, it is plain that the sense of it is precisely the same whether the clause in question be inserted or not.

**7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again** — (~~4786~~ Deuteronomy 6:16), as if he should say, “True, it is so written, and on that promise I implicitly rely; but in using it there is another Scripture which must not be forgotten.”

**Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God** — “Preservation in danger is divinely pledged: shall I then *create* danger, either to put the promised security skeptically to the proof, or wantonly to demand a display of it? That were ‘to tempt the Lord my God,’ which, being expressly forbidden, would forfeit the right to expect preservation.”

**8. Again, the devil taketh him up** — “conducteth him,” as before.

**into** — or “unto”

**an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them** — Luke (~~4485~~ Luke 4:5) adds the important clause, “in a moment of time”; a clause which seems to furnish a key to the true meaning. That a scene was presented to our Lord’s natural eye seems plainly expressed. But to limit this to the most extensive scene which the natural eye could take in, is to give a sense to the expression, “all the

kingdoms of the world,” quite violent. It remains, then, to gather from the expression, “in a moment of time” — which manifestly is intended to intimate some supernatural operation — that it was permitted to the tempter to extend preternaturally for a moment our Lord’s range of vision, and throw a “glory” or glitter over the scene of vision: a thing not inconsistent with the analogy of other scriptural statements regarding the permitted operations of the wicked one. In this case, the “exceeding height” of the “mountain” from which this sight was beheld would favor the effect to be produced.

**9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee** — “and the glory of them,” adds Luke (~~4:6~~ Luke 4:6). But Matthew having already said that this was “showed Him,” did not need to repeat it here. Luke (~~4:6~~ Luke 4:6) adds these other very important clauses, here omitted — “for that is,” or “has been,” “delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.” Was this wholly false? That were not like Satan’s unusual policy, which is to insinuate his lies under cover of some truth. What truth, then, is there here? We answer, Is not Satan thrice called by our Lord Himself, “the prince of this world” (~~12:31~~ John 12:31 ~~14:30~~ 14:30 ~~16:11~~ 16:11)? Does not the apostle call him “the god of this world” (~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 4:4)? And still further, is it not said that Christ came to destroy by His death “him that *hath the power of death*, that is, the devil” (~~2:14~~ Hebrews 2:14)? No doubt these passages only express men’s voluntary subjection to the rule of the wicked one while they live, and his power to surround death to them, when it comes, with all the terrors of the wages of sin. But as this is a real and terrible sway, so all Scripture represents men as righteously sold under it. In this sense he speaks what is not devoid of truth, when he says, “All this is delivered unto me.” But how does he deliver this “to whomsoever he will?” As employing whomsoever he pleases of his willing subjects in keeping men under his power. In this case his offer to our Lord was that of a *deputed* supremacy commensurate with his own, though as *his gift* and for *his ends*.

**if thou wilt fall down and worship me** — This was the sole but monstrous condition. No Scripture, it will be observed, is quoted now, because none could be found to support so blasphemous a claim. In fact, he has ceased now to present his temptations under the mask of piety, and he stands out unblushingly as the rival of God Himself in his claims on the homage of men. Despairing of success as an angel of light, he throws off all disguise, and with a splendid bribe solicits divine honor. This again shows that we are now at the last of the temptations, and that Matthew’s order is the true one.

**10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan** — Since the tempter has now thrown off the mask, and stands forth in his true character, our Lord no longer deals with him as a pretended friend and pious counsellor, but calls him by his right name — His knowledge of which from the outset He had carefully concealed till now — and orders him off. This is the final and conclusive evidence, as we think, that Matthew's must be the right order of the temptations. For who can well conceive of the tempter's returning to the assault after this, in the pious character again, and hoping still to dislodge the consciousness of His Sonship, while our Lord must in that case be supposed to quote Scripture to one He had called the devil to his face — thus throwing His pearls before worse than swine?

**for it is written** — (<sup><0613></sup>Deuteronomy 6:13). Thus does our Lord part with Satan on the rock of Scripture.

**Thou shalt worship** — In the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint* it is, “Thou shalt fear”; but as the sense is the same, so “worship” is here used to show emphatically that what the tempter claimed was precisely what God had forbidden.

**the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve** — The word “serve” in the second clause, is one never used by the *Septuagint* of any but *religious* service; and in this sense exclusively is it used in the New Testament, as we find it here. Once more the word “only,” in the second clause — not expressed in the *Hebrew* and the *Septuagint* — is here added to bring out emphatically the *negative* and *prohibitory* feature of the command. (See <sup><0610></sup>Galatians 3:10 for a similar supplement of the word “all” in a quotation from <sup><0626></sup>Deuteronomy 27:26).

**11. Then the devil leaveth him** — Luke says, “And when the devil had exhausted” — or “quite ended,” as in <sup><0602></sup>Luke 4:2 — “every (mode of) temptation, he departed from him till a season.” The definite “season” here indicated is expressly referred to by our Lord in <sup><0640></sup>John 14:30 <sup><0625></sup>Luke 22:52,53.

**and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him** — or supplied Him with food, as the same expression means in <sup><0603></sup>Mark 1:31 <sup><0608></sup>Luke 8:3. Thus did angels to Elijah (<sup><0615></sup>1 Kings 19:5-8). Excellent critics think that they ministered, not food only, but supernatural support and cheer also. But this would be the natural *effect* rather than the direct *object* of the visit, which was plainly what we have expressed. And after having refused to claim the *illegitimate* ministration of angels in His behalf, oh, with what deep joy would He accept their services when sent, unasked, at the close of all this temptation, direct from Him whom He had so gloriously honored! What “angels’ food” would this repast be to Him! and as He partook of it,

might not a Voice from heaven be heard again, by any who could read the Father's mind, "Said I not well, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?"

## ~~4042~~ MATTHEW 4:12-25.

### **CHRIST BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY — CALLING OF PETER AND ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN — HIS FIRST GALILEAN CIRCUIT. (~~4014~~ MARK 1:14-20,35-39 ~~4044~~ LUKE 4:14,15).**

*There is here a notable gap in the history, which but for the fourth Gospel we should never have discovered. From the former Gospels we should have been apt to draw three inferences, which from the fourth one we know to be erroneous: First, that our Lord awaited the close of John's ministry, by his arrest and imprisonment, before beginning His own; next, that there was but a brief interval between the baptism of our Lord and the imprisonment of John; and further, that our Lord not only opened His work in Galilee, but never ministered out of it, and never visited Jerusalem at all nor kept a passover till He went thither to become "our Passover, sacrificed for us." The fourth Gospel alone gives the true succession of events; not only recording those important openings of our Lord's public work which preceded the Baptist's imprisonment — extending to the end of the third chapter — but so specifying the passover which occurred during our Lord's ministry as to enable us to line off, with a large measure of certainty, the events of the first three Gospels according to the successive passover which they embraced. EUSEBIUS, the ecclesiastical historian, who, early in the fourth century, gave much attention to this subject, in noticing these features of the Evangelical Records, says [*Ecclesiastical History*, 3.24] that John wrote his Gospel at the entreaty of those who knew the important materials he possessed, and filled up what is wanting in the first three Gospels. Why it was reserved for the fourth Gospel, published at so late a period, to supply such important particulars in the life of Christ, it is not easy to conjecture with any probability. It may be, that though not unacquainted with the general facts, they were not furnished with reliable details. But one thing may be affirmed with tolerable certainty, that as our Lord's teaching at Jerusalem was of a depth and grandeur scarcely so well adapted to the prevailing character of the first three Gospels, but altogether congenial to the fourth; and as the bare mention of the successive passovers, without any account of the transactions and discourses they gave rise to, would have served little purpose in the first three Gospels, there may have been no way of preserving the unity and consistency of each Gospel, so as to furnish by*

means of them all the precious information we get from them, save by the plan on which they are actually constructed.

*Entry into Galilee* (~~4042~~Matthew 4:12-17).

**12. Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison** — more simply, “was delivered up,” as recorded in ~~4048~~Matthew 14:3-5 ~~4067~~Mark 6:17-20 ~~4089~~Luke 3:19,20.

**he departed** — rather, “withdrew.”

**into Galilee** — as recorded, in its proper place, in ~~4001~~John 4:1-3.

**13. And leaving Nazareth** — The prevalent opinion is that this refers to a *first* visit to Nazareth after His baptism, whose details are given by Luke (~~4046~~Luke 4:16, etc.); a *second* visit being that detailed by our Evangelist (~~4038~~Matthew 13:54-58), and by Mark (~~4006~~Mark 6:1-6). But to us there seem all but insuperable difficulties in the supposition of two visits to Nazareth after His baptism; and on the grounds stated in ~~4046~~Luke 4:16, etc., we think that the *one only visit* to Nazareth is that recorded by Matthew (~~4038~~Matthew 13:53-58), Mark (~~4006~~Mark 6:1-6), and Luke (~~4044~~Luke 4:14-30). But how, in that case, are we to take the word “*leaving Nazareth*” here? We answer, just as the same word is used in ~~4018~~Acts 21:3, “Now when we had sighted Cyprus, and *left* it on the left, we sailed into Syria,” — that is, without entering Cyprus at all, but merely “sighting” it, as the nautical phrase is, they steered southeast of it, leaving it on the northwest. So here, what we understand the Evangelist to say is, that Jesus, on His return to Galilee, did not, as might have been expected, make Nazareth the place of His stated residence, but, “leaving for passing by Nazareth,”

**he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast** — maritime Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee; but the precise spot is unknown. (See on ~~4023~~Matthew 11:23). Our Lord seems to have chosen it for several reasons. Four or five of the Twelve lived there; it had a considerable and mixed population, securing some freedom from that intense bigotry which even to this day characterizes all places where Jews in large numbers dwell nearly alone; it was central, so that not only on the approach of the annual festivals did large numbers pass through it or near it, but on any occasion multitudes could easily be collected about it; and for crossing and recrossing the lake, which our Lord had so often occasion to do, no place could be more convenient. But one other high reason for the choice of Capernaum remains to be mentioned, the only one specified by our Evangelist.

**in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim** — the one lying to the west of the Sea of Galilee, the other to the north of it; but the precise boundaries cannot now be traced out.

**14. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet** — (<sup>201F</sup>Isaiah 9:1,2 or, as in *Hebrew*, <sup>201F</sup>Isaiah 8:23 9:1).

**saying** — as follows:

15. The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea — the coast skirting the Sea of Galilee westward — beyond Jordan — a phrase commonly meaning eastward of Jordan; but here and in several places it means westward of the Jordan. The word seems to have got the general meaning of “the other side”; the nature of the case determining which side that was.

**Galilee of the Gentiles** — so called from its position, which made it the frontier between the Holy Land and the external world. While Ephraim and Judah, as STANLEY says, were separated from the world by the Jordan valley on one side and the hostile Philistines on another, the northern tribes were in the direct highway of all the invaders from the north, in unbroken communication with the promiscuous races who have always occupied the heights of Lebanon, and in close and peaceful alliance with the most commercial nation of the ancient world, the Phoenicians. Twenty of the cities of Galilee were actually annexed by Solomon to the adjacent kingdom of Tyre, and formed, with their territory, the “boundary” or “offscouring” (*Gebul* or *Cabul*) of the two dominions — at a later time still known by the general name of “the boundaries (coasts or borders) of Tyre and Sidon.” In the first great transportation of the Jewish population, Naphtali and Galilee suffered the same fate as the trans-jordanic tribes before Ephraim or Judah had been molested (<sup>1259</sup>2 Kings 15:29). In the time of the Christian era this original disadvantage of their position was still felt; the speech of the Galileans “betrayed them” by its uncouth pronunciation (<sup>1073</sup>Matthew 26:73); and their distance from the seats of government and civilization at Jerusalem and Caesarea gave them their character for turbulence or independence, according as it was viewed by their friends or their enemies.

**16. The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up** — The prophetic strain to which these words belong commences with the seventh chapter of Isaiah, to which the sixth chapter is introductory, and goes down to the end of the twelfth chapter, which hymns the spirit of that whole strain of prophecy. It belongs to the reign of Ahaz and turns upon the combined efforts of the two neighboring kingdoms of Syria and Israel to crush Judah. In these critical circumstances Judah and her king were, by their



ungodliness, provoking the Lord to sell them into the hands of their enemies. What, then, is the burden of this prophetic strain, on to the passage here quoted? First, Judah shall not, cannot perish, because IMMANUEL, the Virgin's Son, is to come forth from his loins. Next, one of the invaders shall soon perish, and the kingdoms of neither be enlarged. Further, while the Lord will be the Sanctuary of such as confide in these promises and await their fulfillment, He will drive to confusion, darkness, and despair the vast multitude of the nation who despised His oracles, and, in their anxiety and distress, betook themselves to the lying oracles of the heathen. This carries us down to the end of the eighth chapter. At the opening of the ninth chapter a sudden light is seen breaking in upon one particular part of the country, the part which was to suffer most in these wars and devastations — “the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee and the Gentiles.” The rest of the prophecy stretches over both the Assyrian and the Chaldean captivities and terminates in the glorious Messianic prophecy of the eleventh chapter and the choral hymn of the twelfth chapter. Well, this is the point seized on by our Evangelist. By Messiah's taking up His abode in those very regions of Galilee, and shedding His glorious light upon them, this prediction, He says, of the Evangelical prophet was now fulfilled; and if it was not thus fulfilled, we may confidently affirm it was not fulfilled in any age of the Jewish ceremony, and has received no fulfillment at all. Even the most rationalistic critics have difficulty in explaining it in any other way.

**17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand** — Thus did our Lord not only take up the strain, but give forth the identical summons of His honored forerunner. Our Lord sometimes speaks of the new kingdom as already come — in His own Person and ministry; but the *economy* of it was only “at hand” until the blood of the cross was shed, and the Spirit on the day of Pentecost opened the fountain for sin and for uncleanness to the world at large.

*Calling of Peter and Andrew James and John* (~~408~~ Matthew 4:18-22).

**18. And Jesus, walking** — The word “Jesus” here appears not to belong to the text, but to have been introduced from those portions of it which were transcribed to be used as church lessons; where it was naturally introduced as a connecting word at the commencement of a lesson.

**by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers** — “called Peter” for the reason mentioned in ~~408~~ Matthew 16:18.



**19. And he saith unto them, Follow me** — rather, as the same expression is rendered in Mark, “Come ye after Me” (<sup>4017</sup>Mark 1:17).

**and I will make you fishers of men** — raising them from a lower to a higher *fishing*, as David was from a lower to a higher *feeding* (<sup>4980</sup>Psalms 78:70-72).

**20. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.**

**21. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship** — rather, “in the ship,” their fishing boat.

**with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them.**

**22. And they immediately left the ship and their father** — Mark adds an important clause: “They left their father Zebedee in the ship with the *hired servants*” (<sup>4023</sup>Mark 1:20); showing that the family were in easy circumstances.

**and followed him** — Two harmonistic questions here arise: *First*, Was this the same calling as that recorded in <sup>4035</sup>John 1:35-42? Clearly not. For,

(1) That call was given while Jesus was yet in Judea: this, after His return to Galilee.

(2) Here, Christ calls Andrew: there, Andrew solicits an interview with Christ.

(3) Here, Andrew and Peter are called together: there, Andrew having been called, with an unnamed disciple, who was clearly the beloved disciple (see on <sup>4040</sup>John 1:40), goes and fetches Peter his brother to Christ, who then calls him.

(4) Here, John is called along with James his brother: there, John is called along with Andrew, after having at their own request had an interview with Jesus; no mention being made of James, whose call, if it then took place, would not likely have been passed over by his own brother.

Thus far nearly all are agreed. But on the *next* question opinion is divided: Was this the same calling as that recorded in <sup>4091</sup>Luke 5:1-11? Many able critics think so. But the following considerations are to us decisive against it. First here, the four are called separately, in pairs: in Luke, all together. Next, in Luke, after a glorious miracle: here, the one pair are casting their net, the other are mending theirs. Further, here, our Lord had made no public appearance in Galilee, and so had gathered none around Him; He is

walking solitary by the shores of the lake when He accosts the two pairs of fishermen: in Luke, the multitude are pressing upon Him, and hearing the word of God, as He stands by the Lake of Gennesaret — a state of things implying a somewhat advanced stage of His early ministry, and some popular enthusiasm. Regarding these successive callings, see on ~~4:11~~ Luke 5:1.

*First Galilean Circuit (~~4:12~~ Matthew 4:23-25).*

**23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues** — These were houses of local worship. It cannot be proved that they existed before the Babylonish captivity; but as they began to be erected soon after it, probably the idea was suggested by the religious inconveniences to which the captives had been subjected. In our Lord's time, the rule was to have one wherever ten learned men or professed students of the law resided; and they extended to Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and most places of the dispersion. The larger towns had several, and in Jerusalem the number approached five hundred. In point of officers and mode of worship, the Christian congregations are modelled after the synagogue.

**and preaching the gospel of the kingdom** — proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom,

**and healing all manner of sickness** — every disease.

**and all manner of disease among the people** — every complaint. The word means any incipient malady causing "softness."

**24. And his fame went throughout all Syria** — reaching first to the part of it adjacent to Galilee, called Syro-Phoenicia (~~4:13~~ Mark 7:26), and thence extending far and wide.

**and they brought unto him all sick people** — all that were ailing or unwell. Those

**that were taken** — for this is a distinct class, not an explanation of the "unwell" class, as our translators understood it.

**with divers diseases and torments** — that is, acute disorders.

**and those which were possessed with devils** — that were demonized or possessed with demons.

**and those which were lunatic** — moon-struck.

**and those that had the palsy** — paralytics, a word not naturalized when our version was made.

**and he healed them** — These healings were at once His credentials and illustrations of “the glad tidings” which He proclaimed. After reading this account of our Lord’s first preaching tour, can we wonder at what follows?

**25. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis** — a region lying to the east of the Jordan, so called as containing ten cities, founded and chiefly inhabited by Greek settlers.

**and from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan** — meaning from Perea. Thus not only was all Palestine upheaved, but all the adjacent regions. But the more immediate object for which this is here mentioned is, to give the reader some idea both of the vast concourse and of the varied complexion of eager attendants upon the great Preacher, to whom the astonishing discourse of the next three chapters was addressed. On the importance which our Lord Himself attached to this first preaching circuit, and the preparation which He made for it, see on <sup><4065></sup>Mark 1:35-39.

## CHAPTERS 5-8

### SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

That this is the *same Discourse* as that in ~~4167~~ Luke 6:17-49 — only reported more fully by Matthew, and less fully, as well as with considerable variation, by Luke — is the opinion of many very able critics (of the Greek commentators; of CALVIN, GROTIUS, MALDONATUS — Who stands almost alone among Romish commentators; and of most moderns, as THOLUCK, MEYER, DE WETTE, TISCHENDORF, STIER, WIESELER, ROBINSON). The prevailing opinion of these critics is that Luke's is the original form of the discourse, to which Matthew has added a number of sayings, uttered on other occasions, in order to give at one view the great outlines of our Lord's ethical teaching. But that they are *two distinct discourses* — the one delivered about the close of His first missionary tour, and the other after a second such tour and the solemn choice of the Twelve — is the judgment of others who have given much attention to such matters (of most Romish commentators, including ERASMUS; and among the moderns, of LANGE, GRESWELL, BIRKS, WEBSTER and WILKINSON. The question is left undecided by ALFORD). AUGUSTINE's opinion — that they were both delivered on one occasion, Matthew's on the mountain, and to the disciples; Luke's in the plain, and to the promiscuous multitude — is so clumsy and artificial as hardly to deserve notice. To us the weight of argument appears to lie with those who think them two separate discourses. It seems hard to conceive that Matthew should have put this discourse before his own calling, if it was not uttered till long after, and was spoken in his own hearing as one of the newly chosen Twelve. Add to this, that Matthew introduces his discourse amidst very definite markings of time, which fix it to our Lord's first preaching tour; while that of Luke, which is expressly said to have been delivered immediately after the choice of the Twelve, could not have been spoken till long after the time noted by Matthew. It is hard, too, to see how either discourse can well be regarded as the expansion or contraction of the other. And as it is beyond dispute that our Lord repeated some of His weightier sayings in different forms, and with varied applications, it ought not to surprise us that, after the lapse of perhaps a year — when, having spent a whole night on the hill in prayer to God, and set the Twelve apart, He found Himself surrounded by crowds of people, few of whom probably had heard the Sermon on the Mount, and fewer still remembered much of it — He should go over its principal points again,

with just as much sameness as to show their enduring gravity, but at the same time with that difference which shows His exhaustless fertility as the great Prophet of the Church.

# CHAPTER 5

## THE MATTHEW 5:1-16.

### THE BEATITUDES, AND THEIR BEARING UPON THE WORLD.

**1. And seeing the multitudes** — those mentioned in <sup><4025></sup>Matthew 4:25.

**he went up into a mountain** — one of the dozen mountains which ROBINSON says there are in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee, any one of them answering about equally well to the occasion. So charming is the whole landscape that the descriptions of it, from JOSEPHUS downwards [*Wars of the Jews*, 4.10,8], are apt to be thought a little colored.

**and when he was set** — had sat or seated Himself.

**his disciples came unto him** — already a large circle, more or less attracted and subdued by His preaching and miracles, in addition to the smaller band of devoted adherents. Though the latter only answered to the subjects of His kingdom, described in this discourse, there were drawn from time to time into this inner circle souls from the outer one, who, by the power of His matchless word, were constrained to forsake their all for the Lord Jesus.

**2. And he opened his mouth** — a solemn way of arousing the reader's attention, and preparing him for something weighty. (<sup><801></sup>Job 9:1 <sup><4085></sup>Acts 8:35 10:34).

**and taught them, saying** — as follows.

**3. Blessed** — Of the two words which our translators render “blessed,” the one here used points more to what is *inward*, and so might be rendered “happy,” in a lofty sense; while the other denotes rather what comes to us *from without* (as <sup><4254></sup>Matthew 25:34). But the distinction is not always clearly carried out. One *Hebrew* word expresses both. On these precious Beatitudes, observe that though eight in number, there are here but *seven* distinct features of character. The eighth one — the “persecuted for righteousness’ sake” — denotes merely the possessors of the seven preceding features, on account of which it is that they are persecuted (<sup><9122></sup>Timothy 3:12). Accordingly, instead of any distinct promise to this class,

we have merely a repetition of the first promise. This has been noticed by several critics, who by the *sevenfold* character thus set forth have rightly observed that a *complete* character is meant to be depicted, and by the *sevenfold* blessedness attached to it, a *perfect* blessedness is intended. Observe, again, that the language in which these Beatitudes are couched is purposely fetched from the Old Testament, to show that the new kingdom is but the old in a new form; while the characters described are but the varied forms of that *spirituality* which was the essence of real religion all along, but had well-nigh disappeared under corrupt teaching. Further, the things here promised, far from being mere arbitrary rewards, will be found in each case to grow out of the characters to which they are attached, and in their completed form are but the appropriate coronation of them. Once more, as “the kingdom of heaven,” which is the first and the last thing here promised, has two stages — a present and a future, an initial and a consummate stage — so the fulfillment of each of these promises has two stages — a present and a future, a partial and a perfect stage.

**3. Blessed are the poor in spirit** — All familiar with Old Testament phraseology know how frequently God’s true people are styled “the poor” (the “oppressed,” “afflicted,” “miserable”) or “the needy” — or both together (as in <sup><9017></sup>Psalm 40:17 <sup><23417></sup>Isaiah 41:17). The explanation of this lies in the fact that it is generally “the poor of this world” who are “rich in faith” (<sup><3085></sup>James 2:5; compare <sup><600></sup>2 Corinthians 6:10 <sup><6189></sup>Revelation 2:9); while it is often “the ungodly” who “prosper in the world” (<sup><9732></sup>Psalm 73:12). Accordingly, in <sup><1637></sup>Luke 6:20,21, it seems to be this class — the literally “poor” and “hungry” — that are specially addressed. But since God’s people are in so many places styled “the poor” and “the needy,” with no evident reference to their temporal circumstances (as in <sup><980></sup>Psalm 68:10 <sup><669></sup>69:29-33 <sup><132></sup>132:15 <sup><2600></sup>Isaiah 61:1 66:2), it is plainly a *frame of mind* which those terms are meant to express. Accordingly, our translators sometimes render such words “the humble” (<sup><9002></sup>Psalm 10:12,17), “the meek” (<sup><4223></sup>Psalm 22:26), “the lowly” (<sup><1084></sup>Proverbs 3:34), as having no reference to outward circumstances. But here the explanatory words, “in spirit,” fix the sense to “those who in their deepest consciousness realize their entire need” (compare the *Greek* of <sup><2021></sup>Luke 10:21 <sup><6133></sup>John 11:33 <sup><13></sup>13:21 <sup><402></sup>Acts 20:22 <sup><621></sup>Romans 12:11 <sup><668></sup>1 Corinthians 5:3 <sup><3088></sup>Philippians 3:3). This self-emptying conviction, that “before God we are void of everything,” lies at the foundation of all spiritual excellence, according to the teaching of Scripture. Without it we are inaccessible to the riches of Christ; with it we are in the fitting state for receiving all spiritual supplies (<sup><687></sup>Revelation 3:17,18 <sup><402></sup>Matthew 9:12,13).

**for theirs is the kingdom of heaven** — (See on <sup><1000></sup>Matthew 3:2). The poor in spirit not only shall have — they already have — the kingdom. The very sense of their poverty is begun riches. While others “walk in a vain show” — “in a shadow,” “an image” — in an unreal world, taking a false view of themselves and all around them — the poor in spirit are rich in the knowledge of their real case. Having courage to look this in the face, and own it guilelessly, they feel strong in the assurance that “unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness” (<sup><1000></sup>Psalm 112:4); and soon it breaks forth as the morning. God wants nothing from us as the price of His saving gifts; we have but to feel our universal destitution, and cast ourselves upon His compassion (<sup><1000></sup>Job 33:27,28 <sup><1000></sup>1 John 1:9). So the poor in spirit are enriched with the fullness of Christ, which is the kingdom in substance; and when He shall say to them from His great white throne, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you*,” He will invite them merely to the full enjoyment of an already possessed inheritance.

**4. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted** — This “mourning” must not be taken loosely for that feeling which is wrung from men under pressure of the ills of life, nor yet strictly for sorrow on account of committed sins. Evidently it is that entire feeling which the sense of our spiritual poverty begets; and so the second beatitude is but the complement of the first. The one is the intellectual, the other the emotional aspect of the same thing. It is poverty of spirit that says, “I am undone”; and it is the mourning which this causes that makes it break forth in the form of a lamentation — “Woe is me! for I am undone.” Hence this class are termed “mourners *in Zion*,” or, as we might express it, religious mourners, in sharp contrast with all other sorts (<sup><1000></sup>Isaiah 61:1-3 66:2). Religion, according to the Bible, is neither a set of intellectual convictions nor a bundle of emotional feelings, but a compound of both, the former giving birth to the latter. Thus closely do the first two beatitudes cohere. The mourners shall be “comforted.” Even now they get beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Sowing in tears, they reap even here in joy. Still, all present comfort, even the best, is partial, interrupted, short-lived. But the days of our mourning shall soon be ended, and then God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Then, in the fullest sense, shall the mourners be “comforted.”

**5. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth** — This promise to the meek is but a repetition of <sup><1000></sup>Psalm 37:11; only the word which our Evangelist renders “the meek,” after the *Septuagint*, is the same which we have found so often translated “the poor,” showing how closely allied these two features of character are. It is impossible, indeed, that “the poor in spirit” and “the mourners” in Zion should not at the same time be “meek”;



that is to say, persons of a lowly and gentle carriage. How fitting, at least, it is that they should be so, may be seen by the following touching appeal: “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men*: FOR WE OURSELVES WERE ONCE FOOLISH, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures ... But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared ... : according to His mercy He saved us,” etc. (~~408~~ Titus 3:1-7). But He who had no such affecting reasons for manifesting this beautiful carriage, said, nevertheless, of Himself, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (~~412~~ Matthew 11:29); and the apostle besought one of the churches by “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (~~408~~ 2 Corinthians 10:1). In what esteem this is held by Him who seeth not as man seeth, we may learn from ~~408~~ 1 Peter 3:4, where the true adorning is said to be that of “a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.” Towards men this disposition is the opposite of high-mindedness, and a quarrelsome and revengeful spirit; it “rather takes wrong, and suffers itself to be defrauded” (~~408~~ 1 Corinthians 6:7); it “avenges not itself, but rather gives place unto wrath” (~~429~~ Romans 12:19); like the meek One, “when reviled, it reviles not again; when it suffers, it threatens not: but commits itself to Him that judgeth righteously” (~~409~~ 1 Peter 2:19-22). “The earth” which the meek are to inherit might be rendered “the land” — bringing out the more immediate reference to Canaan as the promised land, the secure possession of which was to the Old Testament saints the evidence and manifestation of God’s favor resting on them, and the ideal of all true and abiding blessedness. Even in the Psalm from which these words are taken the promise to the meek is not held forth as an arbitrary reward, but as having a kind of natural fulfillment. When they delight themselves in the Lord, He gives them the desires of their heart: when they commit their way to Him, He brings it to pass; bringing forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noonday: the little that they have, even when despoiled of their rights, is better than the riches of many wicked (~~450~~ Psalm 37:1-24). All things, in short, are theirs — in the possession of that favor which is life, and of those rights which belong to them as the children of God — whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs (~~408~~ 1 Corinthians 3:21,22); and at length, overcoming, they “inherit all things” (~~407~~ Revelation 21:7). Thus are the meek the only rightful occupants of a foot of ground or a crust of bread here, and heirs of all coming things.

**6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled** — “shall be saturated.” “From this verse,” says

THOLUCK, “the reference to the Old Testament background ceases.” Surprising! On the contrary, none of these beatitudes is more manifestly dug out of the rich mine of the Old Testament. Indeed, how could any one who found in the Old Testament “the poor in spirit,” and “the mourners in Zion,” doubt that he would also find those same characters also *craving* that righteousness which they feel and mourn their want of? But what is the precise meaning of “righteousness” here? Lutheran expositors, and some of our own, seem to have a hankering after that more restricted sense of the term in which it is used with reference to the sinner’s justification before God. (See <sup>2316</sup>Jeremiah 23:6 <sup>2353</sup>Isaiah 45:24 <sup>4016</sup>Romans 4:6 <sup>4721</sup>2 Corinthians 5:21). But, in so comprehensive a saying as this, it is clearly to be taken — as in <sup>4150</sup>Matthew 5:10 also — in a much wider sense, as denoting that spiritual and entire conformity to the law of God, under the want of which the saints groan, and the possession of which constitutes the only true saintship. The Old Testament dwells much on this righteousness, as that which alone God regards with approbation (<sup>9117</sup>Psalms 11:7 23:3 106:3 <sup>4128</sup>Proverbs 12:28 16:31 <sup>2347</sup>Isaiah 64:5, etc.). As hunger and thirst are the keenest of our appetites, our Lord, by employing this figure here, plainly means “those whose deepest cravings are after spiritual blessings.” And in the Old Testament we find this craving variously expressed: “Hearken unto Me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord” (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 51:1); “I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord,” exclaimed dying Jacob (<sup>0498</sup>Genesis 49:18); “My soul,” says the sweet Psalmist, “breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments at all times” (<sup>4430</sup>Psalms 119:20): and in similar breathings does he give vent to his deepest longings in that and other Psalms. Well, our Lord just takes up here — this blessed frame of mind, representing it as — the surest pledge of the coveted supplies, as it is the best preparative, and indeed itself the beginning of them. “They shall be saturated,” He says; they shall not only have what they so highly value and long to possess, but they shall have their fill of it. Not here, however. Even in the Old Testament this was well understood. “Deliver me,” says the Psalmist, in language which, beyond all doubt, stretches beyond the present scene, “from men of the world, which have their portion in this life: as for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (<sup>4973</sup>Psalms 17:13-15). The foregoing beatitudes — the first four — represent the saints rather as *conscious of their need of salvation*, and acting suitably to that character, than as possessed of it. The next three are of a different kind — representing the saints as *having now found salvation*, and conducting themselves accordingly.

**7. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy** — Beautiful is the connection between this and the preceding beatitude. The one has a

natural tendency to beget the other. As for the words, they seem directly fetched from <sup>(1825)</sup>Psalm 18:25, “With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful.” Not that our mercifulness comes absolutely first. On the contrary, our Lord Himself expressly teaches us that God’s method is to awaken in us compassion towards our fellow men by His own exercise of it, in so stupendous a way and measure, towards ourselves. In the parable of the unmerciful debtor, the servant to whom his lord forgave ten thousand talents was naturally expected to exercise the small measure of the same compassion required for forgiving his fellow servant’s debt of a hundred pence; and it is only when, instead of this, he relentlessly imprisoned him till he should pay it up, that his lord’s indignation was roused, and he who was designed for a vessel of mercy is treated as a vessel of wrath (<sup>(1823)</sup>Matthew 18:23-35; and see <sup>(1823)</sup>Matthew 5:23,24 6:15 <sup>(1823)</sup>James 2:13). “According to the view given in Scripture,” says TRENCH most justly, “the Christian stands in a middle point, between a mercy received and a mercy yet needed.” Sometimes the first is urged upon him as an argument for showing mercy — “forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you” (<sup>(1818)</sup>Colossians 3:13 <sup>(1818)</sup>Ephesians 4:32): sometimes the last — “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy”; “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven” (<sup>(1817)</sup>Luke 6:37 <sup>(1817)</sup>James 5:9). And thus, while he is ever to look back on the mercy received as the source and motive of the mercy which he shows, he also looks forward to the mercy which he yet needs, and which he is assured that the merciful — according to what BENGEL beautifully calls the *benigna talio* (“the gracious requital”) of the kingdom of God — shall receive, as a new provocation to its abundant exercise. The foretastes and beginnings of this judicial recompense are richly experienced here below: its perfection is reserved for that day when, from His great white throne, the King shall say, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and thirsty, and a stranger, and naked, and sick, and in prison, and ye ministered unto Me.” Yes, thus He acted towards us while on earth, even laying down His life for us; and He will not, He cannot disown, in the merciful, the image of Himself.

**8. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God** — Here, too, we are on Old Testament ground. There the difference between outward and inward purity, and the acceptableness of the latter only in the sight of God, are everywhere taught. Nor is the “vision of God” strange to the Old Testament; and though it was an understood thing that this was not possible in the present life (<sup>(1820)</sup>Exodus 33:20; and compare <sup>(1820)</sup>Job 19:26,27 <sup>(1816)</sup>Isaiah 6:5), yet spiritually it was known and felt to be the privilege of the saints even here (<sup>(1812)</sup>Genesis 5:24 6:9 17:1 48:15 <sup>(1820)</sup>Psalm 27:4 36:9 63:2 <sup>(1818)</sup>Isaiah 38:3,11, etc.). But oh, with what grand simplicity, brevity, and

power is this great fundamental truth here expressed! And in what striking contrast would such teaching appear to that which was then current, in which exclusive attention was paid to ceremonial purification and external morality! This heart purity begins in a “heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,” or a “conscience purged from dead works” (<sup>-S012</sup>Hebrews 10:22 9:14; and see <sup>-A019</sup>Acts 15:9); and this also is taught in the Old Testament (<sup>-P011</sup>Psalms 32:1,2; compare <sup>-R016</sup>Romans 4:5-8 <sup>-I016</sup>Isaiah 6:5-8). The conscience thus purged — the heart thus sprinkled — there is light within wherewith to see God. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other” — He with us and we with Him — “and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us” — us who have this fellowship, and who, without such continual cleansing, would soon lose it again — “from all sin” (<sup>-J006</sup>1 John 1:6,7). “Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him” (<sup>-J006</sup>1 John 3:6); “He that doeth evil hath not seen God” (<sup>-J011</sup>3 John 1:11). The inward vision thus clarified, and the whole inner man in sympathy with God, each looks upon the other with complacency and joy, and we are “changed into the same image from glory to glory.” But the full and beatific vision of God is reserved for that time to which the Psalmist stretches his views — “As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness” (<sup>-P015</sup>Psalms 17:15). Then shall His servants serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads (<sup>-R018</sup>Revelation 22:3,4). They shall see Him as He is (<sup>-J006</sup>1 John 3:2). But, says the apostle, expressing the converse of this beatitude — “Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (<sup>-H014</sup>Hebrews 12:14).

**9. Blessed are the peacemakers** — who not only study peace, but diffuse it.

**for they shall be called the children of God** — shall be called sons of God. Of all these beatitudes this is the only one which could hardly be expected to find its definite ground in the Old Testament; for that most glorious character of God, the likeness of which appears in the peacemakers, had yet to be revealed. His glorious name, indeed — as “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin” — had been proclaimed in a very imposing manner (<sup>-E006</sup>Exodus 34:6), and manifested in action with affecting frequency and variety in the long course of the ancient economy. And we have undeniable evidence that the saints of that economy felt its transforming and ennobling influence on their own character. But it was not till Christ “made peace by the blood of the cross”

that God could manifest Himself as “the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (~~scri~~ Hebrews 13:20) — could reveal Himself as “in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” and hold Himself forth in the astonishing attitude of beseeching men to be “reconciled to Himself” (~~scri~~ 2 Corinthians 5:19,20). When this reconciliation actually takes place, and one has “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” — even “the peace of God which passeth all understanding” — the peace-receivers become transformed into peace-diffusers. God is thus seen reflected in them; and by the family likeness these peacemakers are recognized as the children of God. In now coming to the eighth, or supplementary beatitude, it will be seen that all that the saints are *in themselves* has been already described, in seven features of character; that number indicating *completeness* of delineation. The last feature, accordingly, is a passive one, representing the treatment that the characters already described may expect from the world. He who shall one day fix the destiny of all men here pronounces certain characters “blessed”; but He ends by forewarning them that the world’s estimation and treatment of them will be the reserve of His.

### **10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, etc.**

— How entirely this final beatitude has its ground in the Old Testament, is evident from the concluding words, where the encouragement held out to endure such persecutions consists in its being but a continuation of what was experienced by the Old Testament servants of God. But how, it may be asked, could such beautiful features of character provoke persecution? To this the following answers should suffice: “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” “The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.” “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” “There is yet one man (said wicked Ahab to good Jehoshaphat) by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil” (~~scri~~ John 3:20 7:7 15:19 ~~scri~~ 2 Chronicles 18:7). But more particularly, the seven characters here described are all in the teeth of the spirit of the world, insomuch that such hearers of this discourse as breathed that spirit must have been startled, and had their whole system of thought and action rudely dashed. Poverty of spirit runs counter to the pride of men’s heart; a pensive disposition, in the view of one’s universal deficiencies before God, is ill relished by the callous, indifferent, laughing, self-satisfied world; a meek and quiet spirit, taking wrong, is regarded as pusillanimous, and rasps against the proud, resentful spirit of the world; that craving after spiritual

blessings rebukes but too unpleasantly the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; so does a merciful spirit the hard-heartedness of the world; purity of heart contrasts painfully with painted hypocrisy; and the peacemaker cannot easily be endured by the contentious, quarrelsome world. Thus does “righteousness” come to be “persecuted.” But blessed are they who, in spite of this, dare to be righteous.

**for theirs is the kingdom of heaven** — As this was the reward promised to the poor in spirit — the leading one of these seven beatitudes — of course it is the proper portion of such as are persecuted for exemplifying them.

**11. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you** — or abuse you to your face, in opposition to backbiting. (See <sup>4152</sup>Mark 15:32).

**and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake** — Observe this. He had before said, “for righteousness’ sake.” Here He identifies Himself and His cause with that of righteousness, binding up the cause of righteousness in the world with the reception of Himself. Would Moses, or David, or Isaiah, or Paul have so expressed themselves? Never. Doubtless they suffered for righteousness’ sake. But to have called this “their sake,” would, as every one feels, have been very unbecoming. Whereas He that speaks, being Righteousness incarnate (see <sup>4028</sup>Mark 1:24 <sup>4814</sup>Acts 3:14 <sup>6137</sup>Revelation 3:7), when He so speaks, speaks only like Himself.

**12. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad** — “exult.” In the corresponding passage of Luke (<sup>4672</sup>Luke 6:22,23), where every indignity trying to flesh and blood is held forth as the probable lot of such as were faithful to Him, the word is even stronger than here: “leap,” as if He would have their inward transport to overpower and absorb the sense of all these affronts and sufferings; nor will anything else do it.

**for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you:** — that is, “You do but serve yourselves heirs to their character and sufferings, and the reward will be common.”

**13-16.** We have here the practical application of the foregoing principles to those disciples who sat listening to them, and to their successors in all time. Our Lord, though He began by pronouncing certain *characters* to be blessed — without express reference to any of His hearers — does not close the beatitudes without intimating that such characters were in existence, and that already they were before Him. Accordingly, from characters He comes to *persons* possessing them, saying, “Blessed are ye



when men shall revile you,” etc. (<sup><0511></sup>Matthew 5:11). And now, continuing this mode of direct personal address, He startles those humble, unknown men by pronouncing them the exalted benefactors of their whole species.

**Ye are the salt of the earth** — to preserve it from corruption, to season its insipidity, to freshen and sweeten it. The value of salt for these purposes is abundantly referred to by classical writers as well as in Scripture; and hence its symbolical significance in the religious offerings as well of those without as of those within the pale of revealed religion. In Scripture, mankind, under the unrestrained workings of their own evil nature, are represented as entirely corrupt. Thus, before the flood (<sup><0051></sup>Genesis 6:11,12); after the flood (<sup><0052></sup>Genesis 8:21); in the days of David (<sup><0442></sup>Psalms 14:2,3); in the days of Isaiah (<sup><0053></sup>Isaiah 1:5,6); and in the days of Paul (<sup><0054></sup>Ephesians 2:1-3; see also <sup><0340></sup>Job 14:4 15:15,16 <sup><0055></sup>John 3:6; compared with <sup><0056></sup>Romans 8:8 <sup><0057></sup>Titus 3:2,3). The remedy for this, says our Lord here, is the active presence of His disciples among their fellows. The character and principles of Christians, brought into close contact with it, are designed to arrest the festering corruption of humanity and season its insipidity. But how, it may be asked, are Christians to do this office for their fellow men, if their righteousness only exasperate them, and recoil, in every form of persecution, upon themselves? The answer is: That is but the first and partial effect of their Christianity upon the world: though the great proportion would dislike and reject the truth, a small but noble band would receive and hold it fast; and in the struggle that would ensue, one and another even of the opposing party would come over to His ranks, and at length the Gospel would carry all before it.

**but if the salt have lost his savor** — “become unsavory” or “insipid”; losing its saline or salting property. The meaning is: If that Christianity on which the health of the world depends, does in any age, region, or individual, exist only in *name*, or if it contain not those *saving elements* for want of which the world languishes,

**wherewith shall it be salted?** — How shall the salting qualities be restored it? (Compare <sup><0058></sup>Mark 9:50). Whether salt ever does lose its saline property — about which there is a difference of opinion — is a question of no moment here. The point of the case lies in the supposition — that *if it should lose it*, the consequence would be as here described. So with Christians. The question is not: Can, or do, the saints ever totally lose that grace which makes them a blessing to their fellow men? But, What is to be the issue of that Christianity which is found wanting in those elements which can alone stay the corruption and season the tastelessness of an all — pervading carnality? The restoration or non-restoration of *grace*, or true living Christianity, to those who have lost it, has, in our judgment, nothing

at all to do here. The question is not, If a man lose his grace, how shall *that* grace be restored to him? but, Since living Christianity is the only “salt of the earth,” if men lose that, *what else* can supply its place? What follows is the appalling answer to this question.

**it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out** — a figurative expression of indignant exclusion from the kingdom of God (compare <sup><B082</sup>Matthew 8:12 22:13 <sup><B057</sup>John 6:37 9:34).

**and to be trodden under foot of men** — expressive of contempt and scorn. It is not the mere want of a certain character, but the want of it in those whose *profession* and *appearance* were fitted to beget expectation of finding it.

**14. Ye are the light of the world** — This being the distinctive title which our Lord appropriates to Himself (<sup><B082</sup>John 8:12 9:5; and see <sup><B004</sup>John 1:4,9 3:19 12:35,36) — a title expressly said to be unsuitable even to the highest of all the prophets (<sup><B008</sup>John 1:8) — it must be applied here by our Lord to His disciples only as they shine with His light upon the world, in virtue of His Spirit dwelling in them, and the same mind being in them which was also in Christ Jesus. Nor are Christians anywhere else so called. Nay, as if to avoid the august title which the Master has appropriated to Himself, Christians are said to “shine” — not as “lights,” as our translators render it, but — “as *luminaries* in the world” (<sup><0415</sup>Philippians 2:15); and the Baptist is said to have been “the burning and shining” — not “light,” as in our translation, but “*lamp*” of his day (<sup><B055</sup>John 5:35). Let it be observed, too, that while the two figures of salt and sunlight both express the same function of Christians — their blessed influence on their fellow men — they each set this forth under a different aspect. Salt operates *internally*, in the mass with which it comes in contact; the sunlight operates *externally*, irradiating all that it reaches. Hence Christians are warily styled “the salt of the *earth*” — with reference to the masses of mankind with whom they are expected to mix; but “the light of the *world*” — with reference to the vast and variegated surface which feels its fructifying and gladdening radiance. The same distinction is observable in the second pair of those seven parables which our Lord spoke from the Galilean Lake — that of the “mustard seed,” which grew to be a great overshadowing tree, answering to the sunlight which invests the world, and that of the “leaven,” which a woman took and, like the salt, *hid* in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened (<sup><A030</sup>Matthew 13:31-33).

**A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid** — nor can it be supposed to have been so built except to be seen by many eyes.

**15. Neither do men light a candle** — or, lamp.



**and put it under a bushel** — a dry measure.

**but on a candlestick** — rather, “under the bushel, but on the lampstand.” The article is inserted in both cases to express the familiarity of everyone with those household utensils.

**and it giveth light** — shineth “unto all that are in the house.”

**16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven** — As nobody lights a lamp only to cover it up, but places it so conspicuously as to give light to all who need light, so Christians, being the light of the world, instead of hiding their light, are so to hold it forth before men that they may see what a life the disciples of Christ lead, and seeing this, may glorify their Father for so redeeming, transforming, and ennobling earth’s sinful children, and opening to themselves the way to like redemption and transformation.

## ~~4057~~ MATTHEW 5:17-48.

### IDENTITY OF THESE PRINCIPLES WITH THOSE OF THE ANCIENT ECONOMY; IN CONTRAST WITH THE REIGNING TRADITIONAL TEACHING.

*Exposition of Principles (~~4057~~ Matthew 5:17-20).*

**17. Think not that I am come** — that I came.

**to destroy the law, or the prophets** — that is, “the authority and principles of the Old Testament.” (On the phrase, see ~~4072~~ Matthew 7:12 22:40 ~~4066~~ Luke 16:16 ~~4035~~ Acts 13:15). This general way of taking the phrase is much better than understanding “the law” and “the prophets” separately, and inquiring, as many good critics do, in what sense our Lord could be supposed to meditate the subversion of each. To the various classes of His hearers, who might view such supposed abrogation of the law and the prophets with very different feelings, our Lord’s announcement would, in effect, be such as this — “Ye who tremble at the word of the Lord, *fear* not that I am going to sweep the foundation from under your feet: Ye restless and revolutionary spirits, *hope* not that I am going to head any revolutionary movement: And ye who hypocritically affect great reverence for the law and the prophets, *pretend* not to find anything in My teaching derogatory to God’s living oracles.”

**I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill** — Not to subvert, abrogate, or annul, but to establish the law and the prophets — to unfold them, to

embody them in living form, and to enshrine them in the reverence, affection, and character of men, am I come.

**18. For verily I say unto you** — Here, for the first time, does that august expression occur in our Lord's recorded teaching, with which we have grown so familiar as hardly to reflect on its full import. It is the expression manifestly, of *supreme legislative authority*; and as the subject in connection with which it is uttered is the Moral Law, no higher claim to an authority *strictly divine* could be advanced. For when we observe how jealously Jehovah asserts it as His exclusive prerogative to give law to men (~~1888~~ Leviticus 18:1-5 19:37 26:1-4 13-16, etc.), such language as this of our Lord will appear totally unsuitable, and indeed abhorrent, from any creature lips. When the Baptist's words — "I say unto you" (~~1888~~ Matthew 3:9) — are compared with those of his Master here, the difference of the two cases will be at once apparent.

**Till heaven and earth pass** — Though even the Old Testament announces the ultimate "perdition of the heavens and the earth," in contrast with the immutability of Jehovah (~~1888~~ Psalm 102:24-27), the prevalent representation of the heavens and the earth in Scripture, when employed as a popular figure, is that of their *stability* (~~1888~~ Psalm 119:89-91 ~~1888~~ Ecclesiastes 1:4 ~~1888~~ Jeremiah 33:25,26). It is the enduring stability, then, of the great truths and principles, moral and spiritual, of the Old Testament revelation which our Lord thus expresses.

**one jot** — the smallest of the *Hebrew* letters.

**one tittle** — one of those little strokes by which alone some of the *Hebrew* letters are distinguished from others like them.

**shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled** — The meaning is that "not so much as the smallest loss of authority or vitality shall ever come over the law." The expression, "till all be fulfilled," is much the same in meaning as "it *shall* be had in undiminished and enduring honor, from its greatest to its least requirements." Again, this general way of viewing our Lord's words here seems far preferable to that *doctrinal* understanding of them which would require us to determine the different kinds of "fulfillment" which the *moral* and the *ceremonial* parts of it were to have.

**19. Whosoever therefore shall break** — rather, "dissolve," "annul," or make "invalid."

**one of these least commandments** — an expression equivalent to "one of the least of these commandments."

**and shall teach men so** — referring to the Pharisees and their teaching, as is plain from <sup><1151></sup>Matthew 5:20, but of course embracing all similar schools and teaching in the Christian Church.

**he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven** — As the thing spoken of is not the practical breaking, or disobeying, of the law, but annulling or enervating its obligation by a vicious system of interpretation, and teaching others to do the same; so the thing threatened is not exclusion from heaven, and still less the lowest place in it, but a degraded and contemptuous position in the present stage of the kingdom of God. In other words, they shall be reduced by the retributive providence that overtakes them, to the same condition of dishonor to which, by their system and their teaching, they have brought down those eternal principles of God's law.

**but whosoever shall do and teach them** — whose principles and teaching go to exalt the authority and honor of God's law, in its lowest as well as highest requirements.

**the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven** — shall, by that providence which watches over the honor of God's moral administration, be raised to the same position of authority and honor to which they exalt the law.

**20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees** — The superiority to the Pharisaic righteousness here required is plainly in *kind*, not *degree*; for all Scripture teaches that entrance into God's kingdom, whether in its present or future stage, depends, not on the degree of our excellence in anything, but solely on our having the character itself which God demands. Our righteousness, then — if it is to contrast with the *outward* and *formal* righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees — must be *inward*, *vital*, *spiritual*. Some, indeed, of the scribes and Pharisees themselves might have the very righteousness here demanded; but our Lord is speaking, not of persons, but of the *system* they represented and taught.

**ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven** — If this refer, as in <sup><1159></sup>Matthew 5:19, rather to the earthly stage of this kingdom, the meaning is that without a righteousness exceeding that of the Pharisees, we cannot be members of it at all, save in name. This was no new doctrine ( <sup><1128></sup>Romans 2:28,29 9:6 <sup><1088></sup>Philippians 3:3). But our Lord's teaching here stretches beyond the present scene, to that everlasting stage of the kingdom, where without "purity of heart" none "shall see God."

*The Spirituality of the True Righteousness in Contrast with That of  
the Scribes and Pharisees, Illustrated from the Sixth  
Commandment. (<sup><402></sup>Matthew 5:21-26).*

**21. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time** — or, as in the *Margin*, “to them of old time.” Which of these translations is the right one has been much controverted. Either of them is grammatically defensible, though the latter — “to the ancients” — is more consistent with New Testament usage (see the *Greek* of <sup><402></sup>Romans 9:12,26 <sup><401></sup>Revelation 6:11 9:4); and most critics decide in favor of it. But it is not a question of *Greek* only. Nearly all who would translate “to the ancients” take the speaker of the words quoted to be *Moses in the law*; “the ancients” to be *the people* to whom Moses gave the law; and the intention of our Lord here to be to contrast His own teaching, more or less, with that of Moses; either as opposed to it — as some go the length of affirming — or at least as modifying, enlarging, elevating it. But who can reasonably imagine such a thing, just after the most solemn and emphatic proclamation of the perpetuity of the law, and the honor and glory in which it was to be held under the new economy? To us it seems as plain as possible that our Lord’s one object is to contrast the traditional perversions of the law with the true sense of it as expounded by Himself. A few of those who assent to this still think that “to the ancients” is the only legitimate translation of the words; understanding that our Lord is reporting what had been said to the ancients, not by Moses, but by the perverters of his law. We do not object to this; but we incline to think (with BEZA, and after him with FRITZSCHE, OLSHAUSEN, STIER, and BLOOMFIELD) that “by the ancients” must have been what our Lord meant here, referring to the corrupt teachers rather than the perverted people.

**Thou shall not kill:** — that is, This being all that the law requires, whosoever has imbrued his hands in his brother’s blood, but he only, is guilty of a breach of this commandment.

**and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment** — liable to the judgment; that is, of the sentence of those inferior courts of judicature which were established in all the principal towns, in compliance with <sup><5136></sup>Deuteronomy 16:16. Thus was this commandment reduced, from a holy law of the heart-searching God, to a mere criminal statute, taking cognizance only of outward actions, such as that which we read in <sup><12112></sup>Exodus 21:12 <sup><13477></sup>Leviticus 24:17.

**22. But I say unto you** — Mark the authoritative tone in which — as Himself the Lawgiver and Judge — Christ now gives the true sense, and explains the deep reach, of the commandment.

**That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca! shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool! shall be in danger of hell-fire** — It is unreasonable to deny, as

ALEXANDER does, that three degrees of punishment are here meant to be expressed, and to say that it is but a threefold expression of one and the same thing. But Romish expositors greatly err in taking the first two — “the judgment” and “the council” — to refer to degrees of *temporal* punishment with which lesser sins were to be visited under the Gospel, and only the last — “hell-fire” — to refer to the future life. All three clearly refer to *divine retribution*, and that alone, for breaches of this commandment; though this is expressed by an *allusion* to Jewish tribunals. The “judgment,” as already explained, was the lowest of these; the “council,” or “Sanhedrim,” which sat at Jerusalem — was the highest; while the word used for “hell-fire” contains an allusion to the “valley of the son of Hinnom” (<sup>(10816)</sup>Joshua 18:16). In this valley the Jews, when steeped in idolatry, went the length of burning their children to Molech “on the high places of Tophet” — in consequence of which good Josiah defiled it, to prevent the repetition of such abominations (<sup>(12310)</sup>2 Kings 23:10); and from that time forward, if we may believe the Jewish writers, a fire was kept burning in it to consume the carrion and all kinds of impurities that collected about the capital. Certain it is, that while the final punishment of the wicked is described in the Old Testament by allusions to this valley of Tophet or Hinnom (<sup>(2313)</sup>Isaiah 30:33 66:24), our Lord Himself describes the same by merely quoting these terrific descriptions of the evangelical prophet (<sup>(408)</sup>Mark 9:43-48). What precise degrees of unholy feeling towards our brothers are indicated by the words “Raca” and “fool” it would be as useless as it is vain to inquire. Every age and every country has its modes of expressing such things; and no doubt our Lord seized on the then current phraseology of unholy disrespect and contempt, merely to express and condemn the different degrees of such feeling when brought out in words, as He had immediately before condemned the feeling itself. In fact, so little are we to make of mere *words*, apart from the feeling which they express, that as *anger* is expressly said to have been borne by our Lord towards His enemies though mixed with “grief for the hardness of their hearts” (<sup>(4185)</sup>Mark 3:5), and as the apostle teaches us that there is an anger which is not sinful (<sup>(408)</sup>Ephesians 4:26); so in the Epistle of James (<sup>(3020)</sup>James 2:20) we find the words, “O vain (or, empty) man”; and our Lord Himself applies the very word “fools” twice in one breath to the blind guides of the people (<sup>(4187)</sup>Matthew 23:17,19) — although, in both cases, it is to *false reasoners* rather than persons that such words are applied. The spirit, then, of the whole statement may be thus given: “For ages ye have been taught that the sixth commandment, for example, is broken only by the murderer,

to pass sentence upon whom is the proper business of the recognized tribunals. But I say unto you that it is broken even by causeless anger, which is but hatred in the bud, as hatred is incipient murder (<sup>4115</sup>1 John 3:15); and if by the feelings, much more by those *words* in which all ill feeling, from the slightest to the most envenomed, are wont to be cast upon a brother: and just as there are gradations in human courts of judicature, and in the sentences which they pronounce according to the degrees of criminality, so will the judicial treatment of all the breakers of this commandment at the divine tribunal be according to their real criminality before the heart-searching Judge.” Oh, what holy teaching is this!

**23. Therefore** — to apply the foregoing, and show its paramount importance.

**if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught** — of just complaint “against thee.”

**24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother** — The meaning evidently is — not, “dismiss from thine own breast all ill feeling, “but” get thy brother to dismiss from his mind all grudge against thee.”

**and then come and offer thy gift** — “The picture,” says THOLUCK,” is drawn from life. It transports us to the moment when the Israelite, having brought his sacrifice to the court of the Israelites, awaited the instant when the priest would approach to receive it at his hands. He waits with his gift at the rails which separate the place where he stands from the court of the priests, into which his offering will presently be taken, there to be slain by the priest, and by him presented upon the altar of sacrifice.” It is at this solemn moment, when about to cast himself upon divine mercy, and seek in his offering a seal of divine forgiveness, that the offerer is supposed, all at once, to remember that some brother has a just cause of complaint against him through breach of this commandment in one or other of the ways just indicated. What then? Is he to say, As soon as I have offered this gift I will go straight to my brother, and make it up with him? Nay; but before another step is taken — even before the offering is presented — this reconciliation is to be sought, though the gift have to be left unoffered before the altar. The converse of the truth here taught is very strikingly expressed in <sup>4115</sup>Mark 11:25,26: “And *when ye stand praying* (in the very act), forgive, if ye have aught (of just complaint) against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you,” etc. Hence the beautiful practice of the early Church, to see that all differences amongst brethren and sisters in Christ were made up, in the

spirit of love, before going to the Holy Communion; and the Church of England has a rubrical direction to this effect in her Communion service. Certainly, if this be the highest act of worship on earth, such reconciliation though obligatory on all other occasions of worship — must be peculiarly so then.

**25. Agree with thine adversary** — thine opponent in a matter cognizable by law.

**quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him** — “to the magistrate,” as in ~~12:58~~ Luke 12:58.

**lest at any time** — here, rather, “lest at all,” or simply “lest.”

**the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge** — having pronounced thee in the wrong.

**deliver thee to the officer** — the official whose business it is to see the sentence carried into effect.

**26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, fill thou hast paid the uttermost farthing** — a fractional Roman coin, worth about half a cent. That our Lord meant here merely to give a piece of prudential advice to his hearers, to keep out of the hands of the law and its officials by settling all disputes with one another privately, is not for a moment to be supposed, though there are critics of a school low enough to suggest this. The concluding words — “Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out,” etc. — manifestly show that though the *language* is drawn from human disputes and legal procedure, He is dealing with a higher than any human quarrel, a higher than any human tribunal, a higher than any human and temporal sentence. In this view of the words — in which nearly all critics worthy of the name agree — the spirit of them may be thus expressed: “In expounding the sixth commandment, I have spoken of offenses between man and man; reminding you that the offender has another party to deal with besides him whom he has wronged on earth, and assuring you that all worship offered to the Searcher of hearts by one who knows that a brother has just cause of complaint against him, and yet takes no steps to remove it, is vain: But I cannot pass from this subject without reminding you of One whose cause of complaint against you is far more deadly than any that man can have against man: and since with that Adversary you are already on the way to judgment, it will be your wisdom to make up the quarrel without delay, lest sentence of condemnation be pronounced upon you, and then will execution straightway follow, from the effects of which you shall never escape as long as any remnant of the offense remains unexpiated.” It will be observed that as the *principle* on



which we are to “agree” with this “Adversary” is not here specified, and the precise *nature* of the retribution that is to light upon the despisers of this warning is not to be gathered from the mere use of the word “prison”; so, the *remedilessness* of the punishment is not in so many words expressed, and still less is its actual *cessation* taught. The language on all these points is designedly general; but it may safely be said that the *unending duration* of future punishment — elsewhere so clearly and awfully expressed by our Lord Himself, as in <sup><4059></sup>Matthew 5:29,30, and <sup><4063></sup>Mark 9:43,48 — is the only doctrine with which His language here quite naturally and fully accords. (Compare <sup><4063></sup>Matthew 18:30,34).

*The Same Subject Illustrated from the Seventh Commandment* (<sup><4059></sup>Matthew 5:27-32).

**27. Ye have heard that it was said** — The words “by,” or “to them of old time,” in this verse are insufficiently supported, and probably were not in the original text.

**Thou shalt not commit adultery** — Interpreting this seventh, as they did the sixth commandment, the traditional perverters of the law restricted the breach of it to *acts* of criminal intercourse between, or with, married persons exclusively. Our Lord now dissipates such delusions.

**28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her** — with the intent to do so, as the same expression is used in <sup><4061></sup>Matthew 6:1; or, with the full consent of his will, to feed thereby his unholy desires.

**hath committed adultery with her already in his heart** — We are not to suppose, from the word here used — “adultery” — that our Lord means to restrict the breach of this commandment to married persons, or to criminal intercourse with such. The expressions, “*whosoever* looketh,” and “looketh upon a *woman*,” seem clearly to extend the range of this commandment to all forms of impurity, and the counsels which follow — as they most certainly were intended for all, whether married or unmarried — seem to confirm this. As in dealing with the sixth commandment our Lord first expounds it, and then in the four following verses applies His exposition (<sup><4059></sup>Matthew 5:21-25), so here He first expounds the seventh commandment, and then in the four following verses applies His exposition (<sup><4063></sup>Matthew 5:28-32).

**29. And if thy right eye** — the reader and the dearer of the two.

**offend thee** — be a “trap spring,” or as in the New Testament, be “an occasion of stumbling” to thee.



**pluck it out and cast it from thee** — implying a certain indignant promptitude, heedless of whatever cost to feeling the act may involve. Of course, it is not *the eye simply* of which our Lord speaks — as if execution were to be done upon the bodily organ — though there have been fanatical ascetics who have both advocated and practiced this, showing a very low apprehension of spiritual things — but *the offending eye*, or the eye considered as the occasion of sin; and consequently, only the *sinful exercise* of the organ which is meant. For as one might put out his eyes without in the least quenching the lust to which they ministered, so, “if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light,” and, when directed by a holy mind, becomes an “instrument of righteousness unto God.” At the same time, just as by cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye, the *power* of acting and of seeing would be destroyed, our Lord certainly means that we are to *strike at the root* of such unholy dispositions, as well as cut off the occasions which tend to stimulate them.

**for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell** — He who despises the warning to cast from him, with indignant promptitude, an offending member, will find his whole body “cast,” with a retributive promptitude of indignation, “into hell.” Sharp language, this, from the lips of Love incarnate!

**30. And if thy right hand** — the organ of *action*, to which the eye excites.

**offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable**, etc. — See on <sup>4152</sup>Matthew 5:29. The repetition, in identical terms, of such stern truths and awful lessons seems characteristic of our Lord’s manner of teaching. Compare <sup>4195</sup>Mark 9:43-48.

**31. It hath been said** — This shortened form was perhaps intentional, to mark a transition from the commandments of the Decalogue to a civil enactment on the subject of divorce, quoted from <sup>4548</sup>Deuteronomy 24:1. The law of divorce — according to its strictness or laxity — has so intimate a bearing upon purity in the married life, that nothing could be more natural than to pass from the seventh commandment to the loose views on that subject then current.

**Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement** — a legal check upon reckless and tyrannical separation. The one legitimate ground of divorce allowed by the enactment just quoted was “some uncleanness” — in other words, conjugal infidelity. But while one school of interpreters (that of Shammai) explained this quite correctly, as prohibiting divorce in every case save that of adultery, another school (that of HILLEL) stretched the expression so far as to include everything in the

wife offensive or disagreeable to the husband — a view of the law too well fitted to minister to caprice and depraved inclination not to find extensive favor. And, indeed, to this day the Jews allow divorces on the most frivolous pretexts. It was to meet this that our Lord uttered what follows:

**32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery** — that is, drives her into it in case she marries again.

**and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced** — for anything short of conjugal infidelity.

**committeth adultery** — for if the commandment is broken by the one party, it must be by the other also. But see on <sup><1894></sup>Matthew 19:4-9. Whether the innocent party, after a just divorce, may lawfully marry again, is not treated of here. The Church of Rome says, No; but the Greek and Protestant Churches allow it.

*Same Subject Illustrated from the Third Commandment*  
(<sup><1893></sup>Matthew 5:33-37).

**33. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself** — These are not the precise words of <sup><1897></sup>Exodus 20:7; but they express all that it was currently understood to condemn, namely, false swearing (<sup><18912></sup>Leviticus 19:12, etc.). This is plain from what follows.

**But I say unto you, Swear not at all** — That this was meant to condemn swearing of every kind and on every occasion — as the Society of Friends and some other ultra-moralists allege — is not for a moment to be thought. For even Jehovah is said once and again to have sworn by Himself; and our Lord certainly answered upon oath to a question put to Him by the high priest; and the apostle several times, and in the most solemn language, takes God to witness that he spoke and wrote the truth; and it is inconceivable that our Lord should here have quoted the precept about not forswearing ourselves, but performing to the Lord our oaths, only to give a precept of His own directly in the teeth of it. Evidently, it is swearing in common intercourse and on frivolous occasions that is here meant. Frivolous oaths were indeed severely condemned in the teaching of the times. But so narrow was the circle of them that a man might swear, says LIGHTFOOT, a hundred thousand times and yet not be guilty of vain swearing. Hardly anything was regarded as an oath if only the name of God were not in it; just as among ourselves, as TRENCH well remarks, a certain lingering reverence for the name of God leads to cutting off portions of His name, or uttering sounds nearly resembling it, or substituting the name of some

heathen deity, in profane exclamations or asseverations. Against all this our Lord now speaks decisively; teaching His audience that every oath carries an appeal to God, whether named or not.

**neither by heaven; for it is God's throne** — (quoting <sup>296</sup>Isaiah 66:1);

**35. Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool** — (quoting <sup>296</sup>Isaiah 66:1);

**neither by Jerusalem for it is the city of the great King** — (quoting <sup>296</sup>Psalms 48:2).

**36. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black** — In the other oaths specified, God's name was profaned quite as really as if His name had been uttered, because it was instantly *suggested* by the mention of His "throne," His "footstool," His "city." But in swearing by our own *head* and the like, the objection lies in their being "beyond our control," and therefore profanely assumed to have a stability which they have not.

**37. But let your communication** — "your word," in ordinary intercourse, be,

**Yea, yea; Nay, nay** — Let a simple *Yes* and *No* suffice in affirming the truth or the untruth of anything. (See <sup>296</sup>James 5:12 <sup>296</sup>2 Corinthians 1:17,18).

**for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil** — not "of the evil one"; though an equally correct rendering of the words, and one which some expositors prefer. It is true that all evil in our world is originally of the devil, that it forms a kingdom at the head of which he sits, and that, in every manifestation of it he has an active part. But any reference to this here seems unnatural, and the allusion to this passage in the Epistle of James (<sup>296</sup>James 5:12) seems to show that this is not the sense of it: "Let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; *lest ye fall into condemnation.*" The untruthfulness of our corrupt nature shows itself not only in the tendency to deviate from the strict truth, but in the disposition to suspect others of doing the same; and as this is not diminished, but rather aggravated, by the habit of confirming what we say by an oath, we thus run the risk of having all reverence for God's holy name, and even for strict truth, destroyed in our hearts, and so "fall into condemnation." The practice of going beyond Yes and No in affirmations and denials — as if our word for it were not enough, and we expected others to question it — springs from that vicious root of untruthfulness which is only aggravated by the very effort to clear ourselves of the suspicion of it. And just as swearing to the truth of what we say begets the disposition it is designed to remove, so the love and reign

of truth in the breasts of Christ's disciples reveals itself so plainly even to those who themselves cannot be trusted, that their simple Yes and No come soon to be more relied on than the most solemn asseverations of others. Thus does the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, like a tree cast into the bitter waters of human corruption, heal and sweeten them.

*Same Subject — Retaliation* (<sup><4158></sup>Matthew 5:38-42).

We have here the converse of the preceding lessons. They were *negative*: these are *positive*.

**38. Ye have heard that it hath been said** — (<sup><42123></sup>Exodus 21:23-25 <sup><43419></sup>Leviticus 24:19,20 <sup><41821></sup>Deuteronomy 19:21).

**An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth** — that is, whatever penalty was regarded as a proper equivalent for these. This law of retribution — designed to take vengeance out of the hands of private persons, and commit it to the magistrate — was abused in the opposite way to the commandments of the Decalogue. While they were reduced to the level of civil enactments, this judicial regulation was held to be a warrant for taking redress into their own hands, contrary to the injunctions of the Old Testament itself (<sup><41112></sup>Proverbs 20:22 24:29).

**39. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right check, turn to him the other also** — Our Lord's own meek, yet dignified bearing, when smitten rudely on the cheek (<sup><43802></sup>John 18:22,23), and *not* literally presenting the other, is the best comment on these words. It is the preparedness, after one indignity, not to invite but to submit meekly to another, without retaliation, which this strong language is meant to convey.

**40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat** — the inner garment; in pledge for a debt (<sup><42226></sup>Exodus 22:26,27).

**let him have thy cloak also** — the outer and more costly garment. This overcoat was not allowed to be retained over night as a pledge from the poor because they used it for a bed covering.

**41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain** — an allusion, probably, to the practice of the Romans and some Eastern nations, who, when government despatches had to be forwarded, obliged the people not only to furnish horses and carriage.s, but to give personal attendance, often at great inconvenience, when required. But the thing here demanded is a readiness to submit to unreasonable demands of whatever kind, rather than raise quarrels, with all the evils resulting from them. What follows is a beautiful extension of this precept.

**42. Give to him that asketh thee** — The sense of *unreasonable* asking is here implied (compare <sup><4131></sup>Luke 6:30).

**and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away** — Though the word signifies classically “to have money lent to one on security,” or “with interest,” yet as this was not the original sense of the word, and as usury was forbidden among the Jews (<sup><4225></sup>Exodus 22:25, etc.), it is doubtless simple borrowing which our Lord here means, as indeed the whole strain of the exhortation implies. This shows that such counsels as “Owe no man anything” (<sup><4338></sup>Romans 13:8), are not to be taken absolutely; else the Scripture commendations of the righteous for “lending” to his necessitous brother (<sup><4336></sup>Psalms 37:36 112:5 <sup><4167></sup>Luke 6:37) would have no application.

**turn not thou away** — a graphic expression of unfeeling refusal to relieve a brother in extremity.

*Same Subject — Love to Enemies* (<sup><4153></sup>Matthew 5:43-48).

**43. Ye have heard that it hath been said** — (<sup><4165></sup>Leviticus 19:18).

**Thou shalt love thy neighbor** — To this the corrupt teachers added,

**and hate thine enemy** — as if the one were a legitimate inference from the other, instead of being a detestable gloss, as BENGEL indignantly calls it. LIGHTFOOT quotes some of the cursed maxims inculcated by those traditionists regarding the proper treatment of all Gentiles. No wonder that the Romans charged the Jews with hatred of the human race.

**44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies** — The word here used denotes *moral* love, as distinguished from the other word, which expresses *personal* affection. Usually, the former denotes “complacency in the character” of the person loved; but here it denotes the benignant, compassionate outgoings of desire for another’s good.

**bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you** — The best commentary on these matchless counsels is the bright example of Him who gave them. (See <sup><4102></sup>1 Peter 2:21-24; and compare <sup><5121></sup>Romans 12:20,21 <sup><4102></sup>1 Corinthians 4:12 <sup><4189></sup>1 Peter 3:9). But though such precepts were never before expressed — perhaps not even conceived — with such breadth, precision, and sharpness as here, our Lord is here only the incomparable Interpreter of the law in force from the beginning; and this is the only satisfactory view of the entire strain of this discourse.

**45. That ye may be the children** — sons.

**of your Father which is in heaven** — The meaning is, “that ye may show yourselves to be such by *resembling* Him” (compare <sup>408B</sup>Matthew 5:9 <sup>408E</sup>Ephesians 5:1).

**for he maketh his sun** — “your Father’s sun.” Well might BENGEL exclaim, “Magnificent appellation!”

**to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust** — rather, (without the article) “on evil and good, and on just and unjust.” When we find God’s own procedure held up for imitation in the law, and much more in the prophets (<sup>408B</sup>Leviticus 19:2 20:26; and compare <sup>408E</sup>1 Peter 1:15,16), we may see that the principle of this surprising verse was nothing new: but the form of it certainly is that of One who spake as never man spake.

**46. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?** — The publicans, as collectors of taxes due to the Roman government, were ever on this account obnoxious to the Jews, who sat uneasy under a foreign yoke, and disliked whatever brought this unpleasantly before them. But the extortion practiced by this class made them hateful to the community, who in their current speech ranked them with “harlots.” Nor does our Lord scruple to speak of them as others did, which we may be sure He never would have done if it had been calumnious. The meaning, then, is, “In loving those who love you, there is no evidence of superior principle; the worst of men will do this: even a publican will go that length.”

**47. And if ye salute your brethren only** — of the same nation and religion with yourselves.

what do ye more *than others*? — what do ye uncommon or extraordinary? that is, wherein do ye *excel*?

**do not even the publicans so?** — The true reading here appears to be, “Do not even the heathens the same?” Compare <sup>408E</sup>Matthew 18:17, where the excommunicated person is said to be “as an heathen man and a publican.”

**48. Be ye therefore** — rather, “Ye shall therefore be,” or “Ye are therefore to be,” as My disciples and in My kingdom.

**perfect** — or complete. Manifestly, our Lord here speaks, not of *degrees* of excellence, but of the *kind* of excellence which was to distinguish His disciples and characterize His kingdom. When therefore He adds,

**even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect** — He refers to that fullorbed glorious completeness which is in the great Divine Model, “their Father which is in heaven.”

# CHAPTER 6

## SERMON ON THE MOUNT — *CONTINUED*.

### ~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ MATTHEW 6:1-18.

#### FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM — ITS UNOSTENTATIOUSNESS.

*General Caution against Ostentation in Religious Duties* (~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ Matthew 6:1).

**1. Take heed that ye do not your alms** — But the true reading seems clearly to be “your righteousness.” The external authority for both readings is pretty nearly equal; but internal evidence is decidedly in favor of “righteousness.” The subject of the second verse being “almsgiving” that word — so like the other in *Greek* — might easily be substituted for it by the copyist: whereas the opposite would not be so likely. But it is still more in favor of “righteousness,” that if we so read the first verse, it then becomes a general heading for this whole section of the discourse, inculcating unostentatiousness in *all* deeds of righteousness — Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting being, in that case, but selected examples of this righteousness; whereas, if we read, “Do not your *alms*,” etc., this first verse will have no reference but to that one point. By “righteousness,” in this case, we are to understand that same righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, whose leading features — in opposition to traditional perversions of it — it is the great object of this discourse to open up: that righteousness of which the Lord says, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ Matthew 5:20). To “*do*” this righteousness, was an old and well-understood expression. Thus, “Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times” (~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ Psalm 106:3). It refers to the *actings* of righteousness in the life — the outgoings of the gracious nature — of which our Lord afterwards said to His disciples, “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples” (~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ John 15:8).

**before men, to be seen of them** — with the view or intention of being beheld of them. See the same expression in ~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ Matthew 5:28. True, He had required them to let their light so shine before men that they might see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven (~~ⲁⲓⲙⲉ~~ Matthew 5:16). But this is quite consistent with not making a display of our righteousness



for self-glorification. In fact, the doing of the former necessarily implies our *not* doing the latter.

**otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven** —

When all duty is done to God — as primarily enjoining and finally judging of it — He will take care that it be duly recognized; but when done purely for ostentation, God cannot own it, nor is His judgment of it even thought of — God accepts only what is done to Himself. So much for the general principle. Now follow three illustrations of it.

*Almsgiving* (<sup><40M></sup>Matthew 6:2-4).

**2. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee** — The expression is to be taken figuratively for *blazoning* it. Hence our expression to “trumpet.”

**as the hypocrites do** — This word — of such frequent occurrence in Scripture, signifying primarily “one who acts a part” — denotes one who either *pretends* to be what he is not (as here), or *dissembles* what he really is (as in <sup><40L></sup>Luke 12:1,2).

**in the synagogues and in the streets** — the places of religious and secular resort.

**that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you** — In such august expressions, it is the Lawgiver and Judge Himself that we hear speaking to us.

**They have their reward** — All they wanted was human applause, and they have it — and with it, all they will ever get.

**3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth** — So far from making a display of it, dwell not on it even in thine own thoughts, lest it minister to spiritual pride.

**4. That thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly** — The word “Himself” appears to be an unauthorized addition to the text, which the sense no doubt suggested. (See <sup><50E></sup>1 Timothy 5:25 <sup><81D></sup>Romans 2:16 <sup><40E></sup>1 Corinthians 4:5).

*Prayer* (<sup><40E></sup>Matthew 6:5,6).

**5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt** — or, preferably, “when ye pray ye shall.”

**not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets** — (See on ~~the~~ Matthew 6:2).

**that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have,** etc. — The *standing* posture in prayer was the ancient practice, alike in the Jewish and in the early Christian Church. But of course this conspicuous posture opened the way for the ostentatious.

**6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet** — a place of retirement.

**and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly** — Of course, it is not the simple publicity of prayer which is here condemned. It may be offered in any circumstances, however open, if not prompted by the spirit of ostentation, but dictated by the great ends of prayer itself. It is the *retiring* character of true prayer which is here taught.

*Supplementary Directions and Model Prayer* (~~the~~ Matthew 6:7-15).

**7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions** — “Babble not” would be a better rendering, both for the form of the word — which in both languages is intended to imitate the sound — and for the sense, which expresses not so much the repetition of the same words as a senseless multiplication of them; as appears from what follows.

**as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking** — This method of heathen devotion is still observed by Hindu and Mohammedan devotees. With the Jews, says LIGHTFOOT, it was a maxim, that “Every one who multiplies prayer is heard.” In the Church of Rome, not only is it carried to a shameless extent, but, as THOLUCK justly observes, the very prayer which our Lord gave as an antidote to vain repetitions is the most abused to this superstitious end; the number of times it is repeated counting for so much more merit. Is not this just that characteristic feature of heathen devotion which our Lord here condemns? But praying much, and using at times the same words, is *not* here condemned, and has the example of our Lord Himself in its favor.

**8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him** — and so needs not to be *informed* of our wants, any more than to be *roused* to attend to them by our incessant speaking. What a view of God is here given, in sharp contrast with the gods of the heathen! But let it be carefully noted that it is not as *the general Father of mankind* that our Lord says, “Your Father” knoweth

what ye need before ye ask it; for it is not men, as such, that He is addressing in this discourse, but His own disciples — the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, hungry and thirsty souls, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, who allow themselves to have all manner of evil said against them for the Son of man's sake — in short, the new-born children of God, who, making their Father's interests their own, are here assured that their Father, in return, makes their interests His, and needs neither to be told nor to be reminded of their wants. Yet He will have His children pray to Him, and links all His promised supplies to their petitions for them; thus encouraging us to draw near and keep near to Him, to talk and walk with Him, to open our every case to Him, and assure ourselves that thus asking we shall receive — thus seeking we shall find — thus knocking it shall be opened to us.

**9. After this manner** — more simply “Thus.”

**therefore pray ye** — The “ye” is emphatic here, in contrast with the heathen prayers. That this matchless prayer was given not only as a *model*, but as a *form*, might be concluded from its very nature. Did it consist only of hints or directions for prayer, it could only be used as a directory; but seeing it is an actual prayer — designed, indeed, to show how much real prayer could be compressed into the fewest words, but still, as a prayer, only the more incomparable for that — it is strange that there should be a doubt whether we ought to pray that very prayer. Surely the words with which it is introduced, in the second utterance and varied form of it which we have in  ~~Luke 11:2~~, ought to set this at rest: “When ye pray, *say*, Our Father.” Nevertheless, since the second form of it varies considerably from the first, and since no example of its actual use, or express quotation of its phraseology, occurs in the sequel of the New Testament, we are to guard against a superstitious use of it. How early this began to appear in the church services, and to what extent it was afterwards carried, is known to every one versed in Church History. Nor has the spirit which bred this abuse quite departed from some branches of the Protestant Church, though the opposite and equally condemnable extreme is to be found in other branches of it.

*Model Prayer* ( ~~Luke~~ *Matthew 6:9-13*).

According to the Latin fathers and the Lutheran Church, the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are *seven* in number; according to the Greek fathers, the Reformed Church and the Westminster divines, they are only *six*; the two last being regarded — we think, less correctly — as one. The first three petitions have to do exclusively with God: “*Thy* name be hallowed” — “*Thy* kingdom come” — “*Thy* will be done.” And they occur in a

*descending* scale — from Himself down to the manifestation of Himself in His kingdom; and from His kingdom to the entire subjection of its subjects, or the complete doing of His will. The remaining four petitions have to do with OURSELVES: “Give *us* our daily bread” — “Forgive *us* our debts” — “Lead *us* not into temptation” — “Deliver *us* from evil.” But these latter petitions occur in an *ascending* scale — from the bodily wants of every day up to our final deliverance from all evil.

### *Invocation:*

**Our Father which art in heaven** — In the former clause we express His nearness to us; in the latter, His distance from us. (See <sup><2000></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:2 <sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 66:1). Holy, loving familiarity suggests the one; awful reverence the other. In calling Him “Father” we express a relationship we have all known and felt surrounding us even from our infancy; but in calling Him our Father “who art in heaven,” we contrast Him with the fathers we all have here below, and so raise our souls to that “heaven” where He dwells, and that Majesty and Glory which are there as in their proper home. These first words of the Lord’s Prayer — this invocation with which it opens — what a brightness and warmth does it throw over the whole prayer, and into what a serene region does it introduce the praying believer, the child of God, as he thus approaches Him! It is true that the paternal relationship of God to His people is by no means strange to the Old Testament. (See <sup><2000></sup>Deuteronomy 32:6 <sup><2000></sup>Psalms 103:13 <sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 63:16 <sup><2000></sup>Jeremiah 3:4,19 <sup><2000></sup>Malachi 1:6 2:10). But these are only glimpses — the “back parts” (<sup><2000></sup>Exodus 33:23), if we may so say, in comparison with the “open face” of our Father revealed in Jesus. (See on <sup><2000></sup>2 Corinthians 3:18). Nor is it too much to say, that the view which our Lord gives, throughout this His very first lengthened discourse, of “our Father in heaven,” beggars all that was ever taught, even in God’s own Word, or conceived before by His saints, on this subject.

## FIRST PETITION:

**Hallowed be** — that is, “Be held in reverence”; *regarded* and *treated* as holy.

**thy name** — God’s name means “Himself as revealed and manifested.” Everywhere in Scripture God defines and marks off the faith and love and reverence and obedience He will have from men by the disclosures which He makes to them of what He is; both to shut out false conceptions of Him, and to make all their devotion take the shape and hue of His own teaching. Too much attention cannot be paid to this.

## SECOND PETITION:

**10. Thy kingdom come** — The kingdom of God is that moral and spiritual kingdom which the God of grace is setting up in this fallen world, whose subjects consist of as many as have been brought into hearty subjection to His gracious scepter, and of which His Son Jesus is the glorious Head. In the inward reality of it, this kingdom existed ever since there were men who “walked with God” (~~GEN~~ Genesis 5:24), and “waited for His salvation” (~~GEN~~ Genesis 49:18); who were “continually with Him, holden by His right hand” (~~PS~~ Psalm 73:23), and who, even in the valley of the shadow of death, feared no evil when He was with them (~~PS~~ Psalm 23:4). When Messiah Himself appeared, it was, as a visible kingdom, “at hand.” His death laid the deep foundations of it. His ascension on high, “leading captivity captive and receiving gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them,” and the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, by which those gifts for men descended upon the rebellious, and the Lord God was beheld, in the persons of thousands upon thousands, “dwelling” among men — was a glorious “coming” of this kingdom. But it is still to come, and this petition, “Thy kingdom come,” must not cease to ascend so long as one subject of it remains to be brought in. But does not this prayer stretch further forward — to “the glory to be revealed,” or that stage of the kingdom called “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (~~2~~ Peter 1:11)? Not directly, perhaps, since the petition that follows this — “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” — would then bring us back to this present state of imperfection. Still, the mind refuses to be so bounded by stages and degrees, and in the act of praying, “Thy kingdom come,” it irresistibly stretches the wings of its faith, and longing, and joyous expectation out to the final and glorious consummation of the kingdom of God.

## THIRD PETITION:

**Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven** — or, as the same words are rendered in Luke, “as in heaven, so upon earth” (~~LUK~~ Luke 11:2) — as *cheerfully*, as *constantly*, as *perfectly*. But some will ask, Will this ever be? We answer, If the “new heavens and new earth” are to be just our present material system purified by fire and transfigured, of course it will. But we incline to think that the aspiration which we are taught in this beautiful petition to breathe forth has no direct reference to any such *organic* fulfillment, and is only the spontaneous and resistless longing of the renewed soul — put into words — to see the whole inhabited earth in entire conformity to the will of God. It asks not if ever it shall be — or if ever it can be — in order to pray this prayer. It *must* have its holy yearnings

breathed forth, and this is just the bold yet simple expression of them. Nor is the Old Testament without prayers which come very near to this (~~4009~~ Psalm 7:9 67:1-7 72:19, etc.).

#### FOURTH PETITION:

**11. Give us this day our daily bread** — The compound word here rendered “daily” occurs nowhere else, either in classical or sacred *Greek*, and so must be interpreted by the analogy of its component parts. But on this critics are divided. To those who would understand it to mean, “Give us this day the bread of to-morrow” — as if the sense thus slid into that of Luke “Give us *day by day*” (~~4010~~ Luke 11:2, as BENGEL, MEYER, etc.) it may be answered that the sense thus brought out is scarcely intelligible, if not something less; that the expression “bread of to-morrow” is not at all the same as bread “from day to day,” and that, so understood, it would seem to contradict ~~4011~~ Matthew 6:34. The great majority of the best critics (taking the word to be compounded of *ousia*, “*substance*,” or “*being*”) understand by it the “*staff of life*,” the bread of *subsistence*, and so the sense will be, “Give us this day the bread which this day’s necessities require.” In this case, the rendering of our authorized version (after the *Vulgate*, LUTHER and some of the best modern critics) — “our daily bread” — is, in sense, accurate enough. (See ~~4012~~ Proverbs 30:8). Among commentators, there was early shown an inclination to understand this as a prayer for the heavenly bread, or spiritual nourishment; and in this they have been followed by many superior expositors, even down to our own times. But as this is quite unnatural, so it deprives the Christian of one of the sweetest of his privileges — to cast his bodily wants in this short prayer, by one simple petition, upon his heavenly Father. No doubt the spiritual mind will, from “the meat that perisheth,” naturally rise in thought to “that meat which endureth to everlasting life.” But let it be enough that the petition about bodily wants irresistibly *suggests* a higher petition; and let us not rob ourselves — out of a morbid spirituality — of our one petition in this prayer for that bodily provision which the immediate sequel of this discourse shows that our heavenly Father has so much at heart. In limiting our petitions, however, to provision for the day, what a spirit of childlike dependence does the Lord both demand and beget!

#### FIFTH PETITION:

**12. And forgive us our debts** — A vitally important view of sin, this — as an offense against God demanding reparation to His dishonored claims upon our absolute subjection. As the debtor in the creditor’s hand, so is the sinner in the hands of God. This idea of sin had indeed come up before in

this discourse — in the warning to agree with our adversary quickly, in case of sentence being passed upon us, adjudging us to payment of the last farthing, and to imprisonment till then (<sup><1025></sup>Matthew 5:25,26). And it comes up once and again in our Lord's subsequent teaching — as in the parable of the creditor and his two debtors (<sup><1044></sup>Luke 7:41, etc.), and in the parable of the unmerciful debtor (<sup><1023></sup>Matthew 18:23, etc.). But by embodying it in this brief model of acceptable prayer, and as the first of three petitions more or less bearing upon sin, our Lord teaches us, in the most emphatic manner conceivable, to regard this view of sin as the primary and fundamental one. Answering to this is the “forgiveness” which it directs us to seek — not the removal from our own hearts of the stain of sin, nor yet the removal of our just dread of God's anger, or of unworthy suspicions of His love, which is all that some tell us we have to care about — but the removal from God's own mind of His displeasure against us on account of sin, or, to retain the figure, the wiping or crossing out from His “book of remembrance” of all entries against us on this account.

**as we forgive our debtors** — the same view of sin as before; only now transferred to the region of offenses given and received between man and man. After what has been said on <sup><1037></sup>Matthew 5:7, it will not be thought that our Lord here teaches that our exercise of forgiveness towards our offending fellow men absolutely precedes and is the proper ground of God's forgiveness of us. His whole teaching, indeed — as of all Scripture — is the reverse of this. But as no one can reasonably imagine himself to be the object of divine forgiveness who is deliberately and habitually unforgiving towards his fellow men, so it is a beautiful provision to make our right to ask and expect daily forgiveness of our daily shortcomings and our final absolution and acquittal at the great day of admission into the kingdom, dependent upon our consciousness of a forgiving disposition towards our fellows, and our preparedness to protest before the Searcher of hearts that we do actually forgive them. (See <sup><1125></sup>Mark 11:25,26). God sees His own image reflected in His forgiving children; but to ask God for what we ourselves refuse to men, is to insult Him. So much stress does our Lord put upon this, that immediately after the close of this prayer, it is the one point in it which He comes back upon (<sup><1034></sup>Matthew 6:14,15), for the purpose of solemnly assuring us that the divine procedure in this matter of forgiveness will be exactly what our own is.

## SIXTH PETITION:

**13. And lead us not into temptation** — He who honestly seeks and has the assurance of, forgiveness for past sin, will strive to avoid committing it for the future. But conscious that “when we would do good evil is present



with us,” we are taught to offer this sixth petition, which comes naturally close upon the preceding, and flows, indeed, instinctively from it in the hearts of all earnest Christians. There is some difficulty in the form of the petition, as it is certain that God does bring His people — as He did Abraham, and Christ Himself — into circumstances both fitted and designed to try them, or test the strength of their faith. Some meet this by regarding the petition as simply an humble expression of self-distrust and instinctive shrinking from danger; but this seems too weak. Others take it as a prayer against yielding to temptation, and so equivalent to a prayer for support and deliverance when we are tempted; but this seems to go beyond the precise thing intended. We incline to take it as a prayer against being *drawn* or sucked, of *our own will*, into temptation, to which the word here used seems to lend some countenance — “Introduce us not.” This view, while it does not put into our mouths a prayer against being tempted — which is more than the divine procedure would seem to warrant — does not, on the other hand, change the sense of the petition into one for support *under* temptation, which the words will hardly bear; but it gives us a subject for prayer, in regard to temptation, most *definite*, and of all others most *needful*. It was precisely this which Peter needed to ask, but did not ask, when — of his own accord, and in spite of difficulties — he pressed for entrance into the palace hall of the high priest, and where, once sucked into the scene and atmosphere of temptation, he fell so foully. And if so, does it not seem pretty clear that this was exactly what our Lord meant His disciples to pray against when He said in the garden — “Watch and pray, that ye *enter not into temptation*”? (~~4264~~ Matthew 26:41).

### SEVENTH PETITION:

**But deliver us from evil** — We can see no good reason for regarding this as but the second half of the sixth petition. With far better ground might the second and third petitions be regarded as one. The “but” connecting the two petitions is an insufficient reason for regarding them as one, though enough to show that the one thought naturally follows close upon the other. As the expression “from evil” may be equally well rendered “from the evil one,” a number or superior critics think the devil is intended, especially from its following close upon the subject of “temptation.” But the comprehensive character of these brief petitions, and the place which this one occupies, as that on which all our desires die away, seems to us against so contracted a view of it. Nor can there be a reasonable doubt that the apostle, in some of the last sentences which he penned before he was brought forth to suffer for his Lord, alludes to this very petition in the language of calm assurance — “And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work (compare the *Greek* of the two passages), and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom”



(<sup><10182</sup>2 Timothy 4:18). The final petition, then, is only rightly grasped when regarded as a prayer for deliverance from all evil of whatever kind — not only from sin, but from all its consequences — fully and finally. Fitly, then, are our prayers ended with this. For what can we desire which this does not carry with it?

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.**

**Amen** — If any reliance is to be placed on external evidence, this doxology, we think, can hardly be considered part of the original text. It is wanting in all the most ancient manuscripts; it is wanting in the *Old Latin* version and in the *Vulgate*: the former mounting up to about the middle of the second century, and the latter being a revision of it in the fourth century by JEROME, a most reverential and conservative as well as able and impartial critic. As might be expected from this, it is passed by in silence by the earliest Latin fathers; but even the Greek commentators, when expounding this prayer, pass by the doxology. On the other hand, it is found in a majority of manuscripts, though not the oldest; it is found in all the *Syriac* versions, even the *Peschito* — dating probably as early as the second century — although this version lacks the “Amen,” which the doxology, if genuine, could hardly have wanted; it is found in the *Sahidic* or *Thebaic* version made for the Christians of Upper Egypt, possibly as early as the *Old Latin*; and it is found in perhaps most of the later versions. On a review of the evidence, the strong probability, we think, is that it was no part of the original text.

**14. For if ye forgive men,** etc. — See on <sup><10182</sup>Matthew 6:12.

**15. But if ye forgive not,** etc. — See on <sup><10182</sup>Matthew 6:12.

*Fasting* (<sup><10186</sup>Matthew 6:16-18).

Having concluded His supplementary directions on the subject of prayer with this Divine Pattern, our Lord now returns to the subject of *Unostentatiousness* in our deeds of righteousness, in order to give one more illustration of it, in the matter of fasting.

**16. Moreover, when ye fast** — referring, probably, to private and voluntary fasting, which was to be regulated by each individual for himself; though in spirit it would apply to any fast.

**be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces** — literally, “make unseen”; very well rendered “disfigure.” They went about with a slovenly appearance, and ashes sprinkled on their head.

**that they may appear unto men to fast** — It was not the *deed*, but *reputation* for the deed which they sought; and with this view those

hypocrites multiplied their fasts. And are the exhausting fasts of the Church of Rome, and of Romanizing Protestants, free from this taint?

**Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.**

**17. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face** — as the Jews did, except when mourning (<sup><2008></sup>Daniel 10:3); so that the meaning is, “Appear as usual” — appear so as to attract no notice.

18. That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee *openly* — The “openly” seems evidently a later addition to the text of this verse from <sup><1008></sup>Matthew 6:4,7, though of course the idea is implied.

## <sup><1009></sup>MATTHEW 6:19-34.

### CONCLUDING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM — HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS AND FILIAL CONFIDENCE.

**19. Lay not up for ourselves treasures upon earth** — hoard not.

**where moth** — a “clothes-moth.” Eastern treasures, consisting partly in costly dresses stored up (<sup><1876></sup>Job 27:16), were liable to be consumed by moths (<sup><1838></sup>Job 13:28 <sup><2809></sup>Isaiah 50:9 51:8). In <sup><5002></sup>James 5:2 there is an evident reference to our Lord’s words here.

**and rust** — any “eating into” or “consuming”; here, probably, “wear and tear.”

**doth corrupt** — cause to disappear. By this reference to moth and rust our Lord would teach how *perishable* are such earthly treasures.

**and where thieves break through and steal** — Treasures these, how *precarious*!

**20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven** — The language in Luke (<sup><0123></sup>Luke 12:33) is very bold — “Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,” etc.

**where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal** — Treasures these, *imperishable* and *unassailable*! (Compare <sup><5002></sup>Colossians 3:2).

**21. For where your treasure is** — that which ye value most.

**there will your heart be also** — “Thy treasure — thy heart” is probably the true reading here: “your,” in <sup><41234</sup>Luke 12:34, from which it seems to have come in here. Obvious though this maxim be, by what multitudes who profess to bow to the teaching of Christ is it practically disregarded! “What a man loves,” says LUTHER, quoted by THOLUCK, “that is his God. For he carries it in his heart, he goes about with it night and day, he sleeps and wakes with it; be it what it may — wealth or pelf, pleasure or renown.” But because “laying up” is not in itself sinful, nay, in some cases enjoined (<sup><47245</sup>2 Corinthians 12:14), and honest industry and sagacious enterprise are usually rewarded with prosperity, many flatter themselves that all is right between them and God, while their closest attention, anxiety, zeal, and time are exhausted upon these earthly pursuits. To put this right, our Lord adds what follows, in which there is profound practical wisdom.

**22. The light** — the lamp.

**of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single** — simple, clear. As applied to the outward eye, this means general soundness; particularly, not looking two ways. Here, as also in classical Greek, it is used figuratively to denote the simplicity of the mind’s eye, singleness of purpose, looking right at its object, as opposed to having two ends in view. (See <sup><1025</sup>Proverbs 4:25-27).

**thy whole body shall be full of light** — illuminated. As with the bodily vision, the man who looks with a good, sound eye, walks in light, seeing every object clear; so a simple and persistent purpose to serve and please God in everything will make the whole character consistent and bright.

**23. But if thine eye be evil** — distempered, or, as we should say, If we have got a *bad* eye.

**thy whole body shall be full of darkness** — darkened. As a vitiated eye, or an eye that looks not straight and full at its object, sees nothing as it is, so a mind and heart divided between heaven and earth is all dark.

**If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!** — As the conscience is the regulative faculty, and a man’s inward purpose, scope, aim in life, determines his character — if these be not simple and heavenward, but distorted and double, what must all the other faculties and principles of our nature be which take their direction and character from these, and what must the whole man and the whole life be but a mass of darkness? In Luke (<sup><4113</sup>Luke 11:36) the converse of this statement very strikingly expresses what pure, beautiful, broad perceptions

the *clarity of the inward eye* imparts: “If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.” But now for the application of this.

**24. No man can serve** — The word means to “belong wholly and be entirely under command to.”

**two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other** — Even if the two masters be of one character and have but one object, the servant must *take law* from one or the other: though he may do what is agreeable to both, he cannot, in the nature of the thing, be *servant* to more than one. Much less if, as in the present case, their interests are quite different, and even conflicting. In this case, if our affections be in the service of the one — if we “love the one” — we must of necessity “hate the other”; if we determine resolutely to “hold to the one,” we must at the same time disregard, and (if he insist on his claims upon us) even “despise the other.”

**Ye cannot serve God and mammon** — The word “*mamon*” — better written with one *m* — is a foreign one, whose precise derivation cannot certainly be determined, though the most probable one gives it the sense of “what one trusts in.” Here, there can be no doubt it is used for *riches*, considered as an idol master, or god of the heart. The service of this god and the true God together is here, with a kind of indignant curtness, pronounced impossible. But since the teaching of the preceding verses might seem to endanger our falling short of what is requisite for the present life, and so being left destitute, our Lord now comes to speak to that point.

**25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought** — “Be not solicitous.” The English word “thought,” when our version was made, expressed this idea of “solicitude,” “anxious concern” — as may be seen in any old English classic; and in the same sense it is used in <sup>1095</sup>1 Samuel 9:5, etc. But this sense of the word has now nearly gone out, and so the mere English reader is apt to be perplexed. *Thought* or forethought, for temporal things — in the sense of reflection, consideration — is required alike by Scripture and common sense. It is that anxious solicitude, that oppressive care, which springs from unbelieving doubts and misgivings, which alone is here condemned. (See <sup>1096</sup>Philippians 4:6).

**for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on** — In Luke (<sup>1079</sup>Luke 12:29) our Lord adds, “neither be ye unsettled” — not “of doubtful mind,” as in our version. When “careful (or ‘full of care’) about nothing,” but committing all in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving unto God, the apostle assures us that “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our

hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (<sup><3006></sup>Philippians 4:6,7); that is, shall guard both our feelings and our thoughts from undue agitation, and keep them in a holy calm. But when we commit our whole temporal condition to the wit of our own minds, we get into that “unsettled” state against which our Lord exhorts His disciples.

**Is not the life more than meat** — food.

**and the body than raiment?** — If God, then, gives and keeps up the greater — the life, the body — will He withhold the less, food to sustain life and raiment to clothe the body?

**26. Behold the fowls of the air** — in <sup><4038></sup>Matthew 6:28, “observe well,” and in <sup><4124></sup>Luke 12:24, “consider” — so as to learn wisdom from them.

**for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?** — nobler in yourselves and dearer to God. The argument here is from the greater to the less; but how rich in detail! The brute creation — void of reason — are incapable of sowing, reaping, and storing: yet your heavenly Father suffers them not helplessly to perish, but sustains them without any of those processes. Will He see, then, His own children using all the means which reason dictates for procuring the things needful for the body — looking up to Himself at every step — and yet leave them to starve?

**27. Which of you, by taking thought** — anxious solicitude.

**can add one cubit unto his stature?** — “Stature” can hardly be the thing intended here: first, because the subject is the *prolongation of life*, by the supply of its necessities of food and clothing; and next, because no one would dream of adding a cubit — or a foot and a half — to his stature, while in the corresponding passage in Luke (<sup><4125></sup>Luke 12:25,26) the thing intended is represented as “that thing which is *least*.” But if we take the word in its primary sense of “*age*” (for “stature” is but a secondary sense) the idea will be this, “Which of you, however anxiously you vex yourselves about it, can add so much as a step to the length of your life’s journey?” To compare the length of life to measures of this nature is not foreign to the language of Scripture (compare <sup><3945></sup>Psalms 39:5 <sup><3945></sup>2 Timothy 4:7, etc.). So understood, the meaning is clear and the connection natural. In this the best critics now agree.

**28. And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider** — observe well.

**the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not** — as men, planting and preparing the flax.

**neither do they spin** — as women.

**29. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these** — What incomparable teaching! — best left in its own transparent clearness and rich simplicity.

**30. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass** — the “herbage.”

**of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven** — wild flowers cut with the grass, withering by the heat, and used for fuel. (See <sup><5011></sup>James 1:11).

**shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?** — The argument here is something fresh. Gorgeous as is the array of the flowers that deck the fields, surpassing all artificial human grandeur, it is for but a brief moment; you are ravished with it to-day, and to-morrow it is gone; your own hands have seized and cast it into the oven: Shall, then, God’s children, so dear to Him, and instinct with a life that cannot die, be left naked? He does not say, Shall they not be more beautifully arrayed? but, Shall He not much more *clothe* them? that being all He will have them regard as secured to them (compare <sup><5135></sup>Hebrews 13:5). The expression, “Little-faithed ones,” which our Lord applies once and again to His disciples (<sup><4185></sup>Matthew 8:26 14:31 16:8), can hardly be regarded as rebuking any actual manifestations of unbelief at that early period, and before such an audience. It is His way of gently chiding the *spirit* of unbelief, so natural even to the best, who are surrounded by a world of sense, and of kindling a generous desire to shake it off.

**31. Therefore take no thought** — solicitude.

**saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?**

**32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek)** — rather, “pursue.” Knowing nothing definitely beyond the present life to kindle their aspirations and engage their supreme attention, the heathen naturally pursue present objects as their chief, their only good. To what an elevation above these does Jesus here lift His disciples!

**for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things** — How precious this word! Food and raiment are pronounced *needful* to God’s children; and He who could say, “No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (<sup><4117></sup>Matthew 11:27), says with an authority which none but Himself could claim, “Your heavenly Father *knoweth* that ye have need of all these

things.” Will not that suffice you, O ye needy ones of the household of faith?

**33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you** — This is the great summing up. Strictly speaking, it has to do only with the subject of the present section — the right state of the heart with reference to heavenly and earthly things; but being couched in the form of a brief general directory, it is so comprehensive in its grasp as to embrace the whole subject of this discourse. And, as if to make this the more evident, the two keynotes of this great sermon seem purposely struck in it — “the KINGDOM” and “the RIGHTEOUSNESS” Of the kingdom — as the grand objects, in the supreme pursuit of which all things needful for the present life will be added to us. The precise sense of every word in this golden verse should be carefully weighed. “*The kingdom of God*” is the primary subject of the Sermon on the Mount — that kingdom which the God of heaven is erecting in this fallen world, within which are all the spiritually recovered and inwardly subject portion of the family of Adam, under Messiah as its Divine Head and King. “*The righteousness thereof*” is the character of all such, so amply described and variously illustrated in the foregoing portions of this discourse. The “*seeking*” of these is the making them the object of supreme choice and pursuit; and the seeking of them “*first*” is the seeking of them before and above all else. The “*all these things*” which shall in that case be added to us are just the “all these things” which the last words of ~~4002~~ Matthew 6:32 assured us “our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of”; that is, all we require for the present life. And when our Lord says they shall be “*added*,” it is implied, as a matter of course, that the seekers of the kingdom and its righteousness shall have these as their proper and primary portion: the rest being their gracious reward for *not* seeking them. (See an illustration of the principle of this in ~~4002~~ 2 Chronicles 1:11,12). What follows is but a reduction of this great general direction into a practical and ready form for daily use.

**34. Take therefore no thought** — anxious care.

**for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself** — (or, according to other authorities, “for itself”) — shall have its own causes of anxiety.

**Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof** — An admirable practical maxim, and better rendered in our version than in almost any other, not excepting the preceding English ones. Every day brings its own cares; and to anticipate is only to double them.



# CHAPTER 7

## SERMON ON THE MOUNT — *CONCLUDED.*

### ~~4000~~ MATTHEW 7:1-12.

#### MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLEMENTARY COUNSELS.

That these verses are entirely supplementary is the simplest and most natural view of them. All attempts to make out any evident connection with the immediately preceding context are, in our judgment, forced. But, though supplementary, these counsels are far from being of subordinate importance. On the contrary, they involve some of the most delicate and vital duties of the Christian life. In the vivid form in which they are here presented, perhaps they could not have been introduced with the same effect under any of the foregoing heads; but they spring out of the same great principles, and are but other forms and manifestations of the same evangelical “righteousness.”

#### *Censorious Judgment* (~~4000~~ Matthew 7:1-5).

**1. Judge not, that ye be not judged** — To “judge” here does not exactly mean to pronounce condemnatory judgment, nor does it refer to simple judging at all, whether favorable or the reverse. The context makes it clear that the thing here condemned is that disposition to look unfavorably on the character and actions of others, which leads invariably to the pronouncing of rash, unjust, and unlovely judgments upon them. No doubt it is the judgments so pronounced which are here spoken of; but what our Lord aims at is the spirit out of which they spring. Provided we eschew this unlovely spirit, we are not only warranted to sit in judgment upon a brother’s character and actions, but in the exercise of a necessary discrimination are often constrained to do so for our own guidance. It is the violation of the law of love involved in the exercise of a censorious disposition which alone is here condemned. And the argument against it — “that ye be not judged” — confirms this: “that your own character and actions be not pronounced upon with the like severity”; that is, at the great day.



**2. For with what judgments ye Judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete** — whatever standard of judgment ye apply to others.

**it shall be measured to you again** — This proverbial maxim is used by our Lord in other connections — as in <sup><40B></sup>Mark 4:24, and with a slightly different application in <sup><40B></sup>Luke 6:38 — as a great principle in the divine administration. Unkind judgment of others will be judicially returned upon ourselves, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. But, as in many other cases under the divine administration, such harsh judgment gets self-punished even here. For people shrink from contact with those who systematically deal out harsh judgment upon others — naturally concluding that they themselves may be the next victims — and feel impelled in self-defense, when exposed to it, to roll back upon the assailant his own censures.

**3. And why beholdest thou the mote** — “splinter,” here very well rendered “mote,” denoting any small fault.

**that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?** — denoting the much greater fault which we overlook in ourselves.

**4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?**

**5. Thou hypocrite** — “Hypocrite.”

**first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye** — Our Lord uses a most hyperbolic, but not unfamiliar figure, to express the monstrous inconsistency of this conduct. The “hypocrisy” which, not without indignation, He charges it with, consists in the pretense of a zealous and compassionate charity, which cannot possibly be real in one who suffers worse faults to lie uncorrected in himself. He only is fit to be a reprover of others who jealously and severely judges himself. Such persons will not only be slow to undertake the office of censor on their neighbors, but, when constrained in faithfulness to deal with them, will make it evident that they do it with *reluctance* and not satisfaction, with *moderation* and not exaggeration, with *love* and not harshness.

*Prostitution of Holy Things* (<sup><40B></sup>Matthew 7:6).

The opposite extreme to that of censoriousness is here condemned — want of discrimination of character.

**6. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs** — savage or snarling haters of truth and righteousness.

**neither cast ye your pearls before swine** — the impure or coarse, who are incapable of appreciating the priceless jewels of Christianity. In the East, dogs are wilder and more gregarious, and, feeding on carrion and garbage, are coarser and fiercer than the same animals in the West. Dogs and swine, besides being ceremonially unclean, were peculiarly repulsive to the Jews, and indeed to the ancients generally.

**lest they trample them under their feet** — as swine do.

**and turn again and rend you** — as dogs do. Religion is brought into contempt, and its professors insulted, when it is forced upon those who cannot value it and will not have it. But while the indiscriminately zealous have need of this caution, let us be on our guard against too readily setting our neighbors down as dogs and swine, and excusing ourselves from endeavoring to do them good on this poor plea.

*Prayer* (~~406~~ Matthew 7:7-11).

Enough, one might think, had been said on this subject in ~~406~~ Matthew 6:5-15. But the difficulty of the foregoing duties seems to have recalled the subject, and this gives it quite a new turn. “How shall we ever be able to carry out such precepts as these, of tender, holy, yet discriminating love?” might the humble disciple inquire. “Go to God with it,” is our Lord’s reply; but He expresses this with a fullness which leaves nothing to be desired, urging now not only confidence, but importunity in prayer.

**7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you** — Though there seems evidently a climax here, expressive of more and more importunity, yet each of these terms used presents what we desire of God in a different light. We *ask* for what we *wish*; we *seek* for what we *miss*; we *knock* for that from which we feel ourselves *shut out*. Answering to this threefold representation is the triple assurance of success to our believing efforts. “But ah!” might some humble disciple say, “I cannot persuade myself that *I* have any interest with God.” To meet this, our Lord repeats the triple assurance He had just given, but in such a form as to silence every such complaint.

**8. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened** — Of course, it is presumed that he asks aright — that is, in faith — and with an honest purpose to make use of what he receives. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering (undecided

whether to be altogether on the Lord's side). For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For *let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord*" (<sup><5015></sup>James 1:5-7). Hence, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (<sup><5018></sup>James 4:3).

**9. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread** — a loaf.

**will he give him a stone?** — round and smooth like such a loaf or cake as was much in use, but only to mock him.

**10. Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?** — like it, indeed, but only to sting him.

**11. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!** — Bad as our fallen nature is, the *father* in us is not extinguished. What a heart, then, must the Father of all fathers have towards His pleading children! In the corresponding passage in Luke (see on <sup><4113></sup>Luke 11:13), instead of "good things," our Lord asks whether He will not much more give *the Holy Spirit* to them that ask Him. At this early stage of His ministry, and before such an audience, He seems to avoid such sharp doctrinal teaching as was more accordant with His plan at the riper stage indicated in Luke, and in addressing His own disciples exclusively.

*Golden Rule* (<sup><4012></sup>Matthew 7:12).

**12. Therefore** — to say all in one word.

**all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them** — the same thing and in the same way.

**for this is the law and the prophets** — "This is the substance of all relative duty; all Scripture in a nutshell." Incomparable summary! How well called "the royal law!" (<sup><5118></sup>James 2:8; compare <sup><6119></sup>Romans 13:9). It is true that similar maxims are found floating in the writings of the cultivated Greeks and Romans, and naturally enough in the Rabbinical writings. But so expressed as it is here — in immediate connection with, and as the sum of *such* duties as has been just enjoined, and such principles as had been before taught — it is to be found nowhere else. And the best commentary upon this fact is, that never till our Lord came down thus to teach did men effectually and widely exemplify it in their practice. The precise sense of the maxim is best referred to common sense. It is not, of course, what — in our wayward, capricious, gasping moods — we should *wish* that men would do to us, that we are to hold ourselves bound to do to them; but only

what — in the exercise of an impartial judgment, and putting ourselves in their place — we consider it reasonable that they should do to us, that we are to do to them.

## MATTHEW 7:13-29.

### CONCLUSION AND EFFECT OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

We have here the application of the whole preceding discourse.

*Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount* (<sup><4073</sup>Matthew 7:13-27).

“The righteousness of the kingdom,” so amply described, both in principle and in detail, would be seen to involve *self-sacrifice* at every step. Multitudes would never face this. But it must be faced, else the consequences will be fatal. This would divide all within the sound of these truths into two classes: the many, who will follow the path of ease and self-indulgence — end where it might; and the few, who, bent on eternal safety above everything else, take the way that leads to it — at whatever cost. This gives occasion to the two opening verses of this application.

**13. Enter ye in at the strait gate** — as if hardly wide enough to admit one at all. This expresses the difficulty of the first right step in religion, involving, as it does, a triumph over all our natural inclinations. Hence the still stronger expression in Luke (<sup><2734</sup>Luke 13:24), “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.”

**for wide is the gate** — easily entered.

**and broad is the way** — easily trodden.

**that leadeth to destruction, and** — thus lured “many there be which go in thereat.”

**14. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life** — In other words, the whole course is as difficult as the first step; and (so it comes to pass that).

**few there be that find it** — The recommendation of the broad way is the ease with which it is trodden and the abundance of company to be found in it. It is sailing with a fair wind and a favorable tide. The natural inclinations are not crossed, and fears of the issue, if not easily hushed, are in the long run effectually subdued. The one disadvantage of this course is its end — it

“leadeth to destruction.” The great Teacher says it, and says it as “One having authority.” To the supposed injustice or harshness of this He never once adverts. He leaves it to be inferred that such a course righteously, naturally, necessarily so ends. But whether men see this or no, here He lays down the law of the kingdom, and leaves it with us. As to the other way, the disadvantage of it lies in its narrowness and solicitude. Its very first step involves a revolution in all our purposes and plans for life, and a surrender of all that is dear to natural inclination, while all that follows is but a repetition of the first great act of self-sacrifice. No wonder, then, that few find and few are found in it. But it has one advantage — it “leadeth unto life.” Some critics take “the gate” here, not for the first, but the last step in religion; since gates seldom open into roads, but roads usually terminate in a gate, leading straight to a mansion. But as this would make our Lord’s words to have a very inverted and unnatural form as they stand, it is better, with the majority of critics, to view them as we have done. But since such teaching would be as unpopular as the way itself, our Lord next forewarns His hearers that preachers of smooth things — the true heirs and representatives of the false prophets of old — would be rife enough in the new kingdom.

**15. Beware** — But beware.

**of false prophets** — that is, of teachers coming as authorized expounders of the mind of God and guides to heaven. (See [Acts 20:29,30](#) [2 Peter 2:1,2](#)).

**which come to you in sheep’s clothing** — with a bland, gentle, plausible exterior; persuading you that the gate is not strait nor the way narrow, and that to teach so is illiberal and bigoted — precisely what the old prophets did ([Ezekiel 13:1-10,22](#)).

**but inwardly they are ravening wolves** — bent on devouring the flock for their own ends ([2 Corinthians 11:2,3,13-15](#)).

**16. Ye shall know them by their fruits** — not their doctrines — as many of the elder interpreters and some later ones explain it — for that corresponds to the tree itself; but the practical effect of their teaching, which is the proper fruit of the tree.

**Do men gather grapes of thorns** — any kind of prickly plant.

**or figs of thistles?** — a three-pronged variety. The general sense is obvious — Every tree bears its own fruit.

**17. Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.**

**18. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit** — Obvious as is the truth here expressed in different forms — that the heart determines and is the only proper interpreter of the actions of our life — no one who knows how the Church of Rome makes a merit of actions, quite apart from the motives that prompt them, and how the same tendency manifests itself from time to time even among Protestant Christians, can think it too obvious to be insisted on by the teachers of divine truth. Here follows a wholesome digression.

**19. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire** — (See on <sup><180></sup>Matthew 3:10).

**20. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them** — that is, But the point I now press is not so much the end of such, as the means of detecting them; and this, as already said, is their fruits. The hypocrisy of teachers now leads to a solemn warning against religious hypocrisy in general.

**21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord** — the reduplication of the title “Lord” denoting zeal in according it to Christ (see <sup><145></sup>Mark 14:45). Yet our Lord claims and expects this of all His disciples, as when He washed their feet: “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (<sup><133></sup>John 13:13).

**shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven** — that will which it had been the great object of this discourse to set forth. Yet our Lord says warily, not “the will of *your* Father,” but “of *My* Father”; thus claiming a relationship to His Father with which His disciples might not intermeddle, and which He never lets down. And He so speaks here to give authority to His asseverations. But now He rises higher still — not formally *announcing* Himself as the Judge, but intimating what men will say to Him, and He to them, *when* He sits as their final judge.

**22. Many will say to me in that day** — What day? It is emphatically unnamed. But it is the day to which He had just referred, when men shall “enter” or not enter “into the kingdom of heaven.” (See a similar way of speaking of “that day” in <sup><112></sup>2 Timothy 1:12 4:8).

**Lord, Lord** — The reiteration denotes surprise. “What, Lord? How is this? Are we to be disowned?”

**have we not prophesied** — or, “publicly taught.” As one of the special gifts of the Spirit in the early Church, it has the sense of “inspired and authoritative teaching,” and is ranked next to the apostleship. (See <sup><128></sup>1

Corinthians 12:28 <sup><4011></sup>Ephesians 4:11). In this sense it is used here, as appears from what follows.

**in thy name** — or, “to thy name,” and so in the two following clauses — “having reference to Thy name as the sole power in which we did it.”

**and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works** — or, miracles. These are selected as three examples of the highest services rendered to the Christian cause, and through the power of Christ’s own name, invoked for that purpose; He Himself, too, responding to the call. And the threefold repetition of the question, each time in the same form, expresses in the liveliest manner the astonishment of the speakers at the view now taken of them.

**23. And then will I profess unto them** — or, openly proclaim — tearing off the mask.

**I never knew you** — What they claimed intimacy with Christ, is just what He repudiates, and with a certain scornful dignity. “Our acquaintance was not broken off — there never was any.”

**depart from me** — (Compare <sup><4254></sup>Matthew 25:41). The connection here gives these words an awful significance. They claimed intimacy with Christ, and in the corresponding passage, <sup><4134></sup>Luke 13:26, are represented as having gone out and in with Him on familiar terms. “So much the worse for you,” He replies: “I bore with that long enough; but now — begone!”

**ye that work iniquity** — not “that wrought iniquity”; for they are represented as fresh from the scenes and acts of it as they stand before the Judge. (See on the almost identical, but even more vivid and awful, description of the scene in <sup><4134></sup>Luke 13:24-27). That the apostle alludes to these very words in <sup><4129></sup>2 Timothy 2:19 there can hardly be any doubt — “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord *knoweth* them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the *name* of Christ depart from iniquity.”

**24. Therefore** — to bring this discourse to a close.

**whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them** — see <sup><4022></sup>James 1:22, which seems a plain allusion to these words; also <sup><4135></sup>Luke 11:28 <sup><4123></sup>Romans 2:13 <sup><4117></sup>1 John 3:7.

**I will liken him unto a wise man** — a shrewd, prudent, provident man.

**which built his house upon a rock** — the rock of true discipleship, or genuine subjection to Christ.

**25. And the rain descended** — from above.

**and the floods came** — from below.

**and the winds blew** — sweeping across.

**and beat upon that house** — thus from every direction.

**and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock** — See ~~<4027>~~1 John 2:17.

**26. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine** — in the attitude of discipleship.

**and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand** — denoting a loose foundation — that of an empty profession and mere external services.

**27. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house** — struck against that house;

**and it fell: and great was the fall of it** — terrible the ruin! How lively must this imagery have been to an audience accustomed to the fierceness of an Eastern tempest, and the suddenness and completeness with which it sweeps everything unsteady before it!

*Effect of the Sermon on the Mount (~~<4028>~~Matthew 7:28, 29).*

**28. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine** — rather, “His teaching,” for the reference is to the manner of it quite as much as the matter, or rather more so.

**29. For he taught them as one having authority** — The word “one,” which our translators have here inserted, only weakens the statement.

**and not as the scribes** — The consciousness of divine authority, as Lawgiver, Expounder and Judge, so beamed through His teaching, that the scribes teaching could not but appear drivelling in such a light.



# CHAPTER 8

## ⌞18⌟ MATTHEW 8:1-4.

### HEALING OF A LEPER. (⌞104⌟ MARK 1:40-45 ⌞152⌟ LUKE 5:12-16).

The time of this miracle seems too definitely fixed here to admit of our placing it where it stands in Mark and Luke, in whose Gospels no such precise note of time is given.

**1. When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.**

**2. And, behold, there came a leper** — “a man full of leprosy,” says ⌞152⌟ Luke 5:12. Much has been written on this disease of leprosy, but certain points remain still doubtful. All that needs be said here is that it was a cutaneous disease, of a loathsome, diffusive, and, there is reason to believe, when thoroughly pronounced, incurable character; that though in its distinctive features it is still found in several countries — as Arabia, Egypt, and South Africa — it prevailed, in the form of what is called white leprosy, to an unusual extent, and from a very early period, among the Hebrews; and that it thus furnished to the whole nation a familiar and affecting symbol of SIN, considered as

(1) *loathsome,*

(2) *spreading,*

(3) *incurable.*

And while the ceremonial ordinances for detection and cleansing prescribed in this case by the law of Moses (⌞101⌟ Leviticus 13:1-14:57) held forth a coming remedy “for sin and for uncleanness” (⌞150⌟ Psalm 51:7 ⌞118⌟ 2 Kings 5:1,7,10,13,14), the numerous cases of leprosy with which our Lord came in contact, and the glorious cures of them which He wrought, were a fitting manifestation of the work which He came to accomplish. In this view, it deserves to be noticed that the first of our Lord’s miracles of healing recorded by Matthew is this cure of a leper.

**and worshipped him** — in what sense we shall presently see. Mark says (⌞104⌟ Mark 1:40), he came, “beseeching and kneeling to Him,” and Luke says (⌞152⌟ Luke 5:12), “he fell on his face.”

**saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean** — As this is the only cure of leprosy recorded by all the three first Evangelists, it was probably the first case of the kind; and if so, this leper's faith in the power of Christ must have been formed in him by what he had heard of His other cures. And how striking a faith is it! He does not say he *believed* Him able, but with a brevity expressive of a confidence that knew no doubt, he says simply, "Thou canst." But of Christ's willingness to heal him he was not so sure. It needed more knowledge of Jesus than he could be supposed to have to assure him of that. But one thing he was sure of, that He had but to "will" it. This shows with what "worship" of Christ this leper fell on his face before Him. Clear theological knowledge of the Person of Christ was not then possessed even by those who were most with Him and nearest to Him. Much less could full insight into all that we know of the Only-begotten of the Father be expected of this leper. But he who at that moment felt and owned that to heal an incurable disease needed but the *fiat* of the Person who stood before him, had assuredly that very faith in the germ which now casts its crown before Him that loved us, and would at any time die for His blessed name.

**3. And Jesus** — or "He," according to another reading, — "moved with compassion," says Mark (<sup><404></sup>Mark 1:41); a precious addition.

**put forth his hand, and touched him** — Such a touch occasioned ceremonial defilement (<sup><405></sup>Leviticus 5:3); even as the leper's coming near enough for contact was against the Levitical regulations (<sup><406></sup>Leviticus 13:46). But as the man's faith told him there would be no case for such regulations if the cure he hoped to experience should be accomplished, so He who had healing in His wings transcended all such statutes.

**saying, I will; be thou clean** — How majestic those two words! By not assuring the man of His *power* to heal him, He delightfully sets His seal to the man's previous confession of that power; and by assuring him of the one thing of which he had any doubt, and for which he waited — His *will* to do it — He makes a claim as divine as the cure which immediately followed it.

**And immediately his leprosy was cleansed** — Mark, more emphatic, says (<sup><407></sup>Mark 1:42), "And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed" — as perfectly as instantaneously. What a contrast this to modern pretended cures!

**4. And Jesus** — "straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away" (<sup><408></sup>Mark 1:43), and

**saith unto him, See thou tell no man** — A hard condition this would seem to a grateful heart, whose natural language, in such a case, is “Come, hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul” (<sup><966></sup>Psalm 66:16). We shall presently see the reason for it.

**but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded** — (<sup><646></sup>Leviticus 14:1-57).

**for a testimony unto them** — a palpable witness that the Great Healer had indeed come, and that “God had visited His people.” What the sequel was, our Evangelist Matthew does not say; but Mark thus gives it (<sup><406></sup>Mark 1:45): “But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter.” Thus — by an over-zealous, though most natural and not very culpable, infringement of the injunction to keep the matter quiet — was our Lord, to some extent, thwarted in His movements. As His whole course was sublimely noiseless (<sup><4029></sup>Matthew 12:19), so we find Him repeatedly taking steps to prevent matters prematurely coming to a crisis with Him. (But see on <sup><4069></sup>Mark 5:19,20). “And He withdrew Himself,” adds Luke (<sup><4769></sup>Luke 5:16), “into the wilderness, and prayed”; retreating from the popular excitement into the secret place of the Most High, and thus coming forth as dew upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth (<sup><9726></sup>Psalm 72:6). And this is the secret both of strength and of sweetness in the servants and followers of Christ in every age.

## <sup><4085></sup>MATTHEW 8:5-15.

### HEALING OF THE CENTURION’S SERVANT. (<sup><4701></sup>LUKE 7:1-10).

This incident belongs to a later stage. For the exposition, see on <sup><4701></sup>Luke 7:1-10.

## <sup><4084></sup>MATTHEW 8:14-17.

### HEALING OF PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS. (<sup><4029></sup>MARK 1:29-34 <sup><4085></sup>LUKE 4:38-41).

For the exposition, see on <sup><4029></sup>Mark 1:29-34.

## ✠<sup>188</sup> MATTHEW 8:18-22.

### INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

(✠<sup>187</sup> LUKE 9:57-62).

The incidents here are two: in the corresponding passage of Luke they are three. Here they are introduced before the mission of the Twelve: in Luke, when our Lord was making preparation for His final journey to Jerusalem. But to conclude from this, as some good critics do (as BENGEL, ELLICOTT, etc.). that one of these incidents at least occurred twice — which led to the mention of the others at the two different times — is too artificial. Taking them, then, as one set of occurrences, the question arises. Are they recorded by Matthew or by Luke in their proper place? NEANDER, SCHLEIERMACHER, and OLSHAUSEN adhere to Luke's order; while MEYER, DE WETTE, and LANGE prefer that of Matthew. Probably the first incident is here in its right place. But as the command, in the second incident, to preach the kingdom of God, would scarcely have been given at so early a period, it is likely that it and the third incident have their true place in Luke. Taking these three incidents up here then we have,

#### I. THE RASH OR PRECIPITATE DISCIPLE

(✠<sup>189</sup> MATTHEW 8:19, 20).

**19. And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.**

**20. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head**

— Few as there were of the scribes who attached themselves to Jesus, it would appear, from his calling Him Teacher, that this one was a “disciple” in that looser sense of the word in which it is applied to the crowds who flocked after Him, with more or less conviction that His claims were well founded. But from the answer which he received we are led to infer that there was more of transient emotion — of temporary impulse — than of intelligent principle in the speech. The preaching of Christ had riveted and charmed him; his heart had swelled; his enthusiasm had been kindled; and in this state of mind he will go anywhere with Him, and feels impelled to tell Him so. “Wilt thou?” replies the Lord Jesus. “Knowest thou whom thou art pledging thyself to follow, and whither haply He may lead thee? No warm home, no downy pillow has He for thee: He has them not for Himself. The foxes are not without their holes, nor do the birds of the air lack their nests; but the Son of man has to depend on the hospitality of others, and borrow the pillow whereon He lays His head.” How affecting is

this reply! And yet He rejects not this man's offer, nor refuses him the liberty to follow Him. Only He will have him know what he is doing, and "count the cost." He will have him weigh well the real nature and the strength of his attachment, whether it be such as will abide in the day of trial. If so, he will be right welcome, for Christ puts none away. But it seems too plain that in this case that had not been done. And so we have called this the Rash or Precipitate Disciple.

## II. THE PROCRASTINATING OR ENTANGLED DISCIPLE (~~4082~~ MATTHEW 8:21, 22).

As this is more fully given in Luke (~~4089~~ Luke 9:59), we must take both together. "And He said unto another of His disciples, Follow Me. But he said,"

**Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead** — or, as more definitely in Luke, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (~~4096~~ Luke 9:60). This disciple did not, like the former, volunteer his services, but is called by the Lord Jesus, not only to follow, but to preach Him. And he is quite willing; only he is not ready just yet. "Lord, I *will*; but" — "There is a difficulty in the way just now; but that once removed, I am Thine." What now is this difficulty? Was his father actually dead — lying a corpse — having only to be buried? Impossible. As it was the practice, as noticed on ~~4072~~ Luke 7:12, to bury on the day of death, it is not very likely that this disciple would have been here at all if his father had just breathed his last; nor would the Lord, if He was there, have hindered him discharging the last duties of a son to a father. No doubt it was the common case of a son having a frail or aged father, not likely to live long, whose head he thinks it his duty to see under the ground ere he goes abroad. "This aged father of mine will soon be removed; and if I might but delay till I see him decently interred, I should then be free to preach the kingdom of God wherever duty might call me." This view of the case will explain the curt reply, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Like all the other paradoxical sayings of our Lord, the key to it is the different senses — a higher and a lower — in which the same word "dead" is used: There are two kingdoms of God in existence upon earth; the kingdom of nature, and the kingdom of grace: To the one kingdom all the children of this world, even the most ungodly, are fully alive; to the other, only the children of light: The reigning irreligion consists not in indifference to the common humanities of social life, but to things spiritual and eternal: Fear not, therefore, that your father will in your absence be neglected, and that when he breathes his last there will not be

relatives and friends ready enough to do to him the last offices of kindness. Your wish to discharge these yourself is natural, and to be allowed to do it a privilege not lightly to be foregone. But the kingdom of God lies now all neglected and needy: Its more exalted character few discern; to its paramount claims few are alive: and to “preach” it fewer still are qualified and called: But thou art: The Lord therefore hath need of thee: Leave, then, those claims of nature, high though they be, to those who are dead to the still higher claims of the kingdom of grace, which God is now erecting upon earth — Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And so have we here the genuine, but Procrastinating or Entangled Disciple.

The next case is recorded only by Luke:

### III. THE IRRESOLUTE OR WAVERING DISCIPLE

(~~196~~ LUKE 9:61,62)

~~196~~ LUKE 9:61:

*And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.*

~~196~~ LUKE 9:62:

*And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* But for the very different replies given, we should hardly have discerned the difference between this and the second case: the one man called, indeed, and the other volunteering, as did the first; but both seemingly alike willing, and only having a difficulty in their way just at that moment. But, by help of what is said respectively to each, we perceive the great difference between the two cases. From the warning given against “looking back,” it is evident that this man’s discipleship was not yet *thorough*, his separation from the world not entire. It is not a case of *going* back, but of *looking* back; and as there is here a manifest reference to the case of “Lot’s wife” (~~196~~ Genesis 19:26; and see on ~~197~~ Luke 17:32), we see that it is not *actual return* to the world that we have here to deal with, but a *reluctance to break with it*. The figure of putting one’s hand to the plough and looking back is an exceedingly vivid one, and to an agricultural people most impressive. As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. The reference may be chiefly to ministers; but the application at least is general. As the image seems plainly to have been suggested by the case of Elijah and Elisha, a difficulty may be

raised, requiring a moment's attention. When Elijah cast his mantle about Elisha, which the youth quite understood to mean appointing him his successor, he was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, the last pair held by himself. Leaving his oxen, he ran after the prophet, and said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and [then] I will follow thee." Was this said *in the same spirit* with the same speech uttered by our disciple? Let us see. "And Elijah said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee." Commentators take this to mean that Elijah had really done nothing to hinder him from going on with all his ordinary duties. But to us it seems clear that Elijah's intention was to try what manner of spirit the youth was of: — "Kiss thy father and mother? And why not? By all means, go home and stay with them; for what have I done to thee? I did but throw a mantle about thee; but what of that?" If this was his meaning, Elisha thoroughly apprehended and nobly met it. "He returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen (the wood of his ploughing implements), and gave unto the people, and they did eat: then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him" (~~1199~~ 1 Kings 19:19-21). We know not if even his father and mother had time to be called to this hasty feast. But this much is plain, that, though in affluent circumstances, he gave up his lower calling, with all its prospects, for the higher and at that time perilous, office to which he was called. What now is the bearing of these two cases? Did Elisha do wrong in bidding them farewell with whom he was associated in his early calling? Or, if not, would this disciple have done wrong if he had done the same thing, and in the same spirit, with Elisha? Clearly not. Elisha's doing it proved that he could *with safety* do it; and our Lord's warning is not against bidding them farewell which were at home at his house, but against the probable *fatal consequences* of that step; lest the embraces of earthly relationship should prove too strong for him, and he should never return to follow Christ. Accordingly, we have called this the Irresolute or Wavering Disciple.

## ~~4183~~ MATTHEW 8:23-27.

### JESUS CROSSING THE SEA OF GALILEE, MIRACULOUSLY STILLS A TEMPEST. (~~41065~~ MARK 4:35-41 ~~41822~~ LUKE 8:22-25).

For the exposition, see on ~~41065~~ Mark 4:35-41.

⌄ MATTHEW 8:28-34.

**JESUS HEALS THE GERGESENE DEMONIACS.**

(⌄ MARK 5:1-20 ⌄ LUKE 8:26-39).

For the exposition, see on ⌄ Mark 5:1-20.



# CHAPTER 9

## ⌄MATTHEW 9:1-8.

### HEALING A PARALYTIC. (⌄MARK 2:1-12 ⌄LUKE 5:17-26).

This incident appears to follow next in order of time to the cure of the leper (⌄Matthew 8:1-4). For the exposition, see on ⌄Mark 2:1-12.

## ⌄MATTHEW 9:9-13.

### MATTHEW'S CALL AND FEAST. (⌄MARK 2:14-17 ⌄LUKE 5:27-32).

*The Call of Matthew (⌄Matthew 9:9).*

**9. And as Jesus passed forth from thence** — that is, from the scene of the paralytic's cure in Capernaum, towards the shore of the Sea of Galilee, on which that town lay. Mark, as usual, pictures the scene more in detail, thus (⌄Mark 2:13): "And He went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them" — or, "kept teaching them." "And as He passed by"

**he saw a man, named Matthew** — the writer of this precious Gospel, who here, with singular modesty and brevity, relates the story of his own calling. In Mark and Luke he is called *Levi*, which seems to have been his family name. In their lists of the twelve apostles, however, Mark and Luke give him the name of Matthew, which seems to have been the name by which he was known as a disciple. While he himself sinks his family name, he is careful not to sink his occupation, the obnoxious associations with which he would place over against the grace that called him from it, and made him an apostle. (See on ⌄Matthew 10:3). Mark alone tells us (⌄Mark 2:14) that he was "the son of Alphaeus" — the same, probably, with the father of James the Less. From this and other considerations it is pretty certain that he must at least have heard of our Lord before this meeting. Unnecessary doubts, even from an early period, have been raised about the identity of Levi and Matthew. No capable jury, with the evidence before them which we have in the Gospels, would hesitate in giving a unanimous verdict of identity.

**sitting at the receipt of custom** — as a publican, which Luke (<sup><417></sup>Luke 5:27) calls him. It means the place of receipt, the toll house or booth in which the collector sat. Being in this case by the seaside, it might be the ferry tax for the transit of persons and goods across the lake, which he collected. (See on <sup><416></sup>Matthew 5:46).

**and he saith unto him, Follow me** — Witching words these, from the lips of Him who never employed them without giving them resistless efficacy in the hearts of those they were spoken to.

**And he** — “left all” (<sup><418></sup>Luke 5:28), “arose and followed him.”

*The Feast* (<sup><419></sup>Matthew 9:10-13).

**10. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house** — The modesty of our Evangelist signally appears here. Luke says (<sup><419></sup>Luke 5:29) that “Levi made Him *a great feast*,” or “reception,” while Matthew merely says, “He sat at meat”; and Mark and Luke say that it was in Levi’s “own house,” while Matthew merely says, “He sat at meat *in the house*.”

Whether this feast was made now, or not till afterwards, is a point of some importance in the order of events, and not agreed among harmonists. The probability is that it did not take place till a considerable time afterwards. For Matthew, who ought surely to know what took place while his Lord was speaking at his own table, tells us that the visit of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, occurred at that moment (<sup><419></sup>Matthew 9:18). But we know from Mark and Luke that this visit of Jairus did not take place till after our Lord’s return, at a later period from the country of the Gadarenes. (See <sup><419></sup>Mark 5:21, etc., and <sup><419></sup>Luke 8:40, etc.). We conclude, therefore, that the feast was not made in the novelty of his discipleship, but after Matthew had had time to be somewhat established in the faith; when returning to Capernaum, his compassion for old friends, of his own calling and character, led him to gather them together that they might have an opportunity of hearing the gracious words which proceeded out of His Master’s mouth, if haply they might experience a like change.

**behold, many publicans and sinners** — Luke says, “a great company” (<sup><419></sup>Luke 5:29) — came and sat down with him and his disciples. In all such cases the word rendered “sat” is “reclined,” in allusion to the ancient mode of lying on couches at meals.

**11. And when the Pharisees** — “and scribes,” add Mark and Luke (<sup><419></sup>Mark 2:6 <sup><419></sup>Luke 5:21).

**saw it, they said** — “murmured” or “muttered,” says Luke (<sup><419></sup>Luke 5:30).

**unto his disciples** — not venturing to put their question to Jesus Himself.

**Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?** — (See on ~~419~~ Luke 15:2).

**12. But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them** — to the Pharisees and scribes; addressing Himself to them, though they had shrunk from addressing Him.

**They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick** — that is, “Ye deem yourselves whole; My mission, therefore, is not to you: The physician’s business is with the sick; therefore eat I with publicans and sinners.” Oh, what myriads of broken hearts, of sin-sick souls, have been bound up by this matchless saying!

**13. But go ye and learn what that meaneth** — (~~406~~ Hosea 6:6),

**I will have mercy, and not sacrifice** — that is, the one rather than the other. “Sacrifice,” the chief part of the ceremonial law, is here put for a religion of literal adherence to mere rules; while “mercy” expresses such compassion for the fallen as seeks to lift them up. The duty of keeping aloof from the polluted, in the sense of “having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,” is obvious enough; but to understand this as prohibiting such intercourse with them as is necessary to their recovery, is to abuse it. This was what these pharisaical religionists did, and this is what our Lord here exposes.

**for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance** — The italicized words are of doubtful authority here, and more than doubtful authority in ~~4107~~ Mark 2:17; but in ~~4132~~ Luke 5:32 they are undisputed. We have here just the former statement stripped of its figure. “The righteous” are the whole; “sinners,” the sick. When Christ “called” the latter, as He did Matthew, and probably some of those publicans and sinners whom he had invited to meet Him, it was to heal them of their spiritual maladies, or save their souls: “The righteous,” like those miserable self-satisfied Pharisees, “He sent empty away.”

## ~~4194~~ MATTHEW 9:14-17.

### DISCOURSE ON FASTING.

See on ~~4138~~ Luke 5:33-39.

## MATTHEW 9:18-26.

### THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD HEALED. — THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS RAISED TO LIFE.

(MATTHEW 9:18-26 LUKE 8:40-56 MARK 5:21-43).

For the exposition, see on MARK 5:21-43.

## MATTHEW 9:27-34.

### TWO BLIND MEN AND A DUMB DEMONIAK HEALED.

These two miracles are recorded by Matthew alone.

*Two Blind Men Healed (MATTHEW 9:27-31).*

**27. And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him** — hearing, doubtless, as in a later case is expressed, “that Jesus passed by” (MATTHEW 20:30).

**crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us** — It is remarkable that in the only other recorded case in which the blind applied to Jesus for their sight, and obtained it, they addressed Him, over and over again, by this one Messianic title, so well known — “Son of David” (MATTHEW 20:30). Can there be a doubt that their faith fastened on such great Messianic promises as this, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,” etc. (ISAIAH 35:5).<sup>9</sup> and if so, this appeal to Him, as the Consolation of Israel, to do His predicted office, would fall with great weight upon the ears of Jesus.

**28. And when he was come into the house** — To try their faith and patience, He seems to have made them no answer. But

**the blind men came to Him** — which, no doubt, was what He desired.

**and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? they said unto him, Yea, Lord** — Doubtless our Lord’s design was not only to put their faith to the test by this question, but to deepen it, to raise their expectation of a cure, and so prepare them to receive it; and the cordial acknowledgment, so touchingly simple, which they immediately made to Him of His power to heal them, shows how entirely that object was gained.

**29. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you** — not, Receive a cure *proportioned* to your faith, but, Receive this cure as *granted* to your faith. Thus would they carry about with them, in their restored vision, a gracious seal of the faith which drew it from their compassionate Lord.

**30. And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straitly charged them** — The expression is very strong, denoting great earnestness.

**31. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country** — (See on <sup><1006</sup>Matthew 8:4).

*A Dumb Demoniac Healed* (<sup><1002</sup>Matthew 9:32-34).

**32. As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil** — “demonized.” The dumbness was not natural, but was the effect of the possession.

**33. And when the devil** — demon.

**was cast out, the dumb spake** — The particulars in this case are not given; the object being simply to record the instantaneous restoration of the natural faculties on the removal of the malignant oppression of them, the form which the popular astonishment took, and the very different effect of it upon another class.

**and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel** — referring, probably, not to this case only, but to all those miraculous displays of healing power which seemed to promise a new era in the history of Israel. Probably they meant by this language to indicate, as far as they thought it safe to do so, their inclination to regard Him as the promised Messiah.

**34. But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils** — “the demons through the prince of the demons.” This seems to be the first muttering of a theory of such miracles which soon became a fixed mode of calumniating them — a theory which would be ridiculous if it were not melancholy as an outburst of the darkest malignity. (See on <sup><1026</sup>Matthew 12:24, etc.).

## MATTHEW 9:35-10:5.

### THIRD GALILEAN CIRCUIT — MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

As the Mission of the Twelve supposes the previous choice of them — of which our Evangelist gives no account, and which did not take place till a later stage of our Lord's public life — it is introduced here out of its proper place, which is after what is recorded in <sup><4062></sup>Luke 6:12-19.

*Third Galilean Circuit* (<sup><4065></sup>Matthew 9:35) — and probably the last.

35. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease *among the people* — The italicized words are of more than doubtful authority here, and were probably introduced here from <sup><4063></sup>Matthew 4:23. The language here is so identical with that used in describing the first circuit (<sup><4063></sup>Matthew 4:23), that we may presume the work done on both occasions was much the same. It was just a further preparation of the soil, and a fresh sowing of the precious seed. (See on <sup><4063></sup>Matthew 4:23). To these fruitful journeyings of the Redeemer, "with healing in His wings," Peter no doubt alludes, when, in his address to the household of Cornelius, he spoke of "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him" (<sup><4068></sup>Acts 10:38).

*Jesus Compassionating the Multitudes, Asks Prayer for Help*  
(<sup><4065></sup>Matthew 9:36-38).

He had now returned from His preaching and healing circuit, and the result, as at the close of the first one, was the gathering of a vast and motley multitude around Him. After a whole night spent in prayer, He had called His more immediate disciples, and from them had solemnly chosen the twelve; then, coming down from the mountain, on which this was transacted, to the multitudes that waited for Him below, He had addressed to them — as we take it — that discourse which bears so strong a resemblance to the Sermon on the Mount that many critics take it to be the same. (See on <sup><4062></sup>Luke 6:12-49; and <sup><4066></sup>Matthew 5:1, Introductory Remarks). Soon after this, it should seem, the multitudes still hanging on Him, Jesus is touched with their wretched and helpless condition, and acts as is now to be described.

**36. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted** — This reading, however, has hardly any authority at all. The true reading doubtless is, “were harassed.”

**and were scattered abroad** — rather, “lying about,” “abandoned,” or “neglected.”

**as sheep, having no shepherd** — their pitiable condition as wearied under bodily fatigue, a vast disorganized mass, being but a faint picture of their wretchedness as the victims of pharisaic guidance; their souls uncared for, yet drawn after and hanging upon Him. This moved the Redeemer’s compassion.

**37. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous** — His eye doubtless rested immediately on the Jewish field, but this he saw widening into the vast field of “the world” (~~4038~~ Matthew 13:38), teeming with souls having to be gathered to Him.

**but the laborers** — men divinely qualified and called to gather them in.

**38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest** — the great Lord and Proprietor of all. Compare ~~4039~~ John 15:1, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.”

**that he will send forth laborers into his harvest** — The word properly means “thrust forth”; but this emphatic sense disappears in some places, as in ~~4040~~ Matthew 9:25, and ~~4041~~ John 10:4 — “When He *putteth forth* His own sheep.” (See on ~~4042~~ Matthew 4:1).

# CHAPTER 10

## ⌚ MATTHEW 10:1-5.

### MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

(⌚ MARK 6:7-13 ⌚ LUKE 9:1-6).

The last three verses of the ninth chapter form the proper introduction to the Mission of the Twelve, as is evident from the remarkable fact that the Mission of the Seventy was prefaced by the very same words. (See on ⌚ Luke 10:2).

**1. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power** — The word signifies both “power,” and “authority” or “right.” Even if it were not evident that here both ideas are included, we find both words expressly used in the parallel passage of Luke (⌚ Luke 9:1) — “He gave them power and authority” — in other words, He both *qualified* and *authorized* them.

**against** — or “over.”

**2. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these** — The other Evangelists enumerate the twelve in immediate connection with their appointment (⌚ Mark 3:13-19 ⌚ Luke 6:13-16). But our Evangelist, not intending to record the appointment, but only the Mission of the Twelve, gives their names here. And as in the Acts (⌚ Acts 1:13) we have a list of the Eleven who met daily in the upper room with the other disciples after their Master’s ascension until the day of Pentecost, we have four catalogues in all for comparison.

**The first, Simon, who is called Peter** — (See on ⌚ John 1:42).

**and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother** — named after James, as the younger of the two.

**3. Philip and Bartholomew** — That this person is the same with “Nathanael of Cana in Galilee” is justly concluded for the three following reasons: First, because Bartholomew is not so properly an individual’s name as a family surname; next, because not only in this list, but in Mark’s and Luke’s (⌚ Mark 3:18 ⌚ Luke 6:14), he follows the name of “Philip,” who was the instrument of bringing Nathanael first to Jesus (⌚ John 1:45);



and again, when our Lord, after His resurrection, appeared at the Sea of Tiberias, “Nathanael of Cana in Galilee” is mentioned along with six others, all of them apostles, as being present (☞<sup>212</sup> John 21:2).

**Matthew the publican** — In none of the four lists of the Twelve is this apostle so branded but in his own, as if he would have all to know how deep a debtor he had been to his Lord. (See on ☞<sup>1003</sup> Matthew 1:3; ☞<sup>1009</sup> Matthew 9:9).

**James the son of Alphaeus** — the same person apparently who is called *Cleopas* or *Clopas* (☞<sup>248</sup> Luke 24:18 ☞<sup>625</sup> John 19:25); and, as he was the husband of Mary, sister to the Virgin, James the Less must have been our Lord’s cousin.

**and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus** — the same, without doubt, as “Judas the brother of James,” mentioned in both the lists of Luke (☞<sup>1069</sup> Luke 6:16 ☞<sup>4013</sup> Acts 1:13), while no one of the name of Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus is so. It is he who in John (☞<sup>6142</sup> John 14:22) is sweetly called “Judas, not Iscariot.” That he was the author of the Catholic Epistle of “Jude,” and not “the Lord’s brother” (☞<sup>4035</sup> Matthew 13:55), unless these be the same, is most likely.

**4. Simon the Canaanite** — rather “Kananite,” but better still, “the Zealot,” as he is called in ☞<sup>685</sup> Luke 6:15, where the original term should not have been retained as in our version (“Simon, called Zelotes”), but rendered “Simon, called the Zealot.” The word “Kananite” is just the *Aramaic*, or *Syro-Chaldaic*, term for “Zealot.” Probably before his acquaintance with Jesus, he belonged to the sect of the Zealots, who bound themselves, as a sort of voluntary ecclesiastical police, to see that the law was not broken with impunity.

**and Judas Iscariot** — that is, Judas of Kerioth, a town of Judah (☞<sup>6853</sup> Joshua 15:25); so called to distinguish him from “Judas the brother of James” (☞<sup>4066</sup> Luke 6:16).

**who also betrayed him** — a note of infamy attached to his name in all the catalogues of the Twelve.

## ☞<sup>1005</sup> MATTHEW 10:5-42.

### THE TWELVE RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTIONS.

This directory divides itself into three distinct parts. The *first* part (☞<sup>4008</sup> Matthew 10:5-15) contains directions for the brief and temporary

mission on which they were now going forth, with respect to the places they were to go to, the works they were to do, the message they were to bear, and the manner in which they were to conduct themselves. The *second* part (<sup><4006</sup>Matthew 10:16-23) contains directions of no such limited and temporary nature, but opens out into the permanent exercise of the Gospel ministry. The *third* part (<sup><4008</sup>Matthew 10:24-42) is of wider application still, reaching not only to the ministry of the Gospel in every age, but to the service of Christ in the widest sense. *It is a strong confirmation of this threefold division, that each part closes with the words, "VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU"* (<sup><4005</sup>Matthew 10:15,23,42).

*Directions for the Present Mission* (<sup><4005</sup>Matthew 10:5-15).

**5. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not** — The Samaritans were Gentiles by blood; but being the descendants of those whom the king of Assyria had transported from the East to supply the place of the ten tribes carried captive, they had adopted the religion of the Jews, though with admixtures of their own: and, as the nearest neighbors of the Jews, they occupied a place intermediate between them and the Gentiles. Accordingly, when this prohibition was to be taken off, on the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles were told that they should be Christ's witnesses first "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea," then "in Samaria," and lastly, "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (<sup><4008</sup>Acts 1:8).

**6. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel** — Until Christ's death, which broke down the middle wall of Partition (<sup><4024</sup>Ephesians 2:14), the Gospel commission was to the Jews only, who, though the visible people of God, were "lost sheep," not merely in the sense which all sinners are (<sup><2536</sup>Isaiah 53:6 <sup><4025</sup>1 Peter 2:25; compare with <sup><2600</sup>Luke 19:10), but as abandoned and left to wander from the right way by faithless shepherds (<sup><2608</sup>Jeremiah 50:6,17 <sup><2642</sup>Ezekiel 34:2-6, etc.).

**7. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand** — (See on <sup><4002</sup>Matthew 3:2).

**8. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils** — (The italicized clause — "*raise the dead*" — is wanting in many manuscripts). Here we have the first communication of supernatural power by Christ Himself to His followers — thus anticipating the gifts of Pentecost. And right royally does He dispense it.

**freely ye have received, freely give** — Divine saying, divinely said! (Compare <sup><6500</sup>Deuteronomy 15:10,11 <sup><4036</sup>Acts 3:6) — an apple of gold in a

setting of silver (<sup><435E></sup>Proverbs 25:11). It reminds us of that other golden saying of our Lord, rescued from oblivion by Paul, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (<sup><407E></sup>Acts 20:35). Who can estimate what the world owes to such sayings, and with what beautiful foliage and rich fruit such seeds have covered, and will yet cover, this earth!

**9. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses** — “for” your purses; literally, “your belts,” in which they kept their money.

**10. Nor scrip for your journey** — the bag used by travelers for holding provisions.

**neither two coats** — or tunics, worn next the skin. The meaning is, Take no change of dress, no additional articles.

**neither shoes** — that is change of them.

**nor yet staves** — The received text here has “a staff,” but our version follows another reading, “staves,” which is found in the received text of Luke (<sup><409E></sup>Luke 9:3). The true reading, however, evidently is “a staff” — meaning, that they were not to procure even that much. expressly for this missionary journey, but to go with what they had. No doubt it was the misunderstanding of this that gave rise to the reading “staves” in so many manuscripts. Even if this reading were genuine, it could not mean “more than one”; for who, as ALFORD well asks, would think of taking a spare staff?

**for the workman is worthy of his meat** — his “food” or “maintenance”; a principle which, being universally recognized in secular affairs, is here authoritatively applied to the services of the Lord’s workmen, and by Paul repeatedly and touchingly employed in his appeals to the churches (<sup><457></sup>Romans 15:27 <sup><401E></sup>1 Corinthians 9:11 <sup><800E></sup>Galatians 6:6), and once as “scripture” (<sup><458E></sup>1 Timothy 5:18).

**11. And into whatsoever city or town** — town or village.

**ye shall enter inquire** — carefully.

**who in it is worthy** — or “meet” to entertain such messengers; not in point of rank, of course, but of congenial disposition.

**and there abide till ye go thence** — not shifting about, as if discontented, but returning the welcome given with a courteous, contented, accommodating disposition.

**12. And when ye come into an house** — or “the house,” but it means not the worthy house, but the house ye first enter, to try if it be worthy.

**salute it** — show it the usual civilities.

**13. And if the house be worthy** — showing this by giving you a welcome.

**let your peace come upon it** — This is best explained by the injunction to the Seventy, “And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house” (~~<2015>~~Luke 10:5). This was the ancient salutation of the East, and it prevails to this day. But from the lips of Christ and His messengers, it means something far higher, both in the gift and the giving of it, than in the current salutation. (See on ~~<8427>~~John 14:27).

**but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you** — If your peace finds a shut, instead of an open, door in the heart of any household, take it back to yourselves, who know how to value it; and it will taste the sweeter to you for having been offered, even though rejected.

**14. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city** — for possibly a whole town might not furnish one “worthy.”

**shake off the dust of your feet** — “for a testimony against them,” as Mark and Luke add (~~<4081>~~Mark 6:11 ~~<2011>~~Luke 10:11). By this symbolical action they vividly shook themselves from all *connection* with such, and all *responsibility* for the guilt of rejecting them and their message. Such symbolical actions were common in ancient times, even among others than the Jews, as strikingly appears in Pilate (~~<4724>~~Matthew 27:24). And even to this day it prevails in the East.

**15. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable** — more bearable.

**for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city** — Those Cities of the Plain, which were given to the flames for their loathsome impurities, shall be treated as less criminal, we are here taught, than those places which, though morally respectable, reject the Gospel message and affront those that bear it.

*Directions for the Future and Permanent Exercise of the Christian Ministry* (~~<0016>~~Matthew 10:16-23).

**16. Behold, I send you forth** — The “I” here is emphatic, holding up Himself as the Fountain of the Gospel ministry, as He is also the Great Burden of it.

**as sheep** — defenseless.

**in the midst of wolves** — ready to make a prey of you (<sup><8002></sup>John 10:12). To be left exposed, as sheep to wolves, would have been startling enough; but that the sheep should be *sent* among the wolves would sound strange indeed. No wonder this announcement begins with the exclamation, “Behold.”

**be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves** — Wonderful combination this! Alone, the wisdom of the serpent is mere cunning, and the harmlessness of the dove little better than weakness: but in combination, the wisdom of the serpent would save them from unnecessary exposure to danger; the harmlessness of the dove, from sinful expedients to escape it. In the apostolic age of Christianity, how harmoniously were these qualities displayed! Instead of the fanatical thirst for martyrdom, to which a later age gave birth, there was a manly combination of unflinching zeal and calm discretion, before which nothing was able to stand.

**17. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils** — the local courts, used here for civil magistrates in general.

**and they will scourge you in their synagogues** — By this is meant persecution at the hands of the ecclesiastics.

**18. And ye shall be brought before governors** — provincial rulers.  
**and kings** — the highest tribunals.

**for my sake, for a testimony against them** — rather, “to them,” in order to bear testimony to the truth and its glorious effects.

**and the Gentiles** — “to the Gentiles”; a hint that their message would not long be confined to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The Acts of the Apostles are the best commentary on these warnings.

**19. But when they deliver you up, take no thought** — be not solicitous or anxious. (See on <sup><4025></sup>Matthew 6:25).

**how or what ye shall speak** — that is, either in what *manner* ye shall make your defense, or of what *matter* it shall consist.

**for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak** — (See <sup><2042></sup>Exodus 4:12 <sup><2007></sup>Jeremiah 1:7).

**20. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you** — How remarkably this has been verified, the whole history of persecution thrillingly proclaims — from the Acts of the Apostles to the latest martyrology.

**21. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death** — for example, by lodging information against them with the authorities. The deep and virulent hostility of the old nature and life to the new — as of Belial to Christ — was to issue in awful wrenches of the dearest ties; and the disciples, in the prospect of their cause and themselves being launched upon society, are here prepared for the worst.

**22. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake** — The universality of this hatred would make it evident to them, that since it would not be owing to any temporary excitement, local virulence, or personal prejudice, on the part of their enemies, so no amount of discretion on their part, consistent with entire fidelity to the truth, would avail to stifle that enmity — though it might soften its violence, and in some cases avert the outward manifestations of it.

**but he that endureth to the end shall be saved** — a great saying, repeated, in connection with similar warnings, in the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (<sup><40B3</sup>Matthew 24:13); and often reiterated by the apostle as a warning against “drawing back unto perdition” (<sup><38B</sup>Hebrews 3:6,13 6:4-6 10:23,26-29,38,39, etc.). As “drawing back unto perdition” is merely the palpable evidence of the want of “root” from the first in the Christian profession (<sup><40B3</sup>Luke 8:13), so “enduring to the end” is just the proper evidence of its reality and solidity.

**23. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another** — “into the other.” This, though applicable to all time, and exemplified by our Lord Himself once and again, had special reference to the brief opportunities which Israel was to have of “knowing the time of His visitations.”

**for verily I say unto you** — what will startle you, but at the same time show you the solemnity of your mission, and the need of economizing the time for it.

**Ye shall not have gone over** — Ye shall in nowise have completed.

**the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come** — To understand this — as LANGE and others do — in the first instance, of Christ's own peregrinations, as if He had said, “Waste not your time upon hostile places, for I Myself will be after you ere your work be over” — seems almost trifling. “The coming of the Son of man” has a fixed doctrinal sense, here referring immediately to the crisis of Israel's history as the visible kingdom of God, when Christ was to come and judge it; when “the wrath would

come upon it to the uttermost”; and when, on the ruins of Jerusalem and the old economy, He would establish His own kingdom. This, in the uniform language of Scripture, is more immediately “the coming of the Son of man,” “the day of vengeance of our God” (<sup><0163></sup>Matthew 16:28 24:27,34; compare with <sup><3025></sup>Hebrews 10:25 <sup><3097></sup>James 5:7-9) — but only as being such a lively anticipation of His second coming for vengeance and deliverance. So understood, it is parallel with <sup><0244></sup>Matthew 24:14 (on which see).

*Directions for the Service of Christ in Its Widest Sense*  
(<sup><0034></sup>Matthew 10:24-42).

**24. The disciple is not above his master** — teacher.

**nor the servant above his lord** — another maxim which our Lord repeats in various connections (<sup><0160></sup>Luke 6:40 <sup><0166></sup>John 13:16 15:20).

**25. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub** — All the *Greek* manuscripts, write “Beelzebul,” which undoubtedly is the right form of this word. The other reading came in no doubt from the Old Testament “Baalzebul,” the god of Ekron (<sup><0002></sup>2 Kings 1:2), which it was designed to express. As all idolatry was regarded as devil worship (<sup><0170></sup>Leviticus 17:7 <sup><0177></sup>Deuteronomy 32:17 <sup><0187></sup>Psalms 106:37 <sup><0100></sup>1 Corinthians 10:20), so there seems to have been something peculiarly satanic about the worship of this hateful god, which caused his name to be a synonym of Satan. Though we nowhere read that our Lord was actually called “Beelzebul,” He was charged with being in league with Satan under that hateful name (<sup><0124></sup>Matthew 12:24,26), and more than once Himself was charged with “having a devil” or “demon” (<sup><0103></sup>Mark 3:30 <sup><0170></sup>John 7:20 8:48). Here it is used to denote the most opprobrious language which could be applied by one to another.

**how much more shall they call them of his household** — “the inmates.” Three relations in which Christ stands to His people are here mentioned: He is their Teacher — they His disciples; He is their Lord — they His servants; He is the Master of the household — they its inmates. In all these relations, He says here, He and they are so bound up together that they cannot look to fare better than He, and should think it enough if they fare no worse.

**26. Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known** — that is, There is no use, and no need, of concealing anything; right and wrong, truth and error, are about to come into open and deadly collision; and the day is coming

when all hidden things shall be disclosed, everything seen as it is, and every one have his due (<sup><4005></sup>1 Corinthians 4:5).

**27. What I tell you in darkness** — in the privacy of a teaching for which men are not yet ripe.

**that speak ye in the light** — for when ye go forth all will be ready.

**and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops** — Give free and fearless utterance to all that I have taught you while yet with you. *Objection:* But this may cost us our life? *Answer:* It may, but there their power ends:

**28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul** — In <sup><0214></sup>Luke 12:4, “and after that have no more that they can do.”

**but rather fear him** — In Luke (<sup><0215></sup>Luke 12:5) this is peculiarly solemn, “I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear,” even Him

**which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell** — A decisive proof this that there is a hell for the body as well as the soul in the eternal world; in other words, that the torment that awaits the lost will have elements of suffering adapted to the *material* as well as the spiritual part of our nature, both of which, we are assured, will exist for ever. In the corresponding warning contained in Luke (<sup><0216></sup>Luke 12:4), Jesus calls His disciples “My friends,” as if He had felt that such sufferings constituted a bond of peculiar tenderness between Him and them.

**29. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?** — In Luke (<sup><0217></sup>Luke 12:6) it is “five sparrows for two farthings”; so that, if the purchaser took two farthings’ worth, he got one in addition — of such small value were they.

**and one of them shall not fall on the ground** — exhausted or killed

**without your Father** — “Not one of them is forgotten before God,” as it is in Luke (<sup><0218></sup>Luke 12:6).

**30. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered** — See <sup><0219></sup>Luke 21:18 (and compare for the language <sup><0445></sup>1 Samuel 14:45 <sup><4073></sup>Acts 27:34).

**31. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows** — Was ever language of such simplicity felt to carry such weight as this does? But here lies much of the charm and power of our Lord’s teaching.

**32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men** — despising the shame.



**him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven** — I will not be ashamed of him, but will own him before the most august of all assemblies.

**33. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven** — before that same assembly: “He shall have from Me his own treatment of Me on the earth.” (But see on <sup><1627</sup>Matthew 16:27).

**34. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword** — strife, discord, conflict; deadly opposition between eternally hostile principles, penetrating into and rending asunder the dearest ties.

**35. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law** — (See on <sup><1025</sup>Luke 12:51).

**36. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household** — This saying, which is quoted, as is the whole verse, from <sup><3006</sup>Micah 7:6, is but an extension of the Psalmist’s complaint (<sup><1940</sup>Psalm 41:9 55:12-14), which had its most affecting illustration in the treason of Judas against our Lord Himself (<sup><1838</sup>John 13:18 <sup><1088</sup>Matthew 26:48-50). Hence would arise the necessity of a choice between Christ and the nearest relations, which would put them to the severest test.

**37. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me** — (Compare <sup><6319</sup>Deuteronomy 33:9). As the preference of the one would, in the case supposed, necessitate the abandonment of the other, our Lord here, with a sublime, yet awful self-respect, asserts His own claims to supreme affection.

**38. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me** — a saying which our Lord once and again emphatically reiterates (<sup><1624</sup>Matthew 16:24 <sup><1023</sup>Luke 9:23 14:27). We have become so accustomed to this expression — “taking up one’s cross” — in the sense of “being prepared for trials in general for Christ’s sake,” that we are apt to lose sight of its primary and proper sense here — “a preparedness to go forth even to crucifixion,” as when our Lord had to bear His own cross on His way to Calvary — a saying the more remarkable as our Lord had not as yet given a hint that He would die this death, nor was crucifixion a Jewish mode of capital punishment.

**39. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it** — another of those pregnant sayings which our Lord so often reiterates (<sup><1625></sup>Matthew 16:25 <sup><2173></sup>Luke 17:33 <sup><8125></sup>John 12:25). The pith of such paradoxical maxims depends on the double sense attached to the word “life” — a lower and a higher, the natural and the spiritual, the temporal and eternal. An entire sacrifice of the lower, with all its relationships and interests — or, a willingness to make it which is the same thing — is indispensable to the preservation of the higher life; and he who cannot bring himself to surrender the one for the sake of the other shall eventually lose both.

**40. He that receiveth you** — entertaineth you,

**receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me** — As the treatment which an ambassador receives is understood and regarded as expressing the light in which he that sends him is viewed, so, says our Lord here, “Your authority is Mine, as Mine is My Father’s.”

**41. He that receiveth a prophet** — one divinely commissioned to deliver a message from heaven. Predicting future events was no necessary part of a prophet’s office, especially as the word is used in the New Testament.

**in the name of a prophet** — for his office’s sake and love to his master. (See <sup><1049></sup>2 Kings 4:9 and see on <sup><12440></sup>2 Kings 4:10).

**shall receive a prophet’s reward** — What an encouragement to those who are not prophets! (See <sup><8183></sup>John 3:5-8).

**and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man** — from sympathy with his character and esteem for himself as such

**shall receive a righteous man’s reward** — for he must himself have the seed of righteousness who has any real sympathy with it and complacency in him who possesses it.

**42. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones** — Beautiful epithet! Originally taken from <sup><3810></sup>Zechariah 13:7. The reference is to their lowliness in spirit, their littleness in the eyes of an undiscerning world, while high in Heaven’s esteem.

**a cup of cold water only** — meaning, the smallest service.

**in the name of a disciple** — or, as it is in Mark (<sup><4098></sup>Mark 9:41), because ye are Christ’s: from love to Me, and to him from his connection with Me.

**verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward** — There is here a descending climax — “a prophet,” “a righteous man,” “a little one”;

signifying that however low we come down in our services to those that are Christ's, all that is done for His sake, and that bears the stamp of love to His blessed name, shall be divinely appreciated and owned and rewarded.

# CHAPTER 11

## ⌄THE MATTHEW 11:1-19.

**THE IMPRISONED BAPTIST'S MESSAGE TO HIS MASTER —  
THE REPLY, AND DISCOURSE, ON THE DEPARTURE OF  
THE MESSENGERS, REGARDING JOHN AND HIS MISSION.**  
(⌄LUKE 7:18-35).

**1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciple** — rather, “the twelve disciples,”

**he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities** — This was scarcely a fourth circuit — if we may judge from the less formal way in which it was expressed — but, perhaps, a set of visits paid to certain places, either not reached at all before, or too rapidly passed through, in order to fill up the time till the return of the Twelve. As to their labors, nothing is said of them by our Evangelist. But Luke (⌄LUKE 9:6) says, “They departed, and went through, the towns,” or “villages,” “preaching the Gospel, and healing everywhere.” Mark (⌄MARK 6:12,13), as usual, is more explicit: “And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils (demons) and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.” Though this “anointing with oil” was not mentioned in our Lord’s instructions — at least in any of the records of them — we know it to have been practiced long after this in the apostolic Church (see ⌄JAMES 5:14, and compare ⌄MARK 6:12,13) — not *medicinally*, but as a sign of the healing virtue which was communicated by their hands, and a symbol of something still more precious. It was *unction*, indeed, but, as BENGEL remarks, it was something very different from what Romanists call *extreme unction*. He adds, what is very probable, that they do not appear to have carried the oil about with them, but, as the Jews used oil as a medicine, to have employed it just as they found it with the sick, in their own higher way.

**2. Now when John had heard in the prison** — For the account of this imprisonment, see on ⌄MARK 6:17-20.

**the works of Christ, he sent, etc.** — On the whole passage, see on ⌄LUKE 7:18-35.

⌌ **MATTHEW 11:20-30.**

**OUTBURST OF FEELING SUGGESTED TO THE MIND OF JESUS BY THE RESULT OF HIS LABORS IN GALILEE.**

The connection of this with what goes before it and the similarity of its tone make it evident, we think, that it was delivered on the same occasion, and that it is but a new and more comprehensive series of reflections in the same strain.

**20. Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not.**

**21. Woe unto thee, Chorazin!** — not elsewhere mentioned, but it must have lain near Capernaum.

**woe unto thee, Bethsaida** — “fishing-house,” a fishing station — on the western side of the Sea of Galilee, and to the north of Capernaum; the birthplace of three of the apostles — the brothers Andrew and Peter, and Philip. These two cities appear to be singled out to denote the whole region in which they lay — a region favored with the Redeemer’s presence, teaching, and works above every other.

**for if the mighty works** — the miracles

**which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon** — ancient and celebrated commercial cities, on the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, lying north of Palestine, and the latter the northernmost. As their wealth and prosperity engendered luxury and its concomitant evils — irreligion and moral degeneracy — their overthrow was repeatedly foretold in ancient prophecy, and once and again fulfilled by victorious enemies. Yet they were rebuilt, and at this time were in a flourishing condition.

**they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes** — remarkable language, showing that they had done less violence to conscience, and so, in God’s sight, were less criminal than the region here spoken of.

**22. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you** — more endurable.

**23. And thou, Capernaum** — (See on ⌌ Matthew 4:13).

**which art exalted unto heaven** — Not even of Chorazin and Bethsaida is this said. For since at Capernaum Jesus had His stated abode during the whole period of His public life which He spent in Galilee, it was *the most favored spot upon earth*, the most exalted in privilege.

**shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom** — destroyed for its pollutions.

**it would have remained until this day** — having done no such violence to conscience, and so incurred speakably less guilt.

**24. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee** — “It has been indeed,” says DR. STANLEY, “more tolerable, in one sense, in the day of its earthly judgment, for the land of Sodom than for Capernaum; for the name, and perhaps even the remains of Sodom are still to be found on the shores of the Dead Sea; while that of Capernaum has, on the Lake of Gennesareth, been utterly lost.” But the judgment of which our Lord here speaks is still future; a judgment not on material cities, but their responsible inhabitants — a judgment final and irretrievable.

**25. At that time Jesus answered and said** — We are not to understand by this, that the previous discourse had been concluded, and that this is a record only of something said about the same period. For the connection is most close, and the word “answered” — which, when there is no one to answer, refers to something just before said, or rising in the mind of the speaker in consequence of something said — confirms this. What Jesus here “answered” evidently was the melancholy results of His ministry, lamented over in the foregoing verses. It is as if He had said, “Yes; but there is a brighter side to the picture; even in those who have rejected the message of eternal life, it is the pride of their own hearts only which has blinded them, and the glory of the truth does but the more appear in their inability to receive it. Nor have all rejected it even here; souls thirsting for salvation have drawn water with joy from the wells of salvation; the weary have found rest; the hungry have been filled with good things, while the rich have been sent empty away.”

**I thank thee** — rather, “I assent to thee.” But this is not strong enough. The idea of “*full*” or “cordial” concurrence is conveyed by the preposition. The thing expressed is adoring acquiescence, holy satisfaction with that law of the divine procedure about to be mentioned. And as, when He afterwards uttered the same words, He “exulted in spirit” (see on ~~24~~ Luke 10:21), probably He did the same now, though not recorded.

**O Father, Lord of heaven and earth** — He so styles His Father here, to signify that from Him of right emanates all such high arrangements.

**because thou hast hid these things** — the knowledge of these saving truths.

**from the wise and prudent** — The former of these terms points to the men who pride themselves upon their speculative or philosophical attainments; the latter to the men of worldly shrewdness — the clever, the sharp-witted, the men of affairs. The distinction is a natural one, and was well understood. (See <sup>4191</sup>1 Corinthians 1:19, etc.). But why had the Father hid from such the things that belonged to their peace, and why did Jesus so emphatically set His seal to this arrangement? Because it is not for the offending and revolted to speak or to speculate, but to listen to Him from whom we have broken loose, that we may learn whether there be any recovery for us at all; and if there be, on what principles — of what nature — to what ends. To bring our own “wisdom and prudence” to such questions is impertinent and presumptuous; and if the truth regarding them, or the glory of it, be “hid” from us, it is but a fitting retribution, to which all the right-minded will set their seal along with Jesus.

**hast revealed them unto babes** — to babe-like men; men of unassuming docility, men who, conscious that they know nothing, and have no right to sit in judgment on the things that belong to their peace, determine simply to “hear what God the Lord will speak.” Such are well called “babes.” (See <sup>4183</sup>Hebrews 5:13 <sup>4131</sup>1 Corinthians 13:11:14:20, etc.).

**26. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good** — the emphatic and chosen term for expressing any object of divine complacency; whether Christ Himself (see on <sup>4187</sup>Matthew 3:17), or God’s gracious eternal arrangements (see on <sup>4183</sup>Philippians 2:13).

**in thy sight** — This is just a sublime echo of the foregoing words; as if Jesus, when He uttered them, had paused to reflect on it, and as if the glory of it — not so much in the light of its own reasonableness as of God’s absolute will that so it should be — had filled His soul.

**27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father** — He does not say, They are *revealed* — as to one who knew them not, and was an entire stranger to them save as they were discovered to Him — but, They are “delivered over,” or “committed,” to Me of My Father; meaning the whole administration of the kingdom of grace. So in <sup>4185</sup>John 3:35, “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” (see on <sup>4185</sup>John 3:35). But though the “all things” in both these passages refer properly to the kingdom of grace, they of course include all things necessary to the full

execution of that trust — that is, *unlimited* power. (Song of Solomon  
~~188~~Matthew 28:18 ~~870~~John 17:2 ~~402~~Ephesians 1:22).

**and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will — willeth**

**to reveal him** — What a saying is this, that “the Father and the Son are mutually and exclusively known to each other!” A higher claim to equality with the Father cannot be conceived. Either, then, we have here one of the revolting assumptions ever uttered, or the proper divinity of Christ should to Christians be beyond dispute. “But, alas for me!” may some burdened soul, sighing for relief, here exclaim. If it be thus with us, what can any poor creature do but lie down in passive despair, unless he could dare to hope that *he* may be one of the favored class “to whom the Son is willing to reveal the Father.” But nay. This testimony to the sovereignty of that gracious “will,” on which alone men’s salvation depends, is designed but to reveal the source and enhance the glory of it when once imparted — not to paralyze or shut the soul up in despair. Hear, accordingly, what follows:

**28. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest** — Incomparable, ravishing sounds these — if ever such were heard in this weary, groaning world! What gentleness, what sweetness is there in the very style of the invitation — “Hither to Me”; and in the words, “All ye that toil and are burdened,” the universal wretchedness of man is depicted, on both its sides — the *active* and the *passive* forms of it.

**29. Take my yoke upon you** — the yoke of subjection to Jesus.

**and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls** — As Christ’s willingness to empty Himself to the uttermost of His Father’s requirements was the spring of ineffable repose to His own Spirit, so in the same track does He invite all to follow Him, with the assurance of the same experience.

**30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light** — Matchless paradox, even among the paradoxically couched maxims in which our Lord delights! That rest which the soul experiences when once safe under Christ’s wing makes all yokes easy, all burdens light.



# CHAPTER 12

## ⌌ MATTHEW 12:1-8.

### PLUCKING CORN EARS ON THE SABBATH DAY.

(⌌ MARK 2:23-28 ⌌ LUKE 6:1-5).

The season of the year when this occurred is determined by the event itself. Ripe corn ears are found in the fields only just before harvest. The barley harvest seems clearly intended here, at the close of our March and beginning of our April. It coincided with the Passover season, as the wheat harvest with Pentecost. But in Luke (⌌ LUKE 6:1) we have a still more definite note of time, if we could be certain of the meaning of the peculiar term which he employs to express it “It came to pass (he says) on the sabbath, which was the *first-second*,” for that is the proper rendering of the word, and not “the second sabbath after the first,” as in our version. Of the various conjectures what this may mean, that of SCALIGER is the most approved, and, as we think, the freest from difficulty, namely, the first sabbath after the second day of the Passover; that is, the first of the seven sabbaths which were to be reckoned from the second day of the Passover, which was itself a sabbath, until the next feast, the feast of Pentecost (⌌ LEVITICUS 23:15,16 ⌌ DEUTERONOMY 16:9,10) In this case, the day meant by the Evangelist is the first of those seven sabbaths intervening between Passover and Pentecost. And if we are right in regarding the “feast” mentioned in ⌌ JOHN 5:1 as a *Passover*, and consequently the second during our Lord’s public ministry (see on ⌌ JOHN 5:1), this plucking of the ears of corn must have occurred immediately after the scene and the discourse recorded in ⌌ JOHN 5:19-47, which, doubtless, would induce our Lord to hasten His departure for the north, to avoid the wrath of the Pharisees, which He had kindled at Jerusalem. Here, accordingly, we find Him in the fields — on His way probably to Galilee.

**1. At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn — “the cornfields”** (⌌ MARK 2:23 ⌌ LUKE 6:1).

**and his disciples were an hungered** — not as one may be before his regular meals; but evidently from shortness of provisions: for Jesus defends their plucking the corn-ears and eating them on the plea of *necessity*.

**and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat** — “rubbing them in their hands” (<sup><4141></sup>Luke 6:1).

**2. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day** — The act itself was expressly permitted (<sup><4023></sup>Deuteronomy 23:25). But as being “servile work,” which was prohibited on the sabbath day, it was regarded as sinful.

**3. But he said unto them, Have ye not read** — or, as Mark (<sup><4025></sup>Mark 2:25) has it, “Have ye never read.”

**what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him** — (<sup><4021></sup>1 Samuel 21:1-6)

**4. How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?** — No example could be more apposite than this. The man after God’s own heart, of whom the Jews ever boasted, when suffering in God’s cause and straitened for provisions, asked and obtained from the high priest what, according to the law, it was illegal for anyone save the priests to touch. Mark (<sup><4026></sup>Mark 2:26) says this occurred “in the days of Abiathar the high priest.” But this means not during his high priesthood — for it was under that of his father Ahimelech — but simply, in his time. Ahimelech was soon succeeded by Abiathar, whose connection with David, and prominence during his reign, may account for his name, rather than his father’s, being here introduced. Yet there is not a little confusion in what is said of these priests in different parts of the Old Testament. Thus he is called both the son of the father of Ahimelech (<sup><4027></sup>1 Samuel 22:20 <sup><4087></sup>2 Samuel 8:17); and Ahimelech is called Ahiah (<sup><4043></sup>1 Samuel 14:3), and Abimelech (<sup><43816></sup>1 Chronicles 18:16).

**5. Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath** — by doing “servile work.”

**and are blameless?** — The double offerings required on the sabbath day (<sup><4089></sup>Numbers 28:9) could not be presented, and the new-baked showbread (<sup><4045></sup>Leviticus 24:5 <sup><4392></sup>1 Chronicles 9:32) could not be prepared and presented every sabbath morning, without a good deal of servile work on the part of the priests; not to speak of circumcision, which, when the child’s eighth day happened to fall on a sabbath, had to be performed by the priests on that day. (See on <sup><4372></sup>John 7:22,23).

**6. But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple** — or rather, according to the reading which is best supported, “something

greater.” The argument stands thus: “The ordinary rules for the observance of the sabbath give way before the requirements of the temple; but there are rights here before which the temple itself must give way.” Thus indirectly, but not the less decidedly, does our Lord put in His own claims to consideration in this question — claims to be presently put in even more nakedly.

**7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice** — (<sup><306></sup>Hosea 6:6 <sup><306></sup>Micah 6:6-8, etc.). See on <sup><193></sup>Matthew 9:13.

**ye would not have condemned the guiltless** — that is, Had ye understood the great principle of all religion, which the Scripture everywhere recognizes — that ceremonial observances must give way before moral duties, and particularly the necessities of nature — ye would have refrained from these captious complaints against men who in this matter are blameless. But our Lord added a specific application of this great principle to the law of the sabbath, preserved only in Mark: “And he said unto them, the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (<sup><127></sup>Mark 2:27). A glorious and far-reaching maxim, alike for the permanent establishment of the sabbath and the true freedom of its observance.

**8. For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day** — In what sense now is the Son of man Lord of the sabbath day? Not surely to abolish it — that surely were a strange lordship, especially just after saying that it was made or instituted for MAN — but to *own* it, to *interpret* it, to *preside over* it, and to *ennoble* it, by merging it in the “Lord’s Day” (<sup><610></sup>Revelation 1:10), breathing into it an air of liberty and love necessarily unknown before, and thus making it the nearest resemblance to the eternal sabbatism.

## <sup><129></sup>MATTHEW 12:9-21.

### THE HEALING OF A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH DAY AND RETIREMENT OF JESUS TO AVOID DANGER.

(<sup><401></sup>MARK 3:1-12 <sup><406></sup>LUKE 6:6-11).

*Healing of a Withered Hand* (<sup><129></sup>Matthew 12:9-14).

**9. And when he was departed thence** — but “on another sabbath” (<sup><406></sup>Luke 6:6).

**he went into their synagogue** — and taught,” He had now, no doubt, arrived in Galilee; but this, it would appear, did not occur at Capernaum, for

after it was over, He “withdrew Himself,” it is said “*to the sea*” (~~AKR7~~ Mark 3:7), whereas Capernaum was at the sea.

**And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered** — disabled by paralysis (as in ~~AKR5~~ 1 Kings 13:4). It was his right hand, as Luke (~~AKR6~~ Luke 6:6) graphically notes. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him — Mark and Luke (~~AKR6~~ Mark 3:2 ~~AKR7~~ Luke 6:7) say they “watched Him whether He would heal on the sabbath day.” They were now come to the length of dogging His steps, to collect materials for a charge of impiety against Him. It is probable that it was to their *thoughts* rather than their words that Jesus addressed Himself in what follows.

**11. And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?**

**12. How much then is a man better than a sheep?** — Resistless appeal! “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast” (~~AKR6~~ Proverbs 12:10), and would instinctively rescue it from death or suffering on the sabbath day; how much more his nobler fellow man! But the reasoning, as given in the other two Gospels, is singularly striking: “But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it?” (~~AKR6~~ Luke 6:8,9), or as in Mark (~~AKR6~~ Mark 3:4), “to kill?” He thus shuts them. up to this startling alternative: “Not to do good, when it is in the power of our hand to do it, is to do evil; not to save life, when we can, is to kill” — and must the letter of the sabbath rest be kept at this expense? This unexpected thrust shut their mouths. By this great ethical principle our Lord, we see, held Himself bound, as man. But here we must turn to Mark, whose graphic details make the second Gospel so exceedingly precious. “When He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man” (~~AKR6~~ Mark 3:5). This is one of the very few passages in the Gospel history which reveal our Lord’s *feelings*. How holy this anger was appears from the “grief” which mingled with it at “the hardness of their hearts.”

**13. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth** — the power to obey going forth with the word of command.

**and it was restored whole, like as the other** — The poor man, having faith in this wonderful Healer — which no doubt the whole scene would

singularly help to strengthen — disregarded the proud and venomous Pharisees, and thus gloriously put them to shame.

**14. Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him** — This is the first explicit mention of their murderous designs against our Lord. Luke (<sup><4081></sup>Luke 6:11) says, they were filled with madness, and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.” But their doubt was not, *whether* to get rid of Him, but *how* to compass it. Mark (<sup><4086></sup>Mark 3:6), as usual, is more definite: “The Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.” These Herodians were supporters of Herod’s dynasty, created by Caesar — a political rather than religious party. The Pharisees regarded them as untrue to their religion and country. But here we see them combining together against Christ as a common enemy. So on a subsequent occasion (<sup><4025></sup>Matthew 22:15,16).

*Jesus Retires to Avoid Danger* (<sup><4025></sup>Matthew 12:15-21).

**15. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence** — whither, our Evangelist says not; but Mark (<sup><4087></sup>Mark 3:7) says “it was *to the sea*” — to some distance, no doubt, from the scene of the miracle, the madness, and the plotting just recorded.

**and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all** — Mark gives the following interesting details: “A great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judea and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. And He spake to His disciples, that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known” (<sup><4087></sup>Mark 3:7-12). How glorious this extorted homage to the Son of God! But as this was not the time, so neither were they the fitting preachers, as BENGEL says. (See on <sup><4025></sup>Mark 1:25, and compare <sup><3029></sup>James 2:19). Coming back now to our Evangelist: after saying, “He healed them all,” he continues:

**16. And charged them** — the healed.

**that they should not make him known** — (See on <sup><4088></sup>Matthew 8:4).

**17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying** — (<sup><3015></sup>Isaiah 42:1).

**18. Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.**

**19. He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.**

**20. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory** — “unto truth,” says the *Hebrew* original, and the *Septuagint* also. But our Evangelist merely seizes the spirit, instead of the letter of the prediction in this point. The grandeur and completeness of Messiah’s victories would prove, it seems, not more wonderful than the unobtrusive noiselessness with which they were to be achieved. And whereas one rough touch will break a bruised reed, and quench the flickering, smoking flax, His it should be, with matchless tenderness, love, and skill, to lift up the meek, to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees, to comfort all that mourn, to say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.

**21. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust** — Part of His present audience were Gentiles — from Tyre and Sidon — first-fruits of the great Gentile harvest contemplated in the prophecy.

## ◀122▶ **MATTHEW 12:22-37.**

### **A BLIND AND DUMB DEMONIAIC HEALED AND REPLY TO THE MALIGNANT EXPLANATION PUT UPON IT.**

(◀118▶ **MARK 3:20-30** ▶114▶ **LUKE 11:14-23**).

The precise time of this section is uncertain. Judging from the statements with which Mark introduces it, we should conclude that it was when our Lord’s popularity was approaching its zenith, and so before the feeding of the five thousand. But, on the other hand, the advanced state of the charges brought against our Lord, and the plainness of His warnings and denunciations in reply, seem to favor the later period at which Luke introduces it. “And the multitude,” says Mark (◀118▶ Mark 3:20,21), “cometh together again,” referring back to the immense gathering which Mark had before recorded (◀117▶ Mark 2:2) — “so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when His friends” — or rather, “relatives,” as appears from ▶123▶ Matthew 12:31, and see on ▶124▶ Matthew 12:46 — “heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him; for they said, He is beside Himself.” Compare ▶113▶ 2 Corinthians 5:13, “For whether we be beside ourselves, it is *to God*.”

**22. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil** — “a demonized person.”

**blind and dumb, and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and the dumb both spake and saw.**

**23. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?** — The form of the interrogative requires this to be rendered, “Is this the Son of David?” And as questions put in this form (in *Greek*) suppose doubt, and expect rather a negative answer, the meaning is, “Can it possibly be?” — the people thus indicating their secret impression that this must be He; yet saving themselves from the wrath of the ecclesiastics, which a direct assertion of it would have brought upon them. (On a similar question, see on <sup><4023></sup>John 4:29; and on the phrase, “Son of David,” see on <sup><4027></sup>Matthew 9:27).

**24. But when the Pharisees heard it** — Mark (<sup><4022></sup>Mark 3:22) says, “the scribes which came down from Jerusalem”; so that this had been a hostile party of the ecclesiastics, who had come all the way from Jerusalem to collect materials for a charge against Him. (See on <sup><4024></sup>Matthew 12:14).

**they said, This fellow** — an expression of contempt.

**doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub** — rather, “Beelzebub” (see on <sup><4025></sup>Matthew 10:25).

**the prince of the devils** — Two things are here implied — first, that the bitterest enemies of our Lord were unable to deny the reality of His miracles; and next, that they believed in an *organized internal kingdom of evil*, under one chief. This belief would be of small consequence, had not our Lord set His seal to it; but this He immediately does. Stung by the unsophisticated testimony of “all the people,” they had no way of holding out against His claims but the desperate shift of ascribing His miracles to Satan.

**25. And Jesus knew their thoughts** — “called them” (<sup><4023></sup>Mark 3:23).

**and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand** — “house,” that is, “household”

**26. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?** — The argument here is irresistible. “No organized society can stand — whether kingdom, city, or household — when turned against itself; such intestine war is suicidal: But the works I do



are destructive of Satan's kingdom: That I should be in league with Satan, therefore, is incredible and absurd."

**27. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children** — "your sons," meaning here the "disciples" or pupils of the Pharisees, who were so termed after the familiar language of the Old Testament in speaking of the sons of the prophets (<sup><1185></sup>1 Kings 20:35 <sup><1186></sup>2 Kings 2:3, etc.). Our Lord here seems to admit that such works were wrought by them; in which case the Pharisees stood self-condemned, as expressed in Luke (<sup><1187></sup>Luke 11:19), "Therefore shall they be your judges."

**28. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God** — In Luke (<sup><1188></sup>Luke 11:20) it is, "with (or 'by') the finger of God." This latter expression is just a figurative way of representing the *power* of God, while the former tells us the *living Personal Agent* was made use of by the Lord Jesus in every exercise of that power.

**then** — "no doubt" (<sup><1189></sup>Luke 11:20).

**the kingdom of God is come unto you** — rather "upon you," as the same expression is rendered in Luke (<sup><1190></sup>Luke 11:20): — that is, "If this expulsion of Satan is, and can be, by no other than the Spirit of God, then is his Destroyer already in the midst of you, and that kingdom which is destined to supplant his is already rising on its ruins."

**29. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house** — or rather, "the strong man's house."

**and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.**

**30. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad** — On this important parable, in connection with the corresponding one (<sup><1191></sup>Matthew 12:43-45), see on <sup><1192></sup>Luke 11:21-26.

**31. Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men** — The word "blasphemy" properly signifies "detraction," or "slander." In the New Testament it is applied, as it is here, to vituperation directed against God as well as against men; and in this sense it is to be understood as an aggravated form of sin. Well, says our Lord, all sin — whether in its ordinary or its more aggravated forms — shall find forgiveness with God. Accordingly, in Mark (<sup><1193></sup>Mark 3:28) the language is still stronger: "All sin shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme." There is no sin whatever, it seems, of which it may be said. "That is not a pardonable sin."



This glorious assurance is not to be limited by what follows; but, on the contrary, what follows is to be explained by this.

**but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.**

**32. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come** — In Mark the language is awfully strong, “hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” — or rather, according to what appears to be the preferable though very unusual reading, “in danger of eternal guilt” — a guilt which he will underlie for ever. Mark has the important addition (<sup><4183></sup>Mark 3:30), “Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.” (See on <sup><4125></sup>Matthew 10:25). What, then, is this sin against the Holy Ghost — the unpardonable sin? One thing is clear: Its unpardonableness cannot arise from anything in the nature of sin itself; for that would be a naked contradiction to the emphatic declaration of <sup><4128></sup>Matthew 12:31, that all manner of sin is pardonable. And what is this but the fundamental truth of the Gospel? (See <sup><4138></sup>Acts 13:38,39 <sup><4122></sup>Romans 3:22,24 <sup><4107></sup>1 John 1:7, etc.). Then, again when it is said (<sup><4129></sup>Matthew 12:32), that to speak against or blaspheme the Son of man is pardonable, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not pardonable, it is not to be conceived that this arises from any greater sanctity in the one blessed Person than the other. These remarks so narrow the question that the true sense of our Lord’s words seem to disclose themselves at once. It is a contrast between slandering “the Son of man” *in His veiled condition and unfinished work* — which might be done “ignorantly, in unbelief” (<sup><4113></sup>1 Timothy 1:13), and slandering the same blessed Person after the blaze of glory which *the Holy Ghost* was soon to throw around His claims, and in the full knowledge of all that. This would be to slander Him with eyes open, or to do it “presumptuously.” To blaspheme Christ in the former condition — when even the apostles stumbled at many things — left them still open to conviction on fuller light: but to blaspheme Him in the latter condition would be to hate the light the clearer it became, and resolutely to shut it out; which, of course, precludes salvation. (See on <sup><5809></sup>Hebrews 10:26-29). The Pharisees had not as yet done this; but in charging Jesus with being in league with hell they were displaying beforehand a malignant determination to shut their eyes to all evidence, and so, *bordering upon*, and *in spirit* committing, the unpardonable sin.

**33. Either make the tree good, etc.**

**34. O generation of vipers** — (See on <sup><4107></sup>Matthew 3:7).

**how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh** — a principle obvious enough, yet of deepest significance and vast application. In <sup><0165></sup>Luke 6:45 we find it uttered as part of the discourse delivered after the choice of the apostles.

**35. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things** — or, “putteth forth good things”:

**and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things** — or “putteth forth evil things.” The word “putteth” indicates the spontaneity of what comes from the heart; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh. We have here a new application of a former saying (see on <sup><0176></sup>Matthew 7:16-20). Here, the sentiment is, “There are but two kingdoms, interests, parties — with the proper workings of each: If I promote the one, I cannot belong to the other; but they that set themselves in wilful opposition to the kingdom of light openly proclaim to what other kingdom they belong. As for you, in what ye have now uttered, ye have but revealed the venomous malignity of your hearts.”

**36. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment** — They might say, “It was nothing: we meant no evil; we merely threw out a supposition, as one way of accounting for the miracle we witnessed; if it will not stand, let it go; why make so much of it, and bear down with such severity for it?” Jesus replies, “It was not nothing, and at the great day will not be treated as nothing: Words, as the index of the heart, however idle they may seem, will be taken account of, whether good or bad, in estimating character in the day of judgment.”

## <sup><0128></sup>MATTHEW 12:38-50.

**A SIGN DEMANDED AND THE REPLY — HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN SEEK TO SPEAK WITH HIM, AND THE ANSWER.** (<sup><0116></sup>LUKE 11:16,24-36 <sup><0131></sup>MARK 3:31-35 <sup><0189></sup>LUKE 8:19-21).

*A Sign Demanded, and the Reply* (<sup><0128></sup>Matthew 12:38-45).

The occasion of this section was manifestly the same with that of the preceding.

**38. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master** — “Teacher,” equivalent to “Rabbi.”

**we would see a sign from thee** — “a sign from heaven” (<sup><2116></sup>Luke 11:16); something of an immediate and decisive nature, to show, not that His miracles were *real* — that they seemed willing to concede — but that they were from above, not from beneath. These were not the same class with those who charged Him with being in league with Satan (as we see from <sup><2115></sup>Luke 11:15,16); but as the spirit of both was similar, the tone of severe rebuke is continued.

**39. But he answered and said unto them** — “when the people were gathered thick together” (<sup><2129></sup>Luke 11:29).

**An evil and adulterous generation** — This latter expression is best explained by <sup><2430></sup>Jeremiah 3:20, “Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.” For this was the relationship in which He stood to the covenant-people — “I am married unto you” (<sup><2434></sup>Jeremiah 3:14).

**seeketh after a sign** — In the eye of Jesus this class were but the spokesmen of their generation, the exponents of the reigning spirit of unbelief.

**and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.**

**40. For as Jonas was** — “a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation” (<sup><2130></sup>Luke 11:30). For as Jonas was

**three days and three nights in the whale’s belly** — (<sup><3017></sup>Jonah 1:17).

**so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth** — This was the second public announcement of His resurrection three days after His death. (For the first, see <sup><4129></sup>John 2:19). Jonah’s case was analogous to this. as being a signal judgment of God; reversed in three days; and followed by a glorious mission to the Gentiles. The expression “in the heart of the earth,” suggested by the expression of Jonah with respect to the sea (<sup><3018></sup>Jonah 2:3, in the *Septuagint*), means simply the grave, but this considered as the most emphatic expression of real and total entombment. The period during which He was to lie in the grave is here expressed in round numbers, according to the Jewish way of speaking, which was to regard any part of a day, however small, included within a period of days, as a full day. (See <sup><4012></sup>1 Samuel 30:12,13 <sup><4706></sup>Esther 4:16 5:1 <sup><4128></sup>Matthew 27:63,64, etc.).

**41. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation,** etc. — The Ninevites, though heathens, repented at a man’s preaching;

while they, God's covenant-people, repented not at the preaching of the Son of God — whose supreme dignity is rather implied here than expressed.

**42. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation,** etc. — The queen of Sheba (a tract in Arabia, near the shores of the Red Sea) came from a remote country, “south” of Judea, to hear the wisdom of a mere man, though a gifted one, and was transported with wonder at what she saw and heard (<sup><1100></sup>1 Kings 10:1-9). They, when a Greater than Solomon had come *to them*, despised and rejected, slighted and slandered Him.

**43-45. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,** etc. — On this important parable, in connection with the corresponding one (<sup><1029></sup>Matthew 12:29) see on <sup><1012></sup>Luke 11:21-26.

A charming little incident, given only in <sup><1017></sup>Luke 11:27,28, seems to have its proper place here.

<sup><1017></sup>**LUKE 11:27:**

*And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company* — out of the crowd.

*lifted up her voice and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked* — With true womanly feeling she envies the mother of such a wonderful Teacher. And a higher and better than she had said as much before her (see on <sup><1008></sup>Luke 1:28). How does our Lord, then, treat it? He is far from condemning it. He only holds up as “blessed rather” another class:

<sup><1018></sup>**LUKE 11:28:**

*But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it* — in other words, the humblest real saint of God. How utterly alien is this sentiment from the teaching of the Church of Rome, which would doubtless excommunicate any one of its members that dared to talk in such a strain!

*His Mother and Brethren Seek to Speak with Hint and the Answer*  
(<sup><1016></sup>Matthew 12:46-50).

**46. While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren** — (See on <sup><1035></sup>Matthew 13:55,56).

**stood without, desiring to speak with him** — “and could not come at Him for the press” (<sup><1009></sup>Luke 8:19). For what purpose these came, we learn

from ~~4089~~ Mark 3:20,21. In His zeal and ardor He seemed indifferent both to food and repose, and “they went to lay hold of Him” as one “beside Himself.” Mark (~~4089~~ Mark 3:32) says graphically, “And the multitude sat about Him” — or “around Him.”

**47. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee,** etc. — Absorbed in the awful warnings He was pouring forth. He felt this to be an unseasonable interruption, fitted to dissipate the impression made upon the large audience — such an interruption as duty to the nearest relatives did not require Him to give way to. But instead of a direct rebuke, He seizes on the incident to convey a sublime lesson, expressed in a style of inimitable condescension.

**49. And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples** — How graphic is this! It is the language evidently of an eye-witness.

**and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!**

**50. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother** — that is, “There stand here the members of a family transcending and surviving this of earth: Filial subjection to the will of My Father in heaven is the indissoluble bond of union between Me and all its members; and whosoever enters this hallowed circle becomes to Me brother, and sister, and mother!”

# CHAPTER 13

## ⌄ MATTHEW 13:1-52.

### JESUS TEACHES BY PARABLES.

(⌄ MARK 4:1-34 ⌄ LUKE 8:4-18 13:18-20).

*Introduction* (⌄ Matthew 13:1-3).

**1. The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.**

**2. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship** — the article in the received text lacks authority

**and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore** — How graphic this picture! — no doubt from the pen of an eye-witness, himself impressed with the scene. It was “the same day” on which the foregoing solemn discourse was delivered, when His kindred thought Him “beside Himself” for His indifference to food and repose — that same day retiring to the seashore of Galilee; and there seating Himself, perhaps for coolness and rest, the crowds again flock around Him, and He is fain to push off from them, in the boat usually kept in readiness for Him; yet only to begin, without waiting to rest, a new course of teaching by parables to the eager multitudes that lined the shore. To the parables of our Lord there is nothing in all language to be compared, for simplicity, grace, fullness, and variety of spiritual teaching. They are adapted to all classes and stages of advancement, being understood by each according to the measure of his spiritual capacity.

**3. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying,** etc. — These parables are SEVEN in number; and it is not a little remarkable that while this is the *sacred number*, the first FOUR of them were spoken to the mixed multitude, while the remaining THREE were spoken to the Twelve in private — these divisions, *four* and *three*, being themselves notable in the symbolical arithmetic of Scripture. Another thing remarkable in the structure of these parables is, that while the first of the Seven — that of the Sower — is of the nature of an Introduction to the whole, the remaining Six consist of *three pairs* — the Second and Seventh, the Third and Fourth, and the Fifth and Sixth, corresponding to each other; each pair setting forth the same general truths, but with a certain diversity of aspect. All this can hardly be accidental.

**First Parable:** THE SOWER (~~403B~~ Matthew 13:3-9,18-23).

This parable may be entitled, THE EFFECT OF THE WORD DEPENDENT ON THE STATE OF THE HEART. For the exposition of this parable, see on ~~400B~~ Mark 4:1-9,14-20.

*Reason for Teaching in Parables* (~~403B~~ Matthew 13:10-17).

**10. And the disciples came, and said unto him** — “they that were with Him, when they were alone” (~~400B~~ Mark 4:10).

**Why speakest thou to them in parables?** — Though before this He had couched some things in the parabolic form, for more vivid illustration, it would appear that He now, for the first time, formally employed this method of teaching.

**11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven** — The word “mysteries” in Scripture is not used in its classical sense — of religious secrets, nor yet of things incomprehensible, or in their own nature difficult to be understood — but in the sense of things of purely divine revelation, and, usually, things darkly announced under the ancient economy, and during all that period darkly understood, but fully published under the Gospel (~~400B~~ 1 Corinthians 2:6-10 ~~400B~~ Ephesians 3:3-6,8,9). “The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” then, mean those glorious Gospel truths which at that time only the more advanced disciples could appreciate, and they but partially.

**but to them it is not given** — (See on ~~402S~~ Matthew 11:25). Parables serve the double purpose of *revealing* and *concealing*; presenting “the mysteries of the kingdom” to those who know and relish them, though in never so small a degree, in a new and attractive light; but to those who are insensible to spiritual things yielding only, as so many tales, some temporary entertainment.

**12. For whosoever hath** — that is, keeps; as a thing which he values.

**to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance** — He will be rewarded by an increase of what he so much prizes.

**but whosoever hath not** — who lets this go or lie unused, as a thing on which he sets no value.

**from him shall be taken away even that he hath** — or as it is in Luke (~~408S~~ Luke 8:18), “what he seemeth to have,” or, thinketh he hath. This is a principle of immense importance, and, like other weighty sayings, appears to have been uttered by our Lord on more than one occasion, and in

different connections. (See on <sup><4819></sup>Matthew 25:9). As a great ethical principle, we see it in operation everywhere, under the general law of *habit*; in virtue of which moral principles become stronger by exercise, while by disuse, or the exercise of their contraries, they wax weaker, and at length expire. The same principle reigns in the intellectual world, and even in the animal — if not in the vegetable also — as the facts of physiology sufficiently prove. Here, however, it is viewed as a divine ordination, as a judicial retribution in continual operation under the divine administration.

**13. Therefore speak I to them in parables** — which our Lord, be it observed, did not begin to do till His miracles were malignantly ascribed to Satan.

**because they seeing, see not** — They “saw,” for the light shone on them as never light shone before; but they “saw not,” for they closed their eyes.

**and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand** — They “heard,” for He taught them who “spake as never man spake”; but they “heard not,” for they took nothing in, apprehending not the soul-penetrating, life-giving words addressed to them. In Mark and Luke (<sup><4042></sup>Mark 4:12 <sup><4042></sup>Luke 8:10), what is here expressed as a human fact is represented as the fulfillment of a divine purpose — “that seeing they may see, and not perceive,” etc. The explanation of this lies in the statement of the foregoing verse — that, by a fixed law of the divine administration, the duty men voluntarily refuse to do, and in point of fact do not do, they at length become morally incapable of doing.

**14. And in them is fulfilled** — rather, “is fulfilling,” or “is receiving its fulfillment.”

**the prophecy of Esaias, which saith** — (<sup><2009></sup>Isaiah 6:9,10 — here quoted according to the *Septuagint*).

**By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand**, etc. — They were thus judicially sealed up under the darkness and obduracy which they deliberately preferred to the light and healing which Jesus brought nigh to them.

**16. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear** — that is, “Happy ye, whose eyes and ears, voluntarily and gladly opened, are drinking in the light divine.”

**17. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired** — rather, “coveted.”



**to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them** — Not only were the disciples blessed above the blinded just spoken of, but favored above the most honored and the best that lived under the old economy, who had but glimpses of the things of the new kingdom, just sufficient to kindle in them desires not to be fulfilled to any in their day. In <sup><A13></sup>Luke 10:23,24, where the same saying is repeated on the return of the Seventy — the words, instead of “many prophets and righteous men,” are “many prophets *and kings*”; for several of the Old Testament saints were kings.

### **Second and Seventh Parables** or *First Pair*:

THE WHEAT AND THE TARES, and THE GOOD AND BAD FISH (<sup><A13></sup>Matthew 13:24-30 36-43 47-50).

The subject of both these parables — which teach the same truth, with a slight diversity of aspect — is: THE MIXED CHARACTER OF THE KINGDOM IN ITS PRESENT STATE, AND THE FINAL ABSOLUTE SEPARATION OF THE TWO CLASSES.

*The Tares and the Wheat* (<sup><A13></sup>Matthew 13:24-30,36-43).

**24, 36-38. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field** — Happily for us, these exquisite parables are, with like charming simplicity and clearness, expounded to us by the Great Preacher Himself. Accordingly, we pass to: <sup><A13></sup>Matthew 13:36-38. See on <sup><A13></sup>Matthew 13:36; <sup><A13></sup>Matthew 13:38

**25, 38, 39. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way** — (See on <sup><A13></sup>Matthew 13:38,39).

**26. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also** — the growth in both cases running parallel, as antagonistic principles are seen to do.

**27. So the servants of the householder came** — that is, Christ’s ministers.

**and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?** — This well expresses the surprise, disappointment, and anxiety of Christ’s faithful servants and people at the discovery of “false brethren” among the members of the Church.

**28. He said unto them, An enemy hath done this** — Kind words these from a good Husbandman, honorably clearing His faithful servants of the wrong done to his field.

**The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?** — Compare with this the question of James and John (<sup><0154></sup>Luke 9:54), “Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume” those Samaritans? In this kind of zeal there is usually a large mixture of carnal heat. (See <sup><0120></sup>James 1:20).

**29. But he said, Nay** — “It will be done in due time, but not now, nor is it your business.”

**lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them** — Nothing could more clearly or forcibly teach the difficulty of distinguishing the two classes, and the high probability that in the attempt to do so these will be confounded.

**30, 39. Let both grow together** — that is, in the visible Church.

**until the harvest** — till the one have ripened for full salvation, the other for destruction. (See on <sup><0139></sup>Matthew 13:39).

**and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers** — (See on <sup><0139></sup>Matthew 13:39).

**Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them** — “in the fire” (<sup><0140></sup>Matthew 13:40).

**but gather the wheat into my barn** — Christ, as the Judge, will separate the two classes (as in <sup><0132></sup>Matthew 25:32). It will be observed that the tares are burned *before* the wheat is housed; in the exposition of the parable (<sup><0134></sup>Matthew 13:41,43) the same order is observed: and the same in <sup><0136></sup>Matthew 25:46 — as if, in some literal sense, “with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked” (<sup><0108></sup>Psalms 91:8).

### **Third and Fourth Parables** or *Second Pair*:

THE MUSTARD SEED and THE LEAVEN (<sup><0131></sup>Matthew 13:31-33).

The subject of both these parables, as of the first pair, is the same, but under a slight diversity of aspect, namely —

## **THE GROWTH OF THE KINGDOM FROM THE SMALLEST BEGINNINGS TO ULTIMATE UNIVERSALITY.**

*The Mustard Seed* (<sup><0131></sup>Matthew 13:31,32).

**31. Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field;**

**32. Which indeed is the least of all seeds** — not absolutely, but popularly and proverbially, as in <sup><2709></sup>Luke 17:6, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,” that is, “never so little faith.”

**but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs** — not absolutely, but in relation to the small size of the seed, and in warm latitudes proverbially great.

**and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof** — This is added, no doubt, to express the *amplitude* of the tree. But as this seed has a hot, fiery vigor, gives out its best virtues when bruised, and is grateful to the taste of birds, which are accordingly attracted to its branches both for shelter and food, is it straining the parable, asks TRENCH, to suppose that, besides the wonderful *growth* of His kingdom, our Lord selected this seed to illustrate further the *shelter, repose* and *blessedness* it is destined to afford to the nations of the world?

*The Leaven* (<sup><0133></sup>Matthew 13:33).

**33. Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened** — This parable, while it teaches the same general truth as the foregoing one, holds forth, perhaps, rather the *inward* growth of the kingdom, while “the Mustard Seed” seems to point chiefly to the *outward*. It being a woman’s work to knead, it seems a refinement to say that “the woman” here represents *the Church*, as the instrument of depositing the leaven. Nor does it yield much satisfaction to understand the “three measures of meal” of that threefold division of our nature into “spirit, soul, and body,” alluded to in <sup><3163></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:23, or of the threefold partition of the world among the three sons of Noah (<sup><0132></sup>Genesis 10:32), as some do. It yields more real satisfaction to see in this brief parable just the *all-penetrating* and *assimilating* quality of the Gospel, by virtue of which it will yet mould all institutions and tribes of men. and exhibit over the whole earth one “kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.”

**34. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them** — that is, on this occasion; refraining not only from all naked discourse, but even from all interpretation of these parables to the mixed multitude.

**35. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying** — (<sup>982</sup>Psalm 78:2, nearly as in the *Septuagint*).

**I will open my mouth in parables**, etc. — Though the Psalm seems to contain only a summary of Israelitish *history*, the Psalmist himself calls it “a parable,” and “dark sayings from of old” — as containing, *underneath the history*, truths for all time, not fully brought to light till the Gospel day.

**36-38. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field**, etc. — In the parable of the Sower, “the seed is the word of God” (<sup>401</sup>Luke 8:11). But here that word has been received into the heart, and has converted him that received it into a new creature, a “child of the kingdom,” according to that saying of James (<sup>308</sup>James 1:18), “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” It is worthy of notice that this vast field of the world is here said to be *Christ’s own* — “His field,” says the parable. (See <sup>408</sup>Psalm 2:8).

**38. The tares are the children of the wicked one** — As this sowing could only be “while men slept,” no blame seems intended, and certainly none is charged upon “the servants”; it is probably just the dress of the parable.

**39. The enemy that sowed them is the devil** — emphatically “His enemy” (<sup>4025</sup>Matthew 13:25). (See <sup>4085</sup>Genesis 3:15 <sup>4086</sup>1 John 3:8). By “tares” is meant, not what in our husbandry is so called, but some noxious plant, probably *darnel*. “The tares are the children of the wicked one”; and by their being sown “among the wheat” is meant their being deposited within the territory of the visible Church. As they resemble the children of the kingdom, so they are produced, it seems, by a similar process of “sowing” — the seeds of evil being scattered and lodging in the soil of those hearts upon which falls the seed of the world. The enemy, after sowing his “tares,” “went his way” — his dark work soon done, but taking time to develop its true character.

**The harvest is the end of the world** — the period of Christ’s second coming, and of the judicial separation of the righteous and the wicked. Till then, no attempt is to be made to effect such separation. But to stretch this so far as to justify allowing openly scandalous persons to remain in the communion of the Church, is to wrest the teaching of this parable to other than its proper design, and go in the teeth of apostolic injunctions (1 Corinthians 5).

**And the reapers are the angels** — But whose angels are they? “The Son of man shall send forth His angels” (<sup><0134></sup>Matthew 13:41). Compare <sup><0122></sup>1 Peter 3:22, “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.”

**41. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom** — to which they never really belonged. They usurped their place and name and outward privileges; but “the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners [abide] in the congregation of the righteous” (<sup><0105></sup>Psalm 1:5).

**all things that offend** — all those who have proved a stumbling-block to others

**and them which do iniquity** — The former class, as the worst, are mentioned first.

**42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire** — rather, “the furnace of fire”:

**there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth** — What terrific strength of language — the “casting” or “flinging” expressive of indignation, abhorrence, contempt (compare <sup><0107></sup>Psalm 9:17 <sup><0112></sup>Daniel 12:2): “the furnace of fire” denoting the fierceness of the torment: the “wailing” signifying the anguish this causes; while the “gnashing of teeth” is a graphic way of expressing the despair in which its remedilessness issues (see <sup><0102></sup>Matthew 8:12)!

**43. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father** — as if they had been under a cloud during the present association with ungodly pretenders to their character, and claimants of their privileges, and obstructors of their course.

**Who hath ears to hear, let him hear** — (See <sup><0103></sup>Mark 4:9).

**Fifth and Sixth Parables** or *Third Pair*: THE HIDDEN TREASURE and THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (<sup><0134></sup>Matthew 13:44-46).

The subject of this last pair, as of the two former, is the same, but also under a slight diversity of aspect: namely —

THE PRICELESS VALUE OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM. And while the one parable represents the Kingdom as “found without seeking,” the other holds forth the Kingdom as “sought and found.”

*The Hidden Treasure* (<sup><0134></sup>Matthew 13:44).

**44. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field** — no uncommon thing in unsettled and half-civilized countries, even now as well as in ancient times, when there was no other way of securing it from the rapacity of neighbors or marauders. (~~2408~~Jeremiah 41:8 ~~1872~~Job 3:21 ~~2108~~Proverbs 2:4).

**the which when a man hath found** — that is, unexpectedly found.

**he hideth, and for joy thereof** — on perceiving what a treasure he had lighted on, surpassing the worth of all he possessed.

**goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field** — in which case, by Jewish law, the treasure would become his own.

*The Pearl of Great Price* (~~4035~~Matthew 13:45,46).

**45. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls.**

**46. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it** — The one pearl of great price, instead of being found by accident, as in the former case, is found by one whose *business* it is to seek for such, and who finds it just in the way of *searching* for such treasures. But in both cases the surpassing value of the treasure is alike recognized, and in both all is parted with for it.

*The Good and Bad Fish* (~~4037~~Matthew 13:47-50).

The object of this brief parable is the same as that of the Tares and Wheat. But as its details are fewer, so its teaching is less rich and varied.

**47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind** — The word here rendered “net” signifies a large *drag-net*, which draws everything after it, suffering nothing to escape, as distinguished from a *casting-net* (~~4016~~Mark 1:16,18). The far-reaching efficacy of the Gospel is thus denoted. This Gospel net “gathered of every kind,” meaning every variety of character.

**48. Which, when it was full, they drew to shore** — for the separation will not be made till the number of the elect is accomplished.

**and sat down** — expressing the deliberateness with which the judicial separation will at length be made.

**and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away** — literally, “the rotten,” but here meaning, “the foul” or “worthless” fish: corresponding to the “tares” of the other parable.

**49. So shall it be at the end of the world**, etc. — (See on <sup>4132</sup>Matthew 13:42). We have said that each of these two parables holds forth the same truth under a slight diversity of aspect. What is that diversity? First, the *bad*, in the former parable, are represented as vile seed sown among the wheat by the enemy of souls; in the latter, as foul fish drawn forth out of the great sea of human beings by the Gospel net itself. Both are important truths — that the Gospel draws within its pale, and into the communion of the visible Church, multitudes who are Christians only in name; and that the injury thus done to the Church on earth is to be traced to the wicked one. But further, while the former parable gives chief prominence to the present mixture of good and bad, in the latter, the prominence is given to the future separation of the two classes.

**51. Jesus saith unto them** — that is, to the Twelve. He had spoken the first *four* in the hearing of the mixed multitude: the last *three* He reserved till, on the dismissal of the mixed audience, He and the Twelve were alone (<sup>4133</sup>Matthew 13:36, etc.).

**Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.**

**52. Then said he unto them, Therefore** — or as we should say, “Well, then.”

**every scribe** — or Christian teacher: here so called from that well-known class among the Jews. (See <sup>4134</sup>Matthew 23:34).

**which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven** — himself taught in the mysteries of the Gospel which he has to teach to others.

**is like unto a man that is an householder which bringeth forth** — “turneth” or “dealeth out.”

**out of his treasure** — his store of divine truth.

**things new and old** — old truths in ever new forms, aspects, applications, and with ever new illustrations.

## <sup>4135</sup>MATTHEW 13:53-58.

### HOW JESUS WAS REGARDED BY HIS RELATIVES.

(<sup>4101</sup>MARK 6:1-6 <sup>4096</sup>LUKE 4:16-30).

**53. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.**

**54. And when he was come into his own country** — that is, Nazareth; as is plain from <sup><4041></sup>Mark 6:1. See on <sup><4043></sup>John 4:43, where also the same phrase occurs. This, according to the majority of Harmonists, was the *second* of *two* visits which our Lord paid to Nazareth during His public ministry; but in our view it was His *first* and *only* visit to it. See on <sup><4043></sup>Matthew 4:13; and for the reasons, see <sup><4046></sup>Luke 4:16-30.

**Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?** — “these miracles.” These surely are not like the questions of people who had asked precisely the same questions before, who from astonishment had proceeded to rage, and in their rage had hurried Him out of the synagogue, and away to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, to thrust Him down headlong, and who had been foiled even in that object by His passing through the midst of them, and going His way. But see on <sup><4046></sup>Luke 4:16, etc.

**55. Is not this the carpenter’s son?** — In Mark (<sup><4048></sup>Mark 6:3) the question is, “Is not this the carpenter?” In all likelihood, our Lord, during His stay under the roof of His earthly parents, wrought along with His legal father.

**is not his mother called Mary?** — “Do we not know all about His parentage? Has He not grown up in the midst of us? Are not all His relatives our own townsmen? Whence, then, such wisdom and such miracles?” These particulars of our Lord’s *human* history constitute the most valuable testimony, first, to His true and real humanity — for they prove that during all His first thirty years His townsmen had discovered nothing about Him different from other men; secondly, to the divine character of His mission — for these Nazarenes proclaim both the unparalleled character of His teaching and the reality and glory of His miracles, as transcending human ability; and thirdly, to His wonderful humility and self-denial — in that when He was such as they now saw Him to be, He yet never gave any indications of it for thirty years, because “His hour was not yet come.”

**And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?**

**56. And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? An exceedingly difficult question here arises** — What were these “brethren” and “sisters” to Jesus? Were they, *First*, His full brothers and sisters? or, *Secondly*, Were they His step-brothers and step-sisters, children of Joseph by a former marriage? or, *Thirdly*, Were they cousins, according to a common way of speaking among the Jews respecting persons of collateral descent? On this subject an immense deal has been written, nor are opinions yet by any means agreed. For the second



opinion there is no ground but a vague tradition, arising probably from the wish for some such explanation. The *first* opinion undoubtedly suits the text best in all the places where the parties are certainly referred to (<sup><126</sup>Matthew 12:46; and its parallels, <sup><1035</sup>Mark 3:31 <sup><1039</sup>Luke 8:19; our present passage, and its parallels, <sup><1003</sup>Mark 6:3 <sup><1012</sup>John 2:12 7:3,5,10 <sup><1014</sup>Acts 1:14). But, in addition to other objections, many of the best interpreters, thinking it in the last degree improbable that our Lord, when hanging on the cross, would have committed His mother to John if He had had full brothers of His own then alive, prefer the third opinion; although, on the other hand, it is not to be doubted that our Lord might have good reasons for entrusting the guardianship of His doubly widowed mother to the beloved disciple in preference even to full brothers of His own. Thus dubiously we prefer to leave this vexed question, encompassed as it is with difficulties. As to the names here mentioned, the first of them, “JAMES,” is afterwards called “the Lord’s brother” (see on <sup><1019</sup>Galatians 1:19), but is perhaps not to be confounded with “James the son of Alphaeus,” one of the Twelve, though many think their identity beyond dispute. This question also is one of considerable difficulty, and not without importance; since the James who occupies so prominent a place in the Church of Jerusalem, in the latter part of the Acts, was apparently the apostle, but is by many regarded as “the Lord’s brother,” while others think their identity best suits all the statements. The *second* of those here named, “JOSES” (or Joseph), must not be confounded with “Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus” (<sup><1023</sup>Acts 1:23); and the *third* here named, “SIMON,” is not to be confounded with Simon the Kananite or Zealot (see on <sup><1004</sup>Matthew 10:4). These three are nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament. The *fourth* and last-named, “JUDAS,” can hardly be identical with the apostle of that name — though the brothers of both were of the name of “James” — nor (unless the two be identical, was this Judas) with the author of the catholic Epistle so called.

**58. And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief** — “save that He laid His hands on a few sick folk, and healed them” (<sup><1005</sup>Mark 6:5). See on <sup><1016</sup>Luke 4:16-30.

# CHAPTER 14

## ⌌MATTHEW 14:1-12.

### HEROD THINKS JESUS A RESURRECTION OF THE MURDERED BAPTIST — ACCOUNT OF HIS IMPRISONMENT AND DEATH. (⌌MARK 6:14-29 ⌌LUKE 9:7-9).

The time of this alarm of Herod Antipas appears to have been during the mission of the Twelve, and shortly after the Baptist — who had been in prison for probably more than a year — had been cruelly put to death.

*Herod's Theory of the Works of Christ (⌌Matthew 14:1,2).*

**1. At that time Herod the tetrarch** — Herod Antipas, one of the three sons of Herod the Great, and own brother of Archelaus (⌌Matthew 2:22), who ruled as *ethnarch* over Galilee and Perea.

**heard of the fame of Jesus** — “for His name was spread abroad” (⌌Mark 6:14).

**2. And said unto his servants** — his counsellors or court-ministers.

**This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead**, etc. — The murdered prophet haunted his guilty breast like a specter and seemed to him alive again and clothed with unearthly powers in the person of Jesus.

*Account of the Baptist's Imprisonment and Death*  
(⌌Matthew 14:3-12).

For the exposition of this portion, see on ⌌Mark 6:17-29.

## ◀142 MATTHEW 14:12-21.

**HEARING OF THE BAPTIST DEATH JESUS CROSSES THE LAKE WITH TWELVE AND MIRACULOUSLY FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND. (◀169 MARK 6:30-44 ◀190 LUKE 9:10-17 ◀801 JOHN 6:1-14).**

For the exposition of this section — one of the very few where all the four Evangelists run parallel — see on ▶169 Mark 6:30-44.

## ◀142 MATTHEW 14:22-26.

**JESUS CROSSES TO THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE LAKE WALKING ON THE SEA — INCIDENTS ON LANDING.  
(◀165 MARK 6:45 ◀815 JOHN 6:15-24).**

For the exposition, see on ▶815 John 6:15-24.

**28. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it is thou, bid me come to thee on the water** — (Also see on ▶1009 Mark 6:50.)

**29. And he said, Come. And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus** — (Also see on ▶1068 Mark 6:50.)

**30. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me** — (Also see on ▶1089 Mark 6:50.)

31. And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said to him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? — (Also see on ▶1089 Mark 6:50.)

**32. And when they had come into the boat, the wind ceased** — (Also see on ▶1089 Mark 6:50.)

# CHAPTER 15

## ⌚ MATTHEW 15:1-20.

### DISCOURSE ON CEREMONIAL POLLUTION. (⌚ MARK 7:1,23).

The time of this section was after that Passover which was nigh at hand when our Lord fed the five thousand (⌚ John 6:4) — the third Passover, as we take it, since His public ministry began, but which He did not keep at Jerusalem for the reason mentioned in ⌚ John 7:1.

**1. Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem** — or “from Jerusalem.” Mark (⌚ Mark 7:1) says they “came from” it: a deputation probably sent from the capital expressly to watch Him. As He had not come to them at the last Passover, which they had reckoned on, they now come to Him. “And,” says Mark (⌚ Mark 7:2,3), “when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands” — hands not ceremonially cleansed by washing — “they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft” — literally, “in” or “with the fist”; that is, probably washing the one hand by the use of the other — though some understand it, with our version, in the sense of “diligently,” “sedulously” — “eat not, holding the tradition of the elders”; acting religiously according to the custom handed down to them. “And when they come from the market” (⌚ Mark 7:4) — “And after market”: after any common business, or attending a court of justice, where the Jews, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark, after their subjection to the Romans, were especially exposed to intercourse and contact with heathens — “except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables” — rather, “couches,” such as were used at meals, which probably were merely *sprinkled* for ceremonial purposes. “Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him,”

**saying** — as follows:

**2. Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.**

**3. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?** — The charge is retorted

with startling power: “The tradition they transgress is but *man*’s, and is itself the occasion of heavy transgression, undermining the authority of *God’s law*.”

**4. For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother —** (<sup><1217</sup>Deuteronomy 5:16).

**and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death —** (<sup><1217</sup>Exodus 21:17).

**5. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift —** or simply, “A gift!” In Mark (<sup><4071</sup>Mark 7:11), it is, “*Corban!*” that is, “An oblation!” meaning, any unbloody offering or gift dedicated to sacred uses.

**by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;**

**6. And honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free —** that is, It is true, father — mother — that by giving to thee this, which I now present, thou mightest be profited by me; but I have gifted it to pious uses, and therefore, at whatever cost to thee, I am not now at liberty to alienate any portion of it. “And,” it is added in Mark (<sup><4072</sup>Mark 7:12), “ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother.” To dedicate property to God is indeed lawful and laudable, but not at the expense of filial duty.

**Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect —** cancelled or nullified it “by your tradition.”

**7. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying —** (<sup><2313</sup>Isaiah 29:13).

**8. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth,** etc. — By putting the commandments of men on a level with the divine requirements, *their whole worship was rendered vain* — a principle of deep moment in the service of God. “For,” it is added in <sup><4073</sup>Mark 7:8, “laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do.” The drivelling nature of their multitudinous observances is here pointedly exposed, in contrast with the manly observance of “the commandment of God”; and when our Lord says, “Many other such like things ye do,” it is implied that He had but given a specimen of the hideous treatment which the divine law received, and the grasping disposition which, under the mask of piety, was manifested by the ecclesiastics of that day.

**10. And he called the multitude, and said unto them —** The foregoing dialogue, though in the people’s hearing, was between Jesus and the

pharisaic cavillers, whose object was to disparage Him with the people. But Jesus, having put them down, turns to the multitude, who at this time were prepared to drink in everything He said, and with admirable plainness, strength, and brevity, lays down the great principle of real pollution, by which a world of bondage and uneasiness of conscience would be dissipated in a moment, and the sense of sin be reserved for deviations from the holy and eternal law of God.

### **Hear and understand:**

**11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man** — This is expressed even more emphatically in Mark (<sup><4075></sup>Mark 7:15,16), and it is there added, “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” As in (<sup><4139></sup>Matthew 13:9, this so oft-repeated saying seems designed to call attention to the *fundamental* and *universal* character of the truth it refers to.

**12. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?** — They had given vent to their irritation, and perhaps threats, not to our Lord Himself, from whom they seem to have slunk away, but to some of the disciples, who report it to their Master.

**13. But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up** — They are offended, are they? Heed it not: their corrupt teaching is already doomed: the garden of the Lord upon earth, too long cumbered with their presence, shall yet be purged of them and their accursed system: yea, and whatsoever is not of the planting of My heavenly Father, the great Husbandman (<sup><4953></sup>John 15:1), shall share the same fate.

**14. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch** — Striking expression of the ruinous effects of erroneous teaching!

**15. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable** — “when He was entered into the house from the people,” says Mark (<sup><4077></sup>Mark 7:17).

**16. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?** — Slowness of spiritual apprehension in His genuine disciples grieves the Savior: from others He expects no better (<sup><4131></sup>Matthew 13:11).

**17, 18. Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth,** etc. — Familiar though these sayings have now become, what freedom from bondage to outward things do they proclaim, on the one

hand; and on the other, how searching is the truth which they express — that nothing which enters from without can really defile us; and that only the evil that is in the heart, that is allowed to stir there, to rise up in thought and affection, and to flow forth in voluntary action, really defiles a man!

**19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts** — “evil reasonings”; referring here more immediately to those corrupt reasonings which had stealthily introduced and gradually reared up that hideous fabric of tradition which at length practically nullified the unchangeable principles of the moral law. But the statement is far broader than this; namely that the first shape which the evil that is in the heart takes, when it begins actively to stir, is that of “considerations” or “reasonings” on certain suggested actions.

**murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies** — detractions, whether directed against God or man; here the reference seems to be to the latter. Mark (<sup><4072></sup>Mark 7:22) adds, “covetousnesses” — or desires after more; “wickednesses” — here meaning, perhaps, malignities of various forms; “deceit, lasciviousness” — meaning, excess or enormity of any kind, though by later writers restricted to lewdness; “an evil eye” — meaning, all looks or glances of envy, jealousy, or ill will towards a neighbor; “pride, foolishness” — in the Old Testament sense of “folly”; that is, criminal senselessness, the folly of the *heart*. How appalling is this black catalogue!

**20. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man** — Thus does our Lord sum up this whole searching discourse.

## <sup><4152></sup>MATTHEW 15:21-28.

### THE WOMAN OF CANAAN AND HER DAUGHTER.

For the exposition, see on <sup><4072></sup>Mark 7:24-30.

**23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us** — (Also see on <sup><4072></sup>Mark 7:26.)

**24. But he answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel** — (Also see on <sup><4072></sup>Mark 7:26.)

**25. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me** — (Also see on <sup><4072></sup>Mark 7:26.)

~~4153~~ **MATTHEW 15:29-39.**

**MIRACLES OF HEALING — FOUR THOUSAND  
MIRACULOUSLY FED.**

For the exposition, see on ~~4173~~ Mark 7:31; ~~4180~~ Mark 8:10.



# CHAPTER 16

## ⌄<sup>1611</sup> MATTHEW 16:1-12.

### A SIGN FROM HEAVEN SOUGHT AND REFUSED — CAUTION AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES.

For the exposition, see on ⌄<sup>1611</sup> Mark 8:11-21.

## ⌄<sup>1613</sup> MATTHEW 16:13-28.

### PETER'S NOBLE CONFESSION OF CHRIST AND THE BENEDICTION PRONOUNCED UPON HIM — CHRIST'S FIRST EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING SUFFERINGS, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION — HIS REBUKE OF PETER AND WARNING TO ALL THE TWELVE. (⌄<sup>1627</sup> MARK 8:27 9:1 ⌄<sup>1615</sup> LUKE 9:18-27).

The time of this section — which is beyond doubt, and will presently be mentioned — is of immense importance, and throws a touching interest around the incidents which it records.

*Peter's Confession, and the Benediction Pronounced upon Him.*  
(⌄<sup>1613</sup> Matthew 16:13-20).

**13. When Jesus came into the coasts** — “the parts,” that is, the territory or region. In Mark (⌄<sup>1627</sup> Mark 8:27) it is “the towns” or “villages.”

**of Caesarea Philippi** — It lay at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near the sources of the Jordan, in the territory of Dan, and at the northeast extremity of Palestine. It was originally called *Panium* (from a cavern in its neighborhood dedicated to the god *Pan*) and *Paneas*. Philip, the tetrarch, the only good son of Herod the Great, in whose dominions Paneas lay, having beautified and enlarged it, changed its name to *Caesarea*, in honor of the Roman emperor, and added *Philippi* after his own name, to distinguish it from the other *Caesarea* (⌄<sup>1611</sup> Acts 10:1) on the northeast coast of the Mediterranean Sea. [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 15.10,3; 18.2,1]. This quiet and distant retreat Jesus appears to have sought with the view of

talking over with the Twelve the fruit of His past labors, and breaking to them for the first time the sad intelligence of His approaching death.

**he asked his disciples** — “by the way,” says Mark (<sup><4082></sup>Mark 8:27), and “as He was alone praying,” says Luke (<sup><4088></sup>Luke 9:18).

**saying, Whom** — or more grammatically, “Who”

**do men say that I the Son of man am?** — (or, “that the Son of man is” — the recent editors omitting here the *me* of Mark and Luke [<sup><4082></sup>Mark 8:27 <sup><4088></sup>Luke 9:18]; though the evidence seems pretty nearly balanced) — that is, “What are the views generally entertained of Me, the Son of man, after going up and down among them so long?” He had now closed the first great stage of His ministry, and was just entering on the last dark one. His spirit, burdened, sought relief in retirement, not only from the multitude, but even for a season from the Twelve. He retreated into “the secret place of the Most High,” pouring out His soul “in supplications and prayers, with strong crying and tears” (<sup><3887></sup>Hebrews 5:7). On rejoining His disciples, and as they were pursuing their quiet journey, He asked them this question.

**14. And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist** — risen from the dead. So that Herod Antipas was not singular in his surmise (<sup><4040></sup>Matthew 14:1,2).

**some, Elias** — (Compare <sup><4065></sup>Mark 6:15).

**and others, Jeremias** — Was this theory suggested by a supposed resemblance between the “Man of Sorrows” and “the weeping prophet?”

**or one of the prophets** — or, as Luke (<sup><4088></sup>Luke 9:8) expresses it, “that one of the old prophets is risen again.” In another report of the popular opinions which Mark (<sup><4065></sup>Mark 6:15) gives us, it is thus expressed, “That it is a prophet [or], as one of the prophets”: in other words, That He was a prophetic person, resembling those of old.

**15. He saith unto them, But whom** — rather, “who.”

**say ye that I am?** — He had never put this question before, but the crisis He was reaching made it fitting that He should now have it from them. We may suppose this to be one of those moments of which the prophet says, in His name, “Then I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain” (<sup><3906></sup>Isaiah 49:4): Lo, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree; and what is it? As the result of all, I am taken for John the Baptist, for Elias, for Jeremias, for one of the prophets. Yet some there are that have beheld My glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, and I shall hear their voice, for it is sweet.

**16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God** — He does not say, “Scribes and Pharisees, rulers and people, are all perplexed; and shall we, unlettered fishermen, presume to decide?” But feeling the light of his Master’s glory shining in his soul, he breaks forth — not in a tame, prosaic acknowledgment, “*I believe that Thou art,*” etc. — but in the language of adoration — such as one uses in worship, “THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD!” He first owns Him the promised *Messiah* (see on <sup>4016</sup>Matthew 1:16); then he rises higher, echoing the voice from heaven — “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”; and in the important addition — “Son of the LIVING GOD” — he recognizes the essential and eternal life of God as in this His Son — though doubtless without that distinct perception afterwards vouchsafed.

**17. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou** — Though it is not to be doubted that Peter, in this noble testimony to Christ, only expressed the conviction of all the Twelve, yet since he alone seems to have had clear enough apprehensions to put that conviction in proper and suitable words, and courage enough to speak them out, and readiness enough to do this at the right time — so he only, of all the Twelve, seems to have met the present want, and communicated to the saddened soul of the Redeemer at the critical moment that balm which was needed to cheer and refresh it. Nor is Jesus above giving indication of the deep satisfaction which this speech yielded Him, and hastening to respond to it by a signal acknowledgment of Peter in return.

**Simon-Barjona** — or, “son of Jona” (<sup>4016</sup>John 1:42), or “Jonas” (<sup>4015</sup>John 21:15). This name, denoting his humble fleshly extraction, seems to have been purposely here mentioned, to contrast the more vividly with the spiritual elevation to which divine illumination had raised him.

**for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee** — “This is not the fruit of human teaching.”

**but my Father which is in heaven** — In speaking of God, Jesus, it is to be observed, never calls Him, “our Father” (see on <sup>4017</sup>John 20:17), but either “your Father” — when He would encourage His timid believing ones with the assurance that He was theirs, and teach themselves to call Him so — or, as here, “My Father,” to signify some peculiar action or aspect of Him as “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**18. And I say also unto thee** — that is, “As thou hast borne such testimony to Me, even so in return do I to thee.”

**That thou art Peter** — At his first calling, this new name was announced to him as an honor afterwards to be conferred on him (<sup><1888></sup>John 1:43). Now he gets it, with an explanation of what it was meant to convey.

**and upon this rock** — As “Peter” and “Rock” are one word in the dialect familiarly spoken by our Lord — the *Aramaic* or *Syro-Chaldaic*, which was the mother tongue of the country — this exalted *play upon the word* can be fully seen only in languages which have one word for both. Even in the *Greek* it is imperfectly represented. In French, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark, it is perfect, *Pierre* — *pierre*.

**I will build my Church** — not on the man Simon-Barjona; but on him as the heavenly-taught confessor of a faith. “My Church,” says our Lord, calling the Church His OWN; a magnificent expression regarding Himself, remarks BENGEL — nowhere else occurring in the Gospel.

**and the gates of hell** — “of Hades,” or, the unseen world; meaning, the gates of Death: in other words, “It shall never perish.” Some explain it of “the assaults of the powers of darkness”; but though that expresses a glorious truth, probably the former is the sense here.

**19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven** — the kingdom of God about to be set up on earth

**and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven** — Whatever this mean, it was soon expressly *extended to all the apostles* (<sup><1888></sup>Matthew 18:18); so that the claim of supreme authority in the Church, made for Peter by the Church of Rome, and then arrogated to themselves by the popes as the legitimate successors of St. Peter, is baseless and impudent. As first in confessing Christ, Peter got this commission before the rest; and with these “keys,” on the day of Pentecost, he first “opened the door of faith” to the *Jews*, and then, in the person of Cornelius, he was honored to do the same to the *Gentiles*. Hence, in the lists of the apostles, Peter is always first named. See on <sup><1888></sup>Matthew 18:18. One thing is clear, that not in all the New Testament is there the vestige of any authority either claimed or exercised by Peter, or conceded to him, above the rest of the apostles — a thing conclusive against the Romish claims in behalf of that apostle.

**20. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ** — Now that He had been so explicit, they might naturally think the time come for giving it out openly; but here they are told it had not.

*Announcement of His Approaching Death and Rebuke of Peter*  
(~~<406>~~Matthew 16:21-28).

The occasion here is evidently the same.

**21. From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples** — that is, with an *explicitness and frequency* He had never observed before.

**how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things** — “and be rejected,” (~~<408>~~Mark 8:31 ~~<409>~~Luke 9:22).

**of the elders and chief priests and scribes** — not as before, merely by not receiving Him, but by formal deeds.

**and be killed, and be raised again the third day** — Mark (~~<408>~~Mark 8:32) adds, that “He spake that saying openly” — “explicitly,” or “without disguise.”

**22. Then Peter took him** — aside, apart from the rest; presuming on the distinction just conferred on him; showing how *unexpected* and *distasteful* to them all was the announcement.

**and began to rebuke him** — affectionately, yet with a certain generous indignation, to chide Him.

**saying, Be it far from thee: this shall not be unto thee** — that is, “If I can help it”: the same spirit that prompted him in the garden to draw the sword in His behalf (~~<409>~~John 18:10).

**23. But he turned, and said** — in the hearing of the rest; for Mark (~~<408>~~Mark 8:33) expressly says, “When He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter”; perceiving that he had but boldly uttered what others felt, and that the check was needed by them also.

**Get thee behind me, Satan** — the same words as He had addressed to the Tempter (~~<408>~~Luke 4:8); for He felt in it a satanic lure, a whisper from hell, to move Him from His purpose to suffer. So He shook off the Serpent, then coiling around Him, and “felt no harm” (~~<408>~~Acts 28:5). How quickly has the “rock” turned to a devil! The fruit of divine teaching the Lord delighted to honor in Peter; but the mouthpiece of hell, which he had in a moment of forgetfulness become, the Lord shook off with horror.

**thou art an offense** — a stumbling-block.

**unto me** — “Thou playest the Tempter, casting a stumbling-block in My way to the Cross. Could it succeed, where wert thou? and how should the Serpent’s head be bruised?”

**for thou savourest not** — thou thinkest not.

**the things that be of God, but those that be of men** — “Thou art carried away by human views of the way of setting up Messiah’s kingdom, quite contrary to those of God.” This was kindly said, not to take off the sharp edge of the rebuke. but to explain and justify it, as it was evident Peter knew not what was in the bosom of his rash speech.

**24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples** — Mark (<sup><4083></sup>Mark 8:34) says, “When He had called the people unto Him, with His disciples also, He said unto them” — turning the rebuke of one into a warning to all.

**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.**

**25. For whosoever will save** — is minded to save, or bent on saving.

**his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it** — (See on <sup><4088></sup>Matthew 10:38,39). “A suffering and dying Messiah liketh you ill; but what if His servants shall meet the same fate? They may not; but who follows Me must be prepared for the worst.”

**26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul** — or forfeit his own soul?

**or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?** — Instead of these weighty words, which we find in <sup><4086></sup>Mark 8:36 also, it is thus expressed in <sup><4025></sup>Luke 9:25: “If he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away,” or better, “If he gain the whole world, and destroy or forfeit himself.” How awful is the stake as here set forth! If a man makes the present world — in its various forms of riches, honors, pleasures, and such like — the object of supreme pursuit, be it that he gains the world; yet along with it he forfeits his own soul. Not that any ever did, or ever will gain the whole world — a very small portion of it, indeed, falls to the lot of the most successful of the world’s votaries — but to make the extravagant concession, that by giving himself entirely up to it, a man gains the whole world; yet, setting over against this gain the forfeiture of his soul — necessarily following the surrender of his whole heart to the world — what is he profited? But, if not the whole world, yet possibly something else may be conceived as an equivalent for the soul. Well, what is it? — “Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Thus, in language the weightiest, because the simplest, does our Lord shut up His hearers, and all who shall read these words to the end of the world, to the priceless value to every man of his own soul. In Mark and Luke (<sup><4088></sup>Mark 8:38 <sup><4025></sup>Luke 9:26) the following words are added: “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of

Me and of My words [shall be ashamed of belonging to Me, and ashamed of My Gospel] in this adulterous and sinful generation” (see on <sup><4123></sup>Matthew 12:39), “of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.” He will render back to that man his own treatment, disowning him before the most august of all assemblies, and putting him to “*shame* and everlasting *contempt*” (<sup><2712></sup>Daniel 12:2). “O shame,” exclaims BENGEL, “to be put to shame before God, Christ, and angels!” The sense of *shame* is founded on our love of *reputation*, which causes instinctive aversion to what is fitted to lower it, and was given us as a preservative from all that is properly *shameful*. To be *lost to shame* is to be nearly past hope. (<sup><3812></sup>Zephaniah 3:5 <sup><4013></sup>Jeremiah 6:15 3:3). But when Christ and “His words” are unpopular, the same instinctive desire to *stand well with others* begets that temptation to be ashamed of Him which only the expulsive power of a higher affection can effectually counteract.

**27. For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels** — in the splendor of His Father’s authority and with all His angelic ministers, ready to execute His pleasure.

**and then he shall reward**, etc.

**28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here** — “some of those standing here.”

**which shall not taste of death, fill they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom** — or, as in Mark (<sup><4101></sup>Mark 9:1), “till they see the kingdom of God come with power”; or, as in Luke (<sup><4127></sup>Luke 9:27), more simply still, “till they see the kingdom of God.” The reference, beyond doubt, is to the firm establishment and victorious progress, in the lifetime of some then present, of that new kingdom of Christ, which was destined to work the greatest of all changes on this earth, and be the grand pledge of His final coming in glory.

# CHAPTER 17

## ⌄17⌅ MATTHEW 17:1-13.

### JESUS IS TRANSFIGURED — CONVERSATION ABOUT ELIAS. (⌄10⌅ MARK 9:2-13 ⌄108⌅ LUKE 9:28-36).

For the exposition, see on ⌄108⌅ Luke 9:28-36.

## ⌄174⌅ MATTHEW 17:14-23.

### HEALING OF A DEMONIAK BOY — SECOND EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT BY OUR LORD OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION. (⌄1044⌅ MARK 9:14-32 ⌄1087⌅ LUKE 9:37-45).

The time of this section is sufficiently denoted by the events which all the narratives show to have immediately preceded it — the first explicit announcement of His death, and the transfiguration — both being between His third and His fourth and last Passover.

*Healing of the Demoniac and Lunatic Boy (⌄1074⌅ Matthew 17:14-21).*

For the exposition of this portion, see on ⌄1044⌅ Mark 9:14-32.

*Second Announcement of His Death (⌄1072⌅ Matthew 17:22,23).*

**22. And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them** — Mark (⌄1030⌅ Mark 9:30), as usual, is very precise here: “And they departed thence” — that is, from the scene of the last miracle — “and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it.” So this was not a preaching, but a private, journey through Galilee. Indeed, His public ministry in Galilee was now all but concluded. Though He sent out the Seventy after this to preach and heal, He Himself was little more in public there, and He was soon to bid it a final adieu. Till this hour arrived, He was chiefly occupied with the Twelve, preparing them for the coming events.

**The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men ... And they were exceeding sorry** — Though the shock would not be so great as at the first announcement (⌄1021⌅ Matthew 16:21,22), their “sorrow” would not be



the less, but probably the greater, the deeper the intelligence went down into their hearts, and a new wave dashing upon them by this repetition of the heavy tidings. Accordingly, Luke (<sup><096></sup>Luke 9:43,44), connecting it with the scene of the miracle just recorded, and the teaching which arose out of it — or possibly with all His recent teaching — says our Lord forewarned the Twelve that they would soon stand in need of all that teaching: “But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, He said unto His disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered,” etc.: “Be not carried off your feet by the grandeur you have lately seen in Me, but remember what I have told you, and now tell you again, that that Sun in whose beams ye now rejoice is soon to set in midnight gloom.” Remarkable is the antithesis in those words of our Lord preserved in all the three narratives — “The son of *man* shall be betrayed into the hands of *men*.” Luke adds (<sup><095></sup>Luke 9:45) that “they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not” — for the plainest statements, when they encounter long-continued and obstinate prejudices, are seen through a distorting and dulling medium — “and were afraid to ask Him”; deterred partly by the air of lofty sadness with which doubtless these sayings were uttered, and on which they would be reluctant to break in, and partly by the fear of laying themselves open to rebuke for their shallowness and timidity. How artless is all this!

## <sup><072></sup>MATTHEW 17:24-27.

### THE TRIBUTE MONEY.

The time of this section is evidently in immediate succession to that of the preceding one. The brief but most pregnant incident which it records is given by Matthew alone — for whom, no doubt, it would have a peculiar interest, from its relation to his own town and his own familiar lake.

**24. And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money** — the double drachma; a sum equal to two Attic drachmas, and corresponding to the Jewish “half-shekel,” payable, towards the maintenance of the temple and its services, by every male Jew of twenty years old and upward. For the origin of this annual tax, see <sup><093></sup>Exodus 30:13,14 <sup><092></sup>2 Chronicles 24:6,9. Thus, it will be observed, it was not a civil, but an ecclesiastical tax. The tax mentioned in <sup><072></sup>Matthew 17:25 was a civil one. The whole teaching of this very remarkable scene depends upon this distinction.

**came to Peter** — at whose house Jesus probably resided while at Capernaum. This explains several things in the narrative.

**and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?** — The question seems to imply that the payment of this tax was *voluntary*, but *expected*; or what, in modern phrase, would be called a “voluntary assessment.”

**25. He saith, yes** — that is, “To be sure He does”; as if eager to remove even the suspicion of the contrary. If Peter knew — as surely he did — that there was at this time no money in the bag, this reply must be regarded as a great act of faith in his Master.

**And when he was come into the house** — Peter’s.

**Jesus prevented him** — anticipated him; according to the old sense of the word “prevent.”

**saying, What thinkest thou, Simon?** — using his family name for familiarity.

**of whom do the kings of the earth take custom** — meaning custom on goods exported or imported.

**or tribute** — meaning the poll-tax, payable to the Romans by everyone whose name was in the census. This, therefore, it will be observed, was strictly a *civil* tax.

**of their own children, or of strangers** — This cannot mean “foreigners,” from whom sovereigns certainly do not raise taxes, but those who are not of their own family, that is, their subjects.

**26. Peter saith unto him, Of strangers** — “of those not their children.”

**Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free** — By “the children” our Lord cannot here mean Himself and the Twelve together, in some loose sense of their near relationship to God as their common Father. For besides that our Lord never once mixes Himself up with His disciples in speaking of their relation to God, but ever studiously keeps His relation and theirs apart (see, for example, on the last words of this chapter) — this would be to teach the right of believers to exemption from the dues required for sacred services, in the teeth of all that Paul teaches and that He Himself indicates throughout. He can refer here, then, only to Himself; using the word “children” evidently in order to express the general principle observed by sovereigns, who do not draw taxes from their own children, and thus convey the truth respecting His own exemption the more strikingly: — namely, “If the sovereign’s own family be exempt, you know the inference

in My case”; or to express it more nakedly than Jesus thought needful and fitting: “This is a tax for upholding My Father’s House. As His Son, then, that tax is not due by Me — I AM FREE.”

**27. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend** — stumble.

**them** — all ignorant as they are of My relation to the Lord of the Temple, and should misconstrue a claim to exemption into indifference to His honor who dwells in it.

**go thou to the sea** — Capernaum, it will be remembered, lay on the Sea of Galilee.

**and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shall find a piece of money** — a stater. So it should have been rendered, and not indefinitely, as in our version, for the coin was an Attic silver coin equal to two of the aforementioned “didrachms” of half a shekel’s value, and so, was the exact sum required for both. Accordingly, the Lord adds,

**that take, and give unto them for me and thee** — literally, “instead of Me and thee”; perhaps because the payment was a *redemption of the person* paid for (<sup>4912</sup>Exodus 30:12) — in which view Jesus certainly was “free.” If the house was Peter’s, this will account for payment being provided on this occasion, not for all the Twelve, but only for him and His Lord. Observe, our Lord does not say “for us,” but “for Me and thee”; thus distinguishing the Exempted One and His non-exempted disciple.

## CHAPTER 18

### ⌵MATTHEW 18:1-9.

**STRIFE AMONG THE TWELVE WHO SHOULD BE  
GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, WITH  
RELATIVE TEACHING. (⌵MARK 9:33-50 ⌵LUKE 9:46-50).**

For the exposition, see on ⌵Mark 9:33-50.

### ⌵MATTHEW 18:10-35.

**FURTHER TEACHING ON THE SAME SUBJECT INCLUDING  
THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL DEBTOR.**

*Same Subject (⌵Matthew 18:10-20).*

**10. Take heed that ye despise** — stumble.

**not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their  
angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven —**

A difficult verse; but perhaps the following may be more than an illustration: — Among men, those who nurse and rear the royal children, however humble in themselves, are allowed free entrance with their charge, and a degree of familiarity which even the highest state ministers dare not assume. Probably our Lord means that, in virtue of their charge over His disciples (⌵Hebrews 1:13 ⌵John 1:51), the angels have *errands* to the throne, a *welcome* there, and a *dear familiarity* in dealing with “His Father which is in heaven,” which on their own matters they could not assume.

**11. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost** — or “is lost.” A golden saying, once and again repeated in different forms. Here the connection seems to be, “Since the whole object and errand of the Son of man into the world is to save the lost, take heed lest, by causing offenses, ye lose the saved.” That this is the idea intended we may gather from ⌵Matthew 18:14.

**12, 13. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray,** etc. — This is another of those pregnant sayings which our Lord uttered more than once. See on the delightful parable of the lost sheep in <sup><219></sup>Luke 15:4-7. Only the object *there* is to show what the good Shepherd will do, when even one of His sheep is lost, to *find* it; *here* the object is to show, when found, how reluctant He is to *lose* it. Accordingly, it is added,

**14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish** — How, then, can He but visit for those “offenses” which endanger the souls of these little ones?

**15. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,** etc. — Probably our Lord had reference still to the late dispute, Who should be the greatest? After the rebuke — so gentle and captivating, yet so dignified and divine — under which they would doubtless be smarting, perhaps each would be saying, It was not I that began it, it was not I that threw out unworthy and irritating insinuations against my brethren. Be it so, says our Lord; but as such things will often arise, I will direct you how to proceed. *First*, Neither harbor a grudge against your offending brother, nor break forth upon him in presence of the unbelieving; but take him aside, show him his fault, and if he own and make reparation for it, you have done more service to him than even justice to yourself. *Next*, If this fail, take two or three to witness how just your complaint is, and how brotherly your spirit in dealing with him. *Again*, If this fail, bring him before the Church or congregation to which both belong. *Lastly*, If even this fail, regard him as no longer a brother Christian, but as one “without” — as the Jews did Gentiles and publicans.

**18. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven** — Here, what had been granted but a short time before to Peter only (see on <sup><169></sup>Matthew 16:19) is plainly extended to all the Twelve; so that whatever it means, it means nothing peculiar to Peter, far less to his pretended successors at Rome. It has to do with admission to and rejection from the membership of the Church. But see on <sup><170></sup>John 20:23.

**19. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**

**20. For where two or three are gathered together in my name** — or “unto my name.”

**there am I in the midst of them** — On this passage — so full of sublime encouragement to Christian union in action and prayer — observe, first, the connection in which it stands. Our Lord had been speaking of church meetings before which the obstinate perversity of a brother was in the last resort to be brought, and whose decision was to be final — such honor does the Lord of the Church put upon its lawful assemblies. But not these assemblies only does He deign to countenance and honor. For even two uniting to bring any matter before Him shall find that they are not alone, for My Father is with them, says Jesus. Next, observe the *premium here put upon union in prayer*. As this cannot exist with fewer than two, so by letting it down so low as that number, He gives the utmost conceivable encouragement to union in this exercise. But what kind of union? Not an agreement merely to pray in concert, but to pray *for some definite thing*. “As touching anything which they shall ask,” says our Lord — anything they shall agree to ask in concert. At the same time, it is plain He had certain things at that moment in His eye, as most fitting and needful subjects for such concerted prayer. The Twelve had been “falling out by the way” about the miserable question of precedence in their Master’s kingdom, and this, as it stirred their corruptions, had given rise — or at least was in danger of giving rise — to “offenses” perilous to their souls. The Lord Himself had been directing them how to deal with one another about such matters. “But now shows He unto them a more excellent way.” Let them bring all such matters — yea, and everything whatsoever by which either their own loving relationship to each other, or the good of His kingdom at large, might be affected — to their Father in heaven; and if they be but agreed in petitioning Him about that thing, it shall be done for them of His Father which is in heaven. But further, it is not merely union in prayer for the same thing — for that might be with very jarring ideas of the thing to be desired — but it is to symphonious prayer, the prayer by kindred spirits, members of one family, servants of one Lord, constrained by the same love, fighting under one banner, cheered by assurances of the same victory; a living and loving union, whose voice in the divine ear is as the sound of many waters. Accordingly, what they ask “*on earth*” is done for them, says Jesus, “of My Father which is *in heaven*.” Not for nothing does He say, “of MY FATHER” — not “YOUR FATHER”; as is evident from what follows: “For where two or three are gathered together *unto My name*” — the “My” is emphatic, “*there am I* in the midst of them.” As His name would prove a spell to draw together many clusters of His dear disciples, so if there should be but two or three, that will attract Himself down into the midst of them; and related as He is to both the parties, the petitioners and the Petitioned — to the one on earth by the tie of His assumed flesh, and to the other in heaven by the tie of His eternal Spirit — their symphonious prayers on earth would thrill upward through Him to

heaven, be carried by Him into the holiest of all, and so reach the Throne. Thus will He be the living Conductor of the prayer upward, and the answer downward.

*Parable of the Unmerciful Debtor* (~~1829~~ Matthew 18:21-35).

**21. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?** — In the recent dispute, Peter had probably been an object of special envy, and his forwardness in continually answering for all the rest would likely be cast up to him — and if so, probably by Judas — notwithstanding his Masters' commendations. And as such insinuations were perhaps made once and again, he wished to know how often and how long he was to stand it.

**till seven times?** — This being the sacred and complete number, perhaps his meaning was, Is there to be a limit at which the needful forbearance will be *full*?

**22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven** — that is, so long as it shall be needed and sought: you are never to come to the point of refusing forgiveness sincerely asked. (See on ~~2778~~ Luke 17:3,4).

**23. Therefore** — “with reference to this matter.”

**is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants** — or, would scrutinize the accounts of his revenue collectors.

**24. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents** — If *Attic* talents are here meant, ten thousand of them would amount to above \$7,500,000; if Jewish talents, to a much larger sum.

**25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made** — (See ~~1200~~ 2 Kings 4:1 ~~4618~~ Nehemiah 5:8 ~~8539~~ Leviticus 25:39).

**26. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him** — or did humble obeisance to him.

**saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all** — This was just an acknowledgment of the justice of the claim made against him, and a piteous imploration of mercy.

**27. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt** — Payment being hopeless, the

master is first moved with compassion; next, liberates his debtor from prison; and then cancels the debt freely.

**28. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants** — Mark the difference here. The first case is that of master and servant; in this case, both are on a footing of equality. (See ~~483~~ Matthew 18:33).

**which owed him an hundred pence** — If Jewish money is intended, this debt was to the other less than *one to a million*.

**and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat** — he seized and throttled him.

**saying, Pay me that thou owest** — Mark the mercilessness even of the tone.

**29. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all** — The same attitude, and the same words which drew compassion from his master, are here employed towards himself by his fellow servant.

**30. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt**, etc. — Jesus here vividly conveys the intolerable injustice and impudence which even the servants saw in this act on the part of one so recently laid under the heaviest obligation to their common master.

**32, 33. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant**, etc. — Before bringing down his vengeance upon him, he calmly points out to him how shamefully unreasonable and heartless his conduct was; which would give the punishment inflicted on him a double sting.

**34. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors** — more than *jailers*; denoting the severity of the treatment which he thought such a case demanded.

**till he should pay all that was due unto him.**

**35. So likewise** — in this *spirit*, or on this principle.

**shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.**



# CHAPTER 19

## ⌌~~DE~~ MATTHEW 19:1-12.

### FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE — DIVORCE. (⌌~~MARK~~ 10:1-12 ⌌~~LUKE~~ 9:51).

#### *Farewell to Galilee (⌌~~DE~~ Matthew 19:1,2).*

**1. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee** — This marks a very solemn period in our Lord's public ministry. So slightly is it touched here, and in the corresponding passage of Mark (⌌~~MARK~~ Mark 10:1), that few readers probably note it as the Redeemer's *Farewell to Galilee*, which however it was. See on the sublime statement of Luke (⌌~~LUKE~~ Luke 9:51), which relates to the same transition stage in the progress of our Lord's work.

**and came into the coasts** — or, boundaries

**of Judea beyond Jordan** — that is, to the further, or east side of the Jordan, into Perea, the dominions of Herod Antipas. But though one might conclude from our Evangelist that our Lord went straight from the one region to the other, we know from the other Gospels that a considerable time elapsed between the departure from the one and the arrival at the other, during which many of the most important events in our Lord's public life occurred — probably a large part of what is recorded in ⌌~~LUKE~~ Luke 9:51, onward to ⌌~~MARK~~ Matthew 18:15, and part of ⌌~~JOHN~~ John 7:2-11:54.

**2. And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there** — Mark says further (⌌~~MARK~~ Mark 10:1), that “as He was wont, He taught them there.” What we now have on the subject of divorce is some of that teaching.

#### *Divorce (⌌~~DE~~ Matthew 19:3-12).*

**3. Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?** — Two rival schools (as we saw on ⌌~~DE~~ Matthew 5:31) were divided on this question — a delicate one, as DE WETTE pertinently remarks, in the dominions of Herod Antipas.

**4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female** — or

better, perhaps, “He that made them made them from the beginning a male and a female.”

**5. And said, For this cause** — to follow out this divine appointment.

**shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?** — Jesus here sends them back to the original constitution of man as one pair, a male and a female; to their marriage, as such, by divine appointment; and to the purpose of God, expressed by the sacred historian, that in all time one man and one woman should by marriage become one flesh — so to continue as long as both are in the flesh. This being *God’s* constitution, let not *man* break it up by causeless divorces.

**7. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?**

**8. He saith unto them, Moses** — as a civil lawgiver.

**because of** — or “having respect to.”

**the hardness of your hearts** — looking to your low moral state, and your inability to endure the strictness of the original law.

**suffered you to put away your wives** — tolerated a relaxation of the strictness of the marriage bond — not as approving of it, but to prevent still greater evils.

**But from the beginning it was not so** — This is repeated, in order to impress upon His audience the temporary and purely civil character of this Mosaic relaxation.

**9. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except,** etc. — See on <sup>419</sup>Matthew 5:31.

**10. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry** — that is, “In this view of marriage, surely it must prove a snare rather than a blessing, and had better be avoided altogether.”

**11. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given** — that is, “That the unmarried state is better, is a saying not for everyone, and indeed only for such as it is divinely intended for.” But who are these? they would naturally ask; and this our Lord proceeds to tell them in three particulars.

**12. For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb** — persons constitutionally either incapable of or indisposed to marriage.

**and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men** — persons rendered incapable by others.

**and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake** — persons who, to do God's work better, deliberately choose this state. Such was Paul (~~<400>~~1 Corinthians 7:7).

**He that is able to receive it, let him receive it** — “He who feels this to be his proper vocation, let him embrace it”; which, of course, is as much as to say — “he only.” Thus, all are left free in this matter.

### ~~<093>~~ MATTHEW 19:13-15.

#### LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

(~~<4003>~~ MARK 10:13-16 ~~<0185>~~ LUKE 18:15-17).

For the exposition, see on ~~<0185>~~ Luke 18:15-17.

### ~~<096>~~ MATTHEW 19:16-30.

#### THE RICH YOUNG RULER. (~~<4007>~~ MARK 10:17-31 ~~<0188>~~ LUKE 18:18-30).

For the exposition, see on ~~<0188>~~ Luke 18:18-30.

# CHAPTER 20

## Ⓜ MATTHEW 20:1-16.

### PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD.

This parable, recorded only by Matthew, is closely connected with the end of the nineteenth chapter, being spoken with reference to Peter's question as to how it should fare with those who, like himself, had left all for Christ. It is designed to show that while *they* would be richly rewarded, a certain equity would still be observed towards *later* converts and workmen in His service.

**1. For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder,** etc. — The figure of a vineyard, to represent the rearing of souls for heaven, the culture required and provided for that purpose, and the care and pains which God takes in that whole matter, is familiar to every reader of the Bible. (Ⓜ Psalm 80:8-16 Ⓜ Isaiah 5:1-7 Ⓜ Jeremiah 2:21 Ⓜ Luke 20:9-16 Ⓜ John 15:1-8). At vintage time, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark, labor was scarce, and masters were obliged to be early in the market to secure it. Perhaps the pressing nature of the work of the Gospel, and the comparative paucity of laborers, may be incidentally suggested, Ⓜ Matthew 9:37,38. The "laborers," as in Ⓜ Matthew 9:38, are first, the *official* servants of the Church, but after them and along with them *all* the servants of Christ, whom He has laid under the weightiest obligation to work in His service.

**2. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny** — a usual day's hire.

**he sent them into his vineyard.**

**3. And he went out about the third hour** — about nine o'clock, or after a fourth of the working day had expired: the day of twelve hours was reckoned from six to six.

**and saw others standing idle in the market place** — unemployed.

**4. And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right** — just, equitable, in proportion to their time.

**I will give you. And they went their way.**

**5. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour** — about noon, and about three o'clock in the afternoon.

**and did likewise** — hiring and sending into his vineyard fresh laborers each time.

**6. And about the eleventh hour** — but one hour before the close of the working day; a most unusual hour both for offering and engaging

**and found others standing idle, and saith, Why stand ye here all the day idle?** — Of course they had not been there, or not been disposed to offer themselves at the proper time; but as they were now willing, and the day was not over, and “yet there was room,” they also are engaged, and on similar terms with all the rest.

**8. So when even was come** — that is, the reckoning time between masters and laborers (see <sup><RBH></sup>Deuteronomy 24:15); pointing to the day of final account.

**the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward** — answering to Christ Himself, represented “as a Son over His own house” (<sup><RBH></sup>Hebrews 3:6; see <sup><M127></sup>Matthew 11:27 <sup><RBH></sup>John 3:35 5:27).

**Call the laborers and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first** — Remarkable direction this — last hired, first paid.

**9. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny** — a full day's wages.

**10. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more** — This is that calculating, mercenary spirit which had peeped out — though perhaps very slightly — in Peter's question (<sup><M127></sup>Matthew 19:27), and which this parable was designed once for all to put down among the servants of Christ.

**11. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house** — rather, “the householder,” the word being the same as in <sup><RBH></sup>Matthew 20:1.

**12. Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat** — the burning heat.

**of the day** — who have wrought not only longer but during a more trying period of the day.

**13. But he answered one of them** — doubtless the spokesman of the complaining party.

**and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?** etc.

**15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?** — that is, “You appeal to *justice*, and by that your mouth is shut; for the sum you agreed for is paid you. Your case being disposed of, with the terms I make with other laborers you have nothing to do; and to grudge the benevolence shown to others, when by your own admission you have been honorably dealt with, is both unworthy envy of your neighbor, and discontent with the goodness that engaged and rewarded you in his service at all.”

**16. So the last shall be first, and the first last** — that is, “Take heed lest by indulging the spirit of these murmurers at the penny given to the last hired, ye miss your own penny, though first in the vineyard; while the consciousness of having come in so late may inspire these last with such a humble frame, and such admiration of the grace that has hired and rewarded them at all, as will put them into the foremost place in the end.”

**for many be called, but few chosen** — This is another of our Lord’s terse and pregnant sayings, more than once uttered in different connections. (See <sup>410B</sup>Matthew 19:30 22:14). The “calling” of which the New Testament almost invariably speaks is what divines call *effectual* calling, carrying with it a supernatural operation on the will to secure its consent. But that cannot be the meaning of it here; the “called” being emphatically distinguished from the “chosen.” It can only mean here the “invited.” And so the sense is, Many receive the invitations of the Gospel whom God has never “chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (<sup>410B</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:13). But what, it may be asked, has this to do with the subject of our parable? Probably this — to teach us that men who have wrought in Christ’s service all their days may, by the spirit which they manifest at the last, make it too evident that, as between God and their own souls, they never were chosen workmen at all.

~~<4117>~~ **MATTHEW 20:17-28.**

**THIRD EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS  
APPROACHING SUFFERINGS, DEATH, AND  
RESURRECTION — THE AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF JAMES  
AND JOHN, AND THE REPLY. (~~<4108>~~ MARK 10:32-45 ~~<4138>~~ LUKE  
18:31-34).**

For the exposition, see on ~~<4118>~~ Mark 10:32-45.

~~<4119>~~ **MATTHEW 20:29-34.**

**TWO BLIND MEN HEALED. (~~<4106>~~ MARK 10:46-52 ~~<4135>~~ LUKE 18:35-  
43).**

For the exposition, see on ~~<4135>~~ Luke 18:35-43.

# CHAPTER 21

## ⋈<sup>100</sup> MATTHEW 21:1-9.

**CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. (⋈<sup>100</sup> MARK 11:1-11 ⋈<sup>100</sup> LUKE 19:29-40 ⋈<sup>100</sup> JOHN 12:12-19).**

For the exposition of this majestic scene — recorded, as will be seen, by all the Evangelists — see on ⋈<sup>100</sup> Luke 19:29-40.

## ⋈<sup>110</sup> MATTHEW 21:10-22.

**STIR ABOUT HIM IN THE CITY — SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE, AND MIRACLES THERE — GLORIOUS VINDICATION OF THE CHILDREN'S TESTIMONY — THE BARREN FIG TREE CURSED, WITH LESSONS FROM IT. (⋈<sup>110</sup> MARK 11:11-26 ⋈<sup>110</sup> LUKE 19:45-48).**

For the exposition, see on ⋈<sup>110</sup> Luke 19:45-48; and ⋈<sup>110</sup> Mark 11:12-26.

## ⋈<sup>123</sup> MATTHEW 21:23-46.

**THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED AND THE REPLY — THE PARABLES OF THE TWO SONS, AND OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMAN. (⋈<sup>123</sup> MARK 11:27-32 ⋈<sup>123</sup> LUKE 20:1-19).**

Now commences, as ALFORD remarks, that series of parables and discourses of our Lord with His enemies, in which He develops, more completely than ever before, His hostility to their hypocrisy and iniquity: and so they are stirred up to compass His death.

*The Authority of Jesus Questioned, and the Reply*  
(⋈<sup>123</sup> Matthew 21:23-27).



**23. By what authority doest thou these things!** — referring particularly to the expulsion of the buyers and sellers from the temple, and who gave thee this authority?

**24. And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing,** etc.

**25. The baptism of John** — meaning his whole mission and ministry, of which baptism was the proper character.

**whence was it? from heaven, or of men?** — What wisdom there was in this way of meeting their question will best appear by their reply.

**If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?** — “Why did ye not believe the testimony which he bore to Me, as the promised and expected Messiah?” for that was the burden of John’s whole testimony.

**26. But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people** — rather, “the multitude.” In Luke (~~20:1~~ Luke 20:6) it is, “all the people will stone us.”

**for all hold John as a prophet** — Crooked, cringing hypocrites! No wonder Jesus gave you no answer.

**27. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell** — Evidently their difficulty was, how to answer, so as neither to shake their determination to reject the claims of Christ nor damage their reputation with the people. For the truth itself they cared nothing whatever.

**Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things** — What composure and dignity of wisdom does our Lord here display, as He turns their question upon themselves, and, while revealing His knowledge of their hypocrisy, closes their mouths! Taking advantage of the surprise, silence, and awe produced by this reply, our Lord followed it up immediately by the two following parables.

*Parable of the Two Sons* (~~21:1~~ Matthew 21:28-32).

**28. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard** — for true religion is a practical thing, a “bringing forth fruit unto God.”

**29. He answered and said, I will not** — TRENCH notices the rudeness of this answer, and the total absence of any attempt to excuse such disobedience, both characteristic; representing careless, reckless sinners resisting God to His face.

**30. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir** — “I, sir.” The emphatic “I,” here, denotes the self-righteous complacency which says, “God, I thank thee that *I* am not as other men” (◀◊1811 Luke 18:11).

**and went not** — *He* did not “afterward repent” and refuse to go; for there was here no *intention* to go. It is the class that “say and do not” (◊1818 Matthew 23:3) — a falseness more abominable to God, says STIER, than any “I will not.”

**31. Whether of them twain did the will of his Father? They say unto him, The first** — Now comes the application.

**Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go** — or, “are going”; even now entering, while ye hold back.

**into the kingdom of God before you** — The publicans and the harlots were the first son, who, when told to work in the Lord’s vineyard, said, I will not; but afterwards repented and went. Their early life was a flat and flagrant refusal to do what they were commanded; it was one continued rebellion against the authority of God. The chief priests and the elders of the people, with whom our Lord was now speaking, were the second son, who said, I go, sir, but went not. They were early called, and all their life long professed obedience to God, but never rendered it; their life was one of continued disobedience.

**32. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness** — that is, calling you to repentance; as Noah is styled “a preacher of righteousness” (◊1812 2 Peter 2:5), when like the Baptist he warned the old world to “flee from the wrath to come.”

**and ye believed him not** — They did not reject him; nay, they “were willing for a season to rejoice in his light” (◊1815 John 5:35); but they would not receive his testimony to Jesus.

**but the publicans and the harlots believed him** — Of the publicans this is twice expressly recorded, ◊1812 Luke 3:12 7:29. Of the harlots, then, the same may be taken for granted, though the fact is not expressly recorded. These outcasts gladly believed the testimony of John to the coming Savior, and so hastened to Jesus when He came. See ◊1819 Luke 7:37 15:1, etc.

**and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him** — Instead of being “provoked to jealousy” by their example, ye have seen them flocking to the Savior and getting to heaven, unmoved.

*Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen* (◊1813 Matthew 21:33-46).

**33. Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard** — (See on <sup><2136></sup>Luke 13:6).

**and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower** — These details are taken, as is the basis of the parable itself, from that beautiful parable of <sup><2136></sup>Isaiah 5:1-7, in order to fix down the application and sustain it by Old Testament authority.

**and let it out to husbandmen** — These are just the ordinary spiritual guides of the people, under whose care and culture the fruits of righteousness are expected to spring up.

**and went into a far country** — “for a long time” (<sup><2136></sup>Luke 20:9), leaving the vineyard to the laws of the spiritual husbandry during the whole time of the Jewish economy. On this phraseology, see on <sup><4135></sup>Mark 4:26.

**34. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen** — By these “servants” are meant the prophets and other extraordinary messengers, raised up from time to time. See on <sup><4235></sup>Matthew 23:37.

**that they might receive the fruits of it** — Again see on <sup><2136></sup>Luke 13:6.

**35. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one** — see <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 37:15 38:6.

**and killed another** — see <sup><2475></sup>Jeremiah 26:20-23.

**and stoned another** — see <sup><4221></sup>2 Chronicles 24:21. Compare with this whole verse <sup><4235></sup>Matthew 23:37, where our Lord reiterates these charges in the most melting strain.

**36. Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise** — see <sup><2713></sup>2 Kings 17:13 <sup><4335></sup>2 Chronicles 36:16,18 <sup><4335></sup>Nehemiah 9:26.

**37. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son** — In Mark (<sup><4116></sup>Mark 12:6) this is most touchingly expressed: “Having yet therefore one son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence My Son.” Luke’s version of it too (<sup><2136></sup>Luke 20:13) is striking: “Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send My beloved Son: it may be they will reverence Him when they see Him.” Who does not see that our Lord here severs Himself, by the sharpest line of demarcation, from all merely *human* messengers, and claims for Himself *Sonship* in its loftiest sense? (Compare <sup><3838></sup>Hebrews 3:3-6). The expression, “*It may be* they will reverence My

Son,” is designed to teach the almost unimaginable guilt of *not* reverentially welcoming God’s Son.

**38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves** — Compare <sup><13718></sup>Genesis 37:18-20 <sup><13147></sup>John 11:47-53.

**This is the heir** — Sublime expression this of the great truth, that God’s inheritance was destined for, and in due time is to come into the possession of, His own Son *in our nature* (<sup><3002></sup>Hebrews 1:2).

**come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance** — that so, from mere *servants*, we may become *lords*. This is the deep aim of the depraved heart; this is emphatically “the root of all evil.”

**39. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard** — compare <sup><38311></sup>Hebrews 13:11-13 (“without the gate — without the camp”); <sup><12113></sup>1 Kings 21:13 <sup><19107></sup>John 19:17.

**and slew him.**

**40. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh** — This represents “the settling time,” which, in the case of the Jewish ecclesiastics, was that judicial trial of the nation and its leaders which issued in the destruction of their whole state.

**what will he do unto those husbandmen?**

**41. They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men** — an emphatic alliteration not easily conveyed in English: “He will badly destroy those bad men,” or “miserably destroy those miserable men,” is something like it.

**and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons** — If this answer was given by the Pharisees, to whom our Lord addressed the parable, they thus unwittingly pronounced their own condemnation: as did David to Nathan the prophet (<sup><1022></sup>2 Samuel 12:5-7), and Simon the Pharisee to our Lord (<sup><10143></sup>Luke 7:43, etc.). But if it was given, as the two other Evangelists agree in representing it, by our Lord Himself, and the explicitness of the answer would seem to favor that supposition, then we can better explain the exclamation of the Pharisees which followed it, in Luke’s report (<sup><12016></sup>Luke 20:16) — “And when they heard it, they said, God forbid” — His whole meaning now bursting upon them.

**42. Jesus saith unto them. Did ye never read in the scriptures** — (<sup><13322></sup>Psalms 118:22,23).

**The stone which the builders rejected**, etc. — A bright Messianic prophecy, which reappears in various forms (<sup><2336></sup>Isaiah 28:16, etc.), and was made glorious use of by Peter before the Sanhedrim (<sup><4011></sup>Acts 4:11). He recurs to it in his first epistle (<sup><4004></sup>1 Peter 2:4-6).

**43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God** — God's visible Kingdom, or Church, upon earth, which up to this time stood in the seed of Abraham.

**shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof** — that is, the great evangelical community of the faithful, which, after the extrusion of the Jewish nation, would consist chiefly of Gentiles, until "all Israel should be saved" (<sup><6125></sup>Romans 11:25,26). This vastly important statement is given by Matthew only.

**44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder** — The Kingdom of God is here a Temple, in the erection of which a *certain stone*, rejected as unsuitable by the spiritual builders, is, by the great Lord of the House, made the keystone of the whole. On that Stone the builders were now "falling" and being "broken" (<sup><2385></sup>Isaiah 8:15). They were sustaining great spiritual hurt; but soon that Stone should "fall upon *them*" and "grind them to powder" (<sup><2138></sup>Daniel 2:34,35 <sup><3012></sup>Zechariah 12:2) — in their *corporate* capacity, in the tremendous destruction of Jerusalem, but *personally*, as unbelievers, in a more awful sense still.

**45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables** — referring to that of the Two Sons and this one of the Wicked Husbandmen.

**they perceived that he spake of them.**

**46. But when they sought to lay hands on him** — which Luke (<sup><0219></sup>Luke 20:19) says they did "the same hour," hardly able to restrain their rage.

**they feared the multitude** — rather, "the multitudes."

**because they took him for a prophet** — just as they feared to say John's baptism was of men, because the masses took him for a prophet (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 21:26). Miserable creatures! So, for this time, "they left Him and went their way" (<sup><4122></sup>Mark 12:12).

# CHAPTER 22

## ⌚ MATTHEW 22:1-14.

### PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

This is a different parable from that of the Great Supper, in ⌚ Luke 14:15, etc., and is recorded by Matthew alone.

**2. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son** — “In this parable,” as TRENCH admirably remarks, “we see how the Lord is revealing Himself in ever clearer light as the central Person of the kingdom, giving here a far plainer hint than in the last parable of the nobility of His descent. There He was indeed the Son, the only and beloved one (⌚ Mark 12:6), of the Householder; but here His race is royal, and He appears as Himself at once the King and the King’s Son (⌚ Psalm 72:1). The last was a parable of the Old Testament history; and Christ is rather the last and greatest of the line of its prophets and teachers than the founder of a new kingdom. In that, God appears *demanding* something *from* men; in this, a parable of grace, God appears more as *giving* something *to* them. Thus, as often, the two complete each other: this taking up the matter where the other left it.” The “marriage” of Jehovah to His people Israel was familiar to Jewish ears; and in ⌚ Psalm 45:1-17 this marriage is seen consummated in the Person of Messiah “THE KING,” Himself addressed as “GOD” and yet as anointed by “His God” with the oil of gladness above His fellows. These apparent contradictions (see on ⌚ Luke 20:41-44) are resolved in this parable; and Jesus, in claiming to be this King’s Son, *serves Himself Heir to all that the prophets and sweet singers of Israel held forth as to Jehovah’s ineffably near and endearing union to His people*. But observe carefully, that THE BRIDE does not come into view in this parable; its design being to teach certain truths under the figure of *guests* at a wedding *feast*, and the want of a wedding *garment*, which would not have harmonized with the introduction of the Bride.

**3. and sent forth his servants** — representing all preachers of the Gospel.

**to call them that were bidden** — here meaning the Jews, who were “bidden,” from the first choice of them onwards through every summons addressed to them by the prophets to hold themselves in readiness for the appearing of their King.

**to the wedding** — or the marriage festivities, when the preparations were all concluded.

**and they would not come** — as the issue of the whole ministry of the Baptist, our Lord Himself, and His apostles thereafter, too sadly showed.

**4. my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage** — This points to those Gospel calls *after* Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and effusion of the Spirit, to which the parable could not directly allude, but when only it could be said, with strict propriety, "that all things were ready." Compare <sup><407></sup>1 Corinthians 5:7,8, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore, let us keep the feast"; also <sup><408></sup>John 6:51, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

**5. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:**

**6. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully** — insulted them.

**and slew them** — These are two different classes of unbelievers: the one simply *indifferent*; the other absolutely *hostile* — the one, contemptuous *scorners*; the other, bitter *persecutors*.

**7. But when the king** — the Great God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**heard thereof, he was wroth** — at the affront put both on His Son, and on Himself who had deigned to invite them.

**and he sent forth his armies** — The *Romans* are here styled God's armies, just as the Assyrian is styled "the rod of His anger" (<sup><2005></sup>Isaiah 10:5), as being the executors of His judicial vengeance.

**and destroyed those murderers** — and in what vast numbers did they do it!

**and burned up their city** — Ah! Jerusalem, once "the city of the Great King" (<sup><98></sup>Psalms 48:2), and even up almost to this time (<sup><4055></sup>Matthew 5:35); but now it is "*their city*" — just as our Lord, a day or two after this, said of the temple, where God had so long dwelt, "Behold *your* house is left unto you desolate" (<sup><4038></sup>Matthew 23:38)! Compare <sup><209></sup>Luke 19:43,44.

**8. The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy** — for how should those be deemed worthy to sit down at His table who had affronted Him by their treatment of His gracious invitation?

**9. Go ye therefore into the highways** — the great outlets and thoroughfares, whether of town or country, where human beings are to be found.

**and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage** — that is, just as they are.

**10. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good** — that is, without making any distinction between open sinners and the morally correct. The Gospel call fetched in Jews, Samaritans, and outlying heathen alike. Thus far the parable answers to that of “the Great Supper” (<sup><2416</sup>Luke 14:16, etc.). But the distinguishing feature of our parable is what follows:

**11. And when the king came in to see the guests** — Solemn expression this, of that *omniscient inspection of every professed disciple of the Lord Jesus* from age to age, in virtue of which his true character will hereafter be judicially proclaimed!

**he saw there a man** — This shows that it is the judgment of *individuals* which is intended in this latter part of the parable: the first part represents rather *national* judgment.

**which had not on a wedding garment** — The language here is drawn from the following remarkable passage in <sup><3017</sup>Zephaniah 1:7,8: — “Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, He hath bid His guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord’s sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king’s children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.” The custom in the East of presenting festival garments (see <sup><1452</sup>Genesis 45:22 <sup><1152</sup>2 Kings 5:22), even though not clearly proved, is certainly presupposed here. It undoubtedly means something which they bring not of their own — for how could they have any such dress who were gathered in from the highways indiscriminately? — but which they *receive* as their appropriate dress. And what can that be but what is meant by “putting on the Lord Jesus,” as “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS?” (See <sup><1453</sup>Psalms 45:13,14). Nor could such language be strange to those in whose ears had so long resounded those words of prophetic joy: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of



righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (<sup><2610></sup>Isaiah 61:10).

**12. Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless** — being self-condemned.

**13. Then said the king to the servants** — the angelic ministers of divine vengeance (as in <sup><4134></sup>Matthew 13:41).

**Bind him hand and foot** — putting it out of his power to resist.

**and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness** — So <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 8:12 25:30. The expression is emphatic — “the darkness which is outside.” To be “*outside*” at all — or, in the language of <sup><6215></sup>Revelation 22:15, to be “*without*” the heavenly city, excluded from its joyous nuptials and gladsome festivities — is sad enough of itself, without anything else. But to find themselves not only excluded from the brightness and glory and joy and felicity of the kingdom above, but thrust into a region of “darkness,” with all its horrors, this is the dismal retribution here announced, that awaits the unworthy at the great day.

**there** — in that region and condition.

**shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** See on <sup><4132></sup>Matthew 13:42.

**14. For many are called, but few are chosen** — So <sup><4083></sup>Matthew 19:30. See on <sup><4116></sup>Matthew 20:16.

## <sup><41215></sup>MATTHEW 22:15-40.

**ENTANGLING QUESTIONS ABOUT TRIBUTE THE RESURRECTION, AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT, WITH THE REPLIES.** (<sup><41213></sup>MARK 12:13-34 <sup><42111></sup>LUKE 20:20-40).

For the exposition, see on <sup><41213></sup>Mark 12:13-34.

## <sup><41241></sup>MATTHEW 22:41-46.

**CHRIST BAFFLES THE PHARISEES BY A QUESTION ABOUT DAVID AND MESSIAH.** (<sup><41235></sup>MARK 12:35-37 <sup><42141></sup>LUKE 20:41-44).

For the exposition, see on <sup><41235></sup>Mark 12:35-37.

# CHAPTER 23

## ⌚ MATTHEW 23:1-39.

### DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES — LAMENTATION OVER JERUSALEM, AND FAREWELL TO THE TEMPLE. (⌚ MARK 12:38-40 ⌚ LUKE 20:45-47).

For this long and terrible discourse we are indebted, with the exception of a few verses in Mark and Luke, to Matthew alone. But as it is only an extended repetition of denunciations uttered not long before at the table of a Pharisee, and recorded by Luke (⌚ Luke 11:37-54), we may take both together in the exposition.

#### *Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (⌚ Matthew 23:1-36).*

The first twelve verses were addressed more immediately to the disciples, the rest to the scribes and Pharisees.

**1. Then spake Jesus to the multitude** — to the multitudes, “and to his disciples.”

**2. Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit** — The Jewish teachers *stood* to read, but *sat* to expound the Scriptures, as will be seen by comparing ⌚ Luke 4:16 with ⌚ Matthew 23:20.

**in Moses’ seat** — that is, as interpreters of the law given by Moses.

**3. All therefore** — that is, all which, as *sitting in that seat* and teaching *out of that law*.

**they bid you observe, that observe and do** — The word “therefore” is thus, it will be seen, of great importance, as limiting those injunctions which He would have them obey to what they fetched from the law itself. In requiring implicit obedience to such injunctions, He would have them to recognize the authority with which they taught over and above the obligations of the law itself — an important principle truly; but He who denounced the traditions of such teachers (⌚ Matthew 15:3) cannot have meant here to throw His shield over these. It is remarked by WEBSTER and WILKINSON that the warning to *beware* of the scribes is given by Mark and Luke (⌚ Mark 12:38 ⌚ Luke 20:46) without any qualification: the charge to *respect* and *obey* them being reported by Matthew alone,

indicating for whom this Gospel was especially written, and the writer's desire to conciliate the Jews.

**4. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them** — “touch them not” (<sup><2149</sup>Luke 11:46).

**with one of their fingers** — referring not so much to the irksomeness of the legal rites, though they were irksome enough (<sup><4150</sup>Acts 15:10), as to the heartless rigor with which they were enforced, and by men of shameless inconsistency.

**5. But all their works they do for to be seen of men** — Whatever good they do, or zeal they show, has but one motive — human applause.

**they make broad their phylacteries** — strips of parchment with Scripture — texts on them, worn on the forehead, arm, and side, in time of prayer.

**and enlarge the borders of their garments** — fringes of their upper garments (<sup><0153</sup>Numbers 15:37-40).

**6. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts** — The word “room” is now obsolete in the sense here intended. It should be “the uppermost place,” that is, the place of highest honor.

**and the chief seats in the synagogues.** See on <sup><2147</sup>Luke 14:7,8.

**7. And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi** — It is the spirit rather than the *letter* of this that must be pressed; though the violation of the letter, springing from spiritual pride, has done incalculable evil in the Church of Christ. The reiteration of the word “Rabbi” shows how it tickled the ear and fed the spiritual pride of those ecclesiastics.

**8. But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master** — your Guide, your Teacher.

**9. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven,** etc. — To construe these injunctions into a condemnation of every title by which Church rulers may be distinguished from the flock which they rule, is virtually to condemn that rule itself; and accordingly the same persons do both — but against the whole strain of the New Testament and sound Christian judgment. But when we have guarded ourselves against these extremes, let us see to it that we retain the full spirit of this warning against that itch for ecclesiastical superiority which has been

the bane and the scandal of Christ's ministers in every age. (On the use of the word "Christ" here, see on <sup><100></sup>Matthew 1:1).

**11. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant** — This plainly means, "shall show that he is so by becoming your servant"; as in <sup><100></sup>Matthew 20:27, compared with <sup><100></sup>Mark 10:44.

**12. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased** — See on <sup><100></sup>Luke 18:14. What follows was addressed more immediately to the scribes and Pharisees.

**13. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men** — Here they are charged with *shutting heaven* against men: in <sup><100></sup>Luke 11:52 they are charged with what was worse, *taking away the key* — "the key of knowledge" — which means, not the key to open knowledge, but knowledge as the only key to open heaven. A right knowledge of God's revealed word is eternal life, as our Lord says (<sup><100></sup>John 17:3 5:39); but this they took away from the people, substituting for it their wretched traditions.

**14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses,** etc. — Taking advantage of the helpless condition and confiding character of "widows," they contrived to obtain possession of their property, while by their "long prayers" they made them believe they were raised far above "filthy lucre." So much "the greater damnation" awaits them. What a lifelike description of the Romish clergy, the true successors of those scribes!

**15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte** — from heathenism. We have evidence of this in JOSEPHUS.

**and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves** — condemned, for the hypocrisy he would learn to practice, both by the religion he left and that he embraced.

**16. Woe unto you, ye blind guides** — Striking expression this of the ruinous effects of erroneous teaching. Our Lord, here and in some following verses, condemns the subtle distinctions they made as to the sanctity of oaths — distinctions invented only to promote their own avaricious purposes.

**which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing** — He has incurred no debt.

**but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple** — meaning not the gold that adorned the temple itself, but the *Corban*, set apart for sacred uses (see on <sup><1155></sup>Matthew 15:5).

**he is a debtor!** — that is, it is no longer his own, even though the necessities of the parent might require it. We know who the successors of these men are.

**but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty** — It should have been rendered, “he is a debtor,” as in <sup><1236></sup>Matthew 23:16.

**19. Ye fools, and blind! for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?** — (See <sup><1237></sup>Exodus 29:37).

**20-22. Whose therefore shall swear by the altar,** etc. — See on <sup><1153></sup>Matthew 5:33-37.

**23. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise** — rather, “dill,” as in *Margin*.

**and cummin** — In Luke (<sup><2142></sup>Luke 11:42) it is “and rue, and all manner of herbs.” They grounded this practice on <sup><1230></sup>Leviticus 27:30, which they interpreted rigidly. Our Lord purposely names the most trifling products of the earth as examples of what they punctiliously exacted the tenth of.

**and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith** — In Luke (<sup><2142></sup>Luke 11:42) it is “judgment, mercy, and the love of God” — the expression being probably varied by our Lord Himself on the two different occasions. In both His reference is to <sup><3100></sup>Micah 6:6-8, where the prophet makes all acceptable religion to consist of three elements — “doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God”; which third element presupposes and comprehends both the “faith” of Matthew and the “love” of Luke. See on <sup><1129></sup>Mark 12:29; <sup><1129></sup>Mark 12:32,33. The same tendency to merge greater duties in less besets even the children of God; but *it is the characteristic of hypocrites*.

**these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone** — There is no need for one set of duties to jostle out another; but it is to be carefully noted that of the *greater* duties our Lord says, “Ye ought to have done” them, while of the *lesser* He merely says, “Ye ought not to leave them undone.”

**24. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat** — The proper rendering — as in the older English translations, and perhaps our own as it came from the translators’ hands — evidently is, “strain out.” It was the custom, says TRENCH, of the stricter Jews to strain their wine, vinegar, and other potables

through linen or gauze, lest unawares they should drink down some little unclean insect therein and thus transgress (<sup><112></sup>Leviticus 11:20,23,41,42) — just as the Buddhists do now in Ceylon and Hindustan — and to this custom of theirs our Lord here refers.

**and swallow a camel** — the largest animal the Jews knew, as the “gnat” was the smallest; both were by the law *unclean*.

**25. within they are full of extortion** — In Luke (<sup><113></sup>Luke 11:39) the same word is rendered “ravening,” that is, “rapacity.”

**26. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also** — In Luke (<sup><114></sup>Luke 11:40) it is, “Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also?” — “He to whom belongs the outer life, and of right demands its subjection to Himself, is the inner man less His?” A remarkable example this of our Lord’s power of drawing the most striking illustrations of great truths from the most familiar objects and incidents in life. To these words, recorded by Luke, He adds the following, involving a principle of immense value: “But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you” (<sup><114></sup>Luke 11:41). As the greed of these hypocrites was one of the most prominent features of their character (<sup><114></sup>Luke 16:14), our Lord bids them exemplify the opposite character, and then their *outside*, ruled by this, would be beautiful in the eye of God, and their meals would be eaten with clean hands, though much fouled with the business of this everyday world. (See <sup><115></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:7).

**27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like whited sepulchres** — or, whitewashed sepulchres. (Compare <sup><116></sup>Acts 23:3). The process of whitewashing the sepulchres, as LIGHTFOOT says, was performed on a certain day every year, not for ceremonial cleansing, but., as the following words seem rather to imply, to beautify them.

**which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness** — What a powerful way of conveying the charge, that with all their fair show their hearts were full of corruption! (Compare <sup><117></sup>Psalms 5:9 <sup><118></sup>Romans 3:13). But our Lord, stripping off the figure, next holds up their iniquity in naked colors.

**Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets** — that is “ye be witnesses that ye have inherited, and voluntarily served yourselves heirs to, the truth-hating, prophet-killing, spirit of your fathers.” Out of pretended respect and honor, they repaired and beautified the sepulchres of the prophets, and with whining hypocrisy said, “If we had been in their days, how differently

should we have treated these prophets?" While all the time they were witnesses to themselves that they were the children of them that killed the prophets, convicting themselves daily of as exact a resemblance in spirit and character to the very classes over whose deeds they pretended to mourn, as child to parent. In <sup><2144></sup>Luke 11:44 our Lord gives another turn to this figure of a grave: "Ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them." As one might unconsciously walk over a grave concealed from view, and thus contract ceremonial defilement, so the plausible exterior of the Pharisees kept people from perceiving the pollution they contracted from coming in contact with such corrupt characters.

**33. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?** — In thus, at the end of His ministry, recalling the words of the Baptist at the outset of his, our Lord would seem to intimate that the only difference between their condemnation now and then was, that now they were ripe for their doom, which they were not then.

**34. Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes** — The I here is emphatic: "I am sending," that is, "am about to send." In <sup><2144></sup>Luke 11:49 the variation is remarkable: "Therefore also, said the wisdom of God, I will send them," etc. What precisely is meant by "the wisdom of God" here, is somewhat difficult to determine. To us it appears to be simply an announcement of a purpose of the Divine Wisdom, in the high style of ancient prophecy, to send a last set of messengers whom the people would reject, and rejecting, would fill up the cup of their iniquity. But, whereas in Luke it is "I, the Wisdom of God, will send them," in Matthew it is "I, Jesus, am sending them"; language only befitting the one sender of all the prophets, the Lord God of Israel now in the flesh. They are evidently evangelical messengers, but called by the familiar Jewish names of "prophets, wise men, and scribes," whose counterparts were the inspired and gifted servants of the Lord Jesus; for in Luke (<sup><2144></sup>Luke 11:49) it is "prophets and apostles."

**unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar** — As there is no record of any fresh murder answering to this description, probably the allusion is not to any recent murder, but to <sup><2140></sup>2 Chronicles 24:20-22, as the *last recorded* and most suitable case for illustration. And as Zacharias' last words were, "The Lord require it," so they are here warned that of that generation it should be *required*.

**36. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation** — As it was only in the last generation of them that "the



iniquity of the Amorites was full” (<sup><0156></sup>Genesis 15:16), and then the abominations of ages were at once completely and awfully avenged, so the iniquity of Israel was allowed to accumulate from age to age till in that generation it came to the full, and the whole collected vengeance of heaven broke at once over its devoted head. In the first French Revolution the same awful principle was exemplified, and *Christendom has not done with it yet*.

*Lamentation over Jerusalem and Farewell to the Temple*  
(<sup><0237></sup>Matthew 23:37-39).

**37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,** etc. — How ineffably grand and melting is this apostrophe! It is the very heart of God pouring itself forth through human flesh and speech. It is this incarnation of the innermost life and love of Deity, pleading with men, bleeding for them, and ascending only to open His arms to them and win them back by the power of this story of matchless love, that has conquered the world, that will yet “draw all men unto Him,” and beautify and ennoble Humanity itself! “Jerusalem” here does not mean the mere city or its inhabitants; nor is it to be viewed merely as the metropolis of the *nation*, but as the *center of their religious life* — “the city of their solemnities, whither the tribes went up, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord”; and at this moment it was full of them. It is the whole family of God, then, which is here apostrophized by a name dear to every Jew, recalling to him all that was distinctive and precious in his religion. The intense feeling that sought vent in this utterance comes out first in the redoubling of the opening word — “Jerusalem, Jerusalem!” but, next, in the picture of it which He draws — “that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee!” — not content with spurning God’s messages of mercy, that canst not suffer even the messengers to live! When He adds, “How often would I have gathered thee!” He refers surely to something beyond the six or seven times that He visited and taught in Jerusalem while on earth. No doubt it points to “the prophets,” whom they “killed,” to “them that were sent unto her,” whom they “stoned.” But whom would He have gathered so often? “Thee,” truth-hating, mercy-spurning, prophet-killing Jerusalem — how often would I have gathered *thee*! Compare with this that affecting clause in the great ministerial commission, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*.” (<sup><0247></sup>Luke 24:47). What encouragement to the heartbroken at their own long-continued and obstinate rebellion! But we have not yet got at the whole heart of this outburst. I would have gathered thee, He says, “even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.” Was ever imagery so homely invested with such grace and such sublimity as this, at our Lord’s touch? And yet how



exquisite the figure itself — of protection, rest, warmth, and all manner of conscious well-being in those poor, defenseless, dependent little creatures, as they creep under and feel themselves overshadowed by the capacious and kindly wing of the mother bird! If, wandering beyond hearing of her peculiar call, they are overtaken by a storm or attacked by an enemy, what can they do but in the one case droop and die, and in the other submit to be torn in pieces? But if they can reach in time their place of safety, under the mother's wing, in vain will any enemy try to drag them thence. For rising into strength, kindling into fury, and forgetting herself entirely in her young, she will let the last drop of her blood be shed out and perish in defense of her precious charge, rather than yield them to an enemy's talons. How significant all this of what Jesus is and does for men! Under His great Mediatorial wing would He have "gathered" Israel. For the figure, see <sup><1520></sup>Deuteronomy 32:10-12 <sup><1812></sup>Ruth 2:12 <sup><1970></sup>Psalm 17:8 36:7 61:4 63:7 91:4 <sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 31:5 <sup><3012></sup>Malachi 4:2. The ancient rabbins had a beautiful expression for proselytes from the heathen — that they had "come under the wings of the Shekinah." For this last word, see on <sup><1238></sup>Matthew 23:38. But what was the result of all this tender and mighty love? The answer is, "And ye would not." O mysterious word! mysterious the resistance of such patient Love-mysterious the liberty of self-undoing! The awful dignity of the *will*, as here expressed, might make the ears to tingle.

**38. Behold, your house** — the temple, beyond all doubt; but *their* house now, not *the Lord's*. See on <sup><1207></sup>Matthew 22:7.

**is left unto you desolate** — deserted, that is, of its Divine Inhabitant. But who is that? Hear the next words:

**39. For I say unto you** — and these were *His last words* to the impenitent nation, see on <sup><4112></sup>Mark 13:1, opening remarks.

**Ye shall not see me henceforth** — What? Does Jesus mean that He was Himself the Lord of the temple, and that it became "deserted" when HE finally left it? It is even so. Now is thy fate sealed, O Jerusalem, for the glory is departed from thee! That glory, once visible in the holy of holies, over the mercy seat, when on the day of atonement the blood of typical expiation was sprinkled on it and in front of it — called by the Jews the *Shekinah*, or the *Dwelling*, as being the visible pavilion of Jehovah — that glory, which Isaiah (<sup><2312></sup>Isaiah 6:1-13) saw in vision, the beloved disciple says was *the glory of Christ* (<sup><6124></sup>John 12:41). Though it was never visible in the second temple, Haggai foretold that "*the glory of that latter house should be greater than of the former*" (<sup><3012></sup>Haggai 2:9) because "the Lord whom they sought was suddenly to come to His temple" (<sup><3012></sup>Malachi 3:1), not in a mere bright cloud, but enshrined in living humanity! Yet brief as

well as “sudden” was the manifestation to be: for the words He was now uttering were to be HIS VERY LAST within its precincts.

**till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord** — that is, till those “Hosannas to the Son of David” with which the multitude had welcomed Him into the city — instead of “sore displeasing the chief priests and scribes” (¶1215 Matthew 21:15) — should break forth from the whole nation, as their glad acclaim to their once pierced, but now acknowledged, Messiah. That such a time will come is clear from ¶8210 Zechariah 12:10 ¶6126 Romans 11:26 ¶7185 2 Corinthians 3:15,16, etc. In what sense they shall then “see Him” may be gathered from ¶8217 Zechariah 2:10-13 ¶6723 Ezekiel 37:23-28 39:28,29, etc.

# CHAPTER 24

⌄⌄⌄ MATTHEW 24:1-51.

**CHRIST'S PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF  
JERUSALEM, AND WARNINGS SUGGESTED BY IT TO  
PREPARE FOR HIS SECOND COMING. (⌄⌄⌄ MARK 13:1-37  
⌄⌄⌄ LUKE 21:5-36).**

For the exposition, see on ⌄⌄⌄ Mark 13:1-37.

# CHAPTER 25

## ⌚ MATTHEW 25:1-13.

### PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

This and the following parable are in Matthew alone.

**1. Then** — at the time referred to at the close of the preceding chapter, the time of the Lord's Second Coming to reward His faithful servants and take vengeance on the faithless. *Then* shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took

**their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom** — This supplies a key to the parable, whose object is, in the main, the same as that of the last parable — to illustrate *the vigilant and expectant attitude of faith*, in respect of which believers are described as “they that look for Him” (⌚ Hebrews 9:28), and “love His appearing” (⌚ 2 Timothy 4:8). In the last parable it was that of servants waiting for their absent Lord; in this it is that of virgin attendants on a Bride, whose duty it was to go forth at night with lamps, and be ready on the appearance of the Bridegroom to conduct the Bride to his house, and go in with him to the marriage. This entire and beautiful change of figure brings out the lesson of the former parable in quite a new light. But let it be observed that, just as in the parable of the Marriage Supper, so in this — the *Bride* does not come into view at all in this parable; the *Virgins* and the *Bridegroom* holding forth all the intended instruction: nor could believers be represented both as Bride and Bridal Attendants without incongruity.

**2. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish** — They are not distinguished into good and bad, as TRENCH observes, but into “wise” and “foolish” — just as in ⌚ Matthew 7:25-27 those who reared their house for eternity are distinguished into “wise” and “foolish builders”; because in both cases a certain degree of goodwill towards the truth is assumed. To make anything of the equal number of both classes would, we think, be precarious, save to warn us how large a portion of those who, up to the last, so nearly resemble those that love Christ's appearing will be disowned by Him when He comes.

**3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:**

**4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps** — What are these “lamps” and this “oil”? Many answers have been given. But since the foolish as well as the wise took their lamps and went forth with them to meet the Bridegroom, these lighted lamps and this advance a certain way in company with the wise, must denote that Christian profession which is common to all who bear the Christian name; while the insufficiency of this without something else, of which they never possessed themselves, shows that “the foolish” mean those who, with all that is common to them with real Christians, *lack the essential preparation for meeting Christ*. Then, since the wisdom of “the wise” consisted in their taking with their lamps a supply of oil in their vessels, keeping their lamps burning till the Bridegroom came, and so fitting them to go in with Him to the marriage, this supply of oil must mean that *inward reality of grace* which alone will stand when He appears whose eyes are as a flame of fire. But this is too general; for it cannot be for nothing that this inward grace is here set forth by the familiar symbol of *oil*, by which *the Spirit of all grace* is so constantly represented in Scripture. Beyond all doubt, this was what was symbolized by that precious anointing oil with which Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priestly office (<sup><023></sup>Exodus 30:23-25,30); by “the oil of gladness above His fellows” with which Messiah was to be anointed (<sup><081></sup>Psalms 45:7 <sup><009></sup>Hebrews 1:9), even as it is expressly said, that “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (<sup><034></sup>John 3:34); and by the bowl full of golden oil, in Zechariah’s vision, which, receiving its supplies from the two olive trees on either side of it, poured it through seven golden pipes into the golden lamp-stand to keep it continually burning bright (<sup><004></sup>Zechariah 4:1-14) — for the prophet is expressly told that it was to proclaim the great truth, “Not by might, nor by power, but by MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts [shall this temple be built]. Who art thou, O great mountain [of opposition to this issue]? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain [or, be swept out of the way], and he shall bring forth the head stone [of the temple], with shoutings [crying], GRACE, GRACE unto it.” This supply of oil, then, representing that inward grace which distinguishes the wise, must denote, more particularly, that “supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” which, as it is the source of the new spiritual life at the first, is the secret of its *enduring* character. Everything *short of this* may be possessed by “the foolish”; while it is the possession of this that makes “the wise” to be “ready” when the Bridegroom appears, and fit to “go in with Him to the marriage.” Just so in the parable of the Sower, the stony-ground hearers, “having no deepness of earth” and “no root in themselves,” though they spring up and get even into ear, never ripen, while they in the good ground bear the precious grain.

**5. While the bridegroom tarried** — So in <sup><4BHS></sup>Matthew 24:48, “My Lord delayeth His coming”; and so Peter says sublimely of the ascended Savior, “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things” (<sup><4AB></sup>Acts 3:21, and compare <sup><DBH></sup>Luke 19:11,12). Christ “tarries,” among other reasons, to try the faith and patience of His people. they

**all slumbered and slept** — the wise as well as the foolish. The world “slumbered” signifies, simply, “nodded,” or, “became drowsy”; while the world “slept” is the usual word for lying down to sleep, denoting two stages of spiritual declension — first, that half-involuntary lethargy or drowsiness which is apt to steal over one who falls into inactivity; and then a conscious, deliberate yielding to it, after a little vain resistance. Such was the state alike of the wise and the foolish virgins, even till the cry of the Bridegroom’s approach awoke them. So likewise in the parable of the Importunate Widow: “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” (<sup><DBH></sup>Luke 18:8).

**6. And at midnight** — that is, the time when the Bridegroom will be least expected; for “the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (<sup><3BD></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:2).

**there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him** — that is, Be ready to welcome Him.

**7. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps** — the foolish virgins as well as the wise. How very long do both parties seem the same — almost to the moment of decision! Looking at the mere form of the parable, it is evident that the folly of “the foolish” consisted not in having no oil at all; for they must have had oil enough in their lamps to keep them burning up to this moment: their folly consisted in not making provision against its *exhaustion*, by taking with their lamp an *oil-vessel* wherewith to replenish their lamp from time to time, and so have it burning until the Bridegroom should come. Are we, then — with some even superior expositors — to conclude that the foolish virgins must represent true Christians as well as do the wise, since only true Christians have the Spirit, and that the difference between the two classes consists only in the one having the necessary watchfulness which the other wants? Certainly not. Since the parable was designed to hold forth the prepared and the unprepared to meet Christ at His coming, and how the unprepared might, up to the very last, be confounded with the prepared — the structure of the parable behooved to accommodate itself to this, by making the lamps of the foolish to burn, as well as those of the wise, up to a certain point of time, and only then to discover their inability to burn on for want of a fresh supply of oil. But this is evidently just a *structural device*; and the real

difference between the two classes who profess to love the Lord's appearing is a *radical one* — the possession by the one class of *an enduring principle of spiritual life*, and the want of it by the other.

**8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out** — rather, as in the *Margin*, “are going out”; for oil will not light an extinguished lamp, though it will keep a burning one from going out. Ah! now at length they have discovered not only their own folly, but the wisdom of the other class, and they do homage to it. They did not perhaps despise them before, but they thought them righteous overmuch; now they are forced, with bitter mortification, to wish they were like them.

**9. But the wise answered, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you** — The words “Not so,” it will be seen, are not in the original, where the reply is very elliptical — “In case there be not enough for us and you.” A truly wise answer this. “And what, then, if we shall share it with you? Why, both will be undone.”

**but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves** — Here again it would be straining the parable beyond its legitimate design to make it teach that men may get salvation even after they are supposed and required to have it already gotten. It is merely a friendly way of reminding them of the proper way of obtaining the needed and precious article, with a certain reflection on them for having it now to seek. Also, when the parable speaks of “selling” and “buying” that valuable article, it means simply, “Go, get it in the only legitimate way.” And yet the word “buy” is significant; for we are elsewhere bidden, “buy wine and milk without money and without price,” and “buy of Christ gold tried in the fire,” (<sup>2581</sup>Isaiah 55:1 <sup>4188</sup>Revelation 3:18). Now, since what we pay the demanded price for becomes thereby *our own property*, the salvation which we thus take gratuitously at God's hands, being bought in His own sense of that word, becomes ours thereby in inalienable possession. (Compare for the language, <sup>4123</sup>Proverbs 23:23 <sup>4134</sup>Matthew 13:44).

**10. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut** — They are sensible of their past folly; they have taken good advice: they are in the act of getting what alone they lacked: a very little more, and they also are ready. But the Bridegroom comes; the ready are admitted; “the door is shut,” and they are undone. How graphic and appalling this picture of one *almost saved* — *but lost!*

**11. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us** — In <sup>4102</sup>Matthew 7:22 this reiteration of the name was an exclamation rather of surprise; here it is a piteous cry of urgency, bordering on despair.

Ah! now at length their eyes are wide open, and they realize all the consequences of their past folly.

**12. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not** — The attempt to establish a difference between “I know you not” here, and “I never knew you” in <sup><4073></sup>Matthew 7:23 — as if this were gentler, and so implied a milder fate, reserved for “the foolish” of this parable — is to be resisted, though advocated by such critics as OLSHAUSEN, STIER, and ALFORD. Besides being inconsistent with the general tenor of such language, and particularly the solemn moral of the whole (<sup><4253></sup>Matthew 25:13), it is a *kind* of criticism which tampers with some of the most awful warnings regarding the future. If it be asked why unworthy guests were admitted to the marriage of the King’s Son, in a former parable, and the foolish virgins are excluded in this one, we may answer, in the admirable words of GERHARD, quoted by TRENCH, that those festivities are celebrated in this life, in the Church militant; these at the last day, in the Church triumphant; to those, even they are admitted who are not adorned with the wedding garment; but to these, only they to whom it is granted to be arrayed in fine linen clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints (<sup><6908></sup>Revelation 19:8); to those, men are called by the trumpet of the Gospel; to these by the trumpet of the Archangel; to those, who enters may go out from them, or be cast out; who is once introduced to these never goes out, nor is cast out, from them any more: wherefore it is said, “The door is shut.”

**13. Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh** — This, the moral or practical lesson of the whole parable, needs no comment.

## <sup><4254></sup>MATTHEW 25:14-30.

### PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

This parable, while closely resembling it, is yet a different one from that of THE POUNDS, in <sup><2941></sup>Luke 19:11-27; though CALVIN, OLSHAUSEN, MEYER, and others identify them — but not DE WETTE and NEANDER. For the difference between the two parables, see the opening remarks on that of The Pounds. While, as TRENCH observes with his usual felicity, “the virgins were represented as *waiting* for their Lord, we have the servants *working* for Him; there the *inward spiritual life* of the faithful was described; here his *external activity*. It is not, therefore, without good reason that they appear in their actual order — that of the Virgins first, and of the Talents



following — since it is the sole condition of a profitable outward activity for the kingdom of God, that the life of God be diligently maintained within the heart.”

**14. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man** — The ellipsis is better supplied by our translators in the corresponding passage of Mark (<sup><4133></sup>Mark 13:34), “[For the Son of man is] as a man”

**travelling into a far country** — or more simply, “going abroad.” The idea of long “tarrying” is certainly implied here, since it is expressed in <sup><1259></sup>Matthew 25:19.

**who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods** — Between master and slaves this was not uncommon in ancient times. Christ’s “servants” here mean all who, by their Christian profession, stand in the relation to Him of entire subjection. His “goods” mean all their gifts and endowments, whether original or acquired, natural or spiritual. As all that slaves have belongs to their master, so Christ has a claim to everything which belongs to His people, everything which, may be turned to good, and He demands its appropriation to His service, or, viewing it otherwise, they first offer it up to Him; as being “not their own, but bought with a price” (<sup><4099></sup>1 Corinthians 6:19,20), and He “delivers it to them” again to be put to use in His service.

**15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one** — While the *proportion of gifts* is different in each, the same *fidelity* is required of all, and equally rewarded. And thus there is perfect equity.

**to every man according to his several ability** — his natural capacity as enlisted in Christ’s service, and his opportunities in providence for employing the gifts bestowed on him.

**and straightway took his journey** — Compare <sup><4133></sup>Matthew 21:33, where the same departure is ascribed to God, after setting up the ancient economy. In both cases, it denotes the leaving of men to the action of all those spiritual laws and influences of Heaven under which they have been graciously placed for their own salvation and the advancement of their Lord’s kingdom.

**16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same** — expressive of the activity which he put forth and the labor he bestowed.

**and made them other five talents.**

**17. And likewise he that had received two he also gained other two** — each doubling what he received, and therefore *both equally faithful*.

**18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money** — not misspending, but simply making no use of it. Nay, his action seems that of one anxious that the gift should not be misused or lost, but ready to be returned, just as he got it.

**19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them** — That any one — within the lifetime of the apostles at least — with such words before them, should think that Jesus had given any reason to expect His Second Appearing within that period, would seem strange, did we not know the tendency of enthusiastic, ill-regulated love of His appearing ever to take this turn.

**20. Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more** — How beautifully does this illustrate what the beloved disciple says of “boldness in the day of judgment,” and his desire that “when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming!” (ⲉⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ John 4:17 2:28).

**21. His lord said unto him, Well done** — a single word, not of bare satisfaction, but of warm and delighted commendation. And from what Lips!

**thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things**, etc.

**22. He also that had received two talents came ... good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things** — *Both are commended in the same terms, and the reward of both is precisely the same.* (See on ⲉⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Matthew 25:15). Observe also the contrasts: “Thou hast been faithful as a *servant*; now be a *ruler* — thou hast been *entrusted* with a few things; now have *dominion* over *many* things.”

**enter thou into the joy of thy lord** — thy Lord's own joy. (See ⲉⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ John 15:11 ⲉⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Hebrews 12:2).

**24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man** — harsh. The word in Luke (ⲉⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Luke 19:21) is “austere.”

**reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed** — The sense is obvious: “I knew thou wast one whom it was impossible to serve, one whom nothing would please: exacting what was

impracticable, and dissatisfied with what was attainable.” Thus do men secretly think of God as a hard Master, and virtually throw on Him the blame of their fruitlessness.

**25. And I was afraid** — of making matters worse by meddling with it at all.

**and went and hid thy talent in the earth** — This depicts the conduct of all those who shut up their gifts from the active service of Christ, without actually prostituting them to unworthy uses. Fitly, therefore, may it, at least, comprehend those, to whom TRENCH refers, who, in the early Church, pleaded that they had enough to do with their own souls, and were afraid of losing them in trying to save others; and so, instead of being the salt of the earth, thought rather of keeping their own saltiness by withdrawing sometimes into caves and wildernesses, from all those active ministries of love by which they might have served their brethren.

**Thou wicked and slothful servant** — “Wicked” or “bad” means “falsehearted,” as opposed to the others, who are emphatically styled “*good* servants.” The addition of “slothful” is to mark the precise nature of his wickedness: it consisted, it seems, not in his doing anything *against*, but simply *nothing* for his master.

**Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed** — He takes the servant’s own account of his demands, as expressing graphically enough, not the *hardness* which he had basely imputed to him, but simply his demand of a *profitable return for the gift entrusted*.

**27. thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers** — the banker.

**and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury** — interest.

**29. For unto every one that hath shall be given**, etc. — See on <sup>4132</sup>Matthew 13:12.

**30. And cast ye** — cast ye out.

**the unprofitable servant** — the useless servant, that does his Master no service.

**into outer darkness** — the darkness which is outside. On this expression see on <sup>4123</sup>Matthew 22:13.

**there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth** — See on <sup>413C</sup>Matthew 13:42.

## <sup>413B</sup>MATTHEW 25:31-46.

### THE LAST JUDGMENT.

The close connection between this sublime scene — peculiar to Matthew — and the two preceding parables is too obvious to need pointing out.

**31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory** — His *personal* glory.

**and all the holy angels with him** — See <sup>413B</sup>Deuteronomy 33:2 <sup>410B</sup>Daniel 7:9,10 <sup>411A</sup>Jude 1:14; with <sup>301B</sup>Hebrews 1:6 <sup>412B</sup>1 Peter 3:22.

**then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory** — the glory of His *judicial* authority.

**32. And before him shall be gathered all nations** — or, “all the nations.” That this should be understood to mean the *heathen nations*, or all *except* believers in Christ, will seem amazing to any simple reader. Yet this is the exposition of OLSHAUSEN, STIER, KEIL, ALFORD (though latterly with some diffidence), and of a number, though not all, of those who hold that Christ will come the second time before the millennium, and that the saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air before His appearing. Their chief argument is, the impossibility of any that ever knew the Lord Jesus wondering, at the Judgment Day, that they should be thought to have done — or left undone — anything “unto Christ.” To that we shall advert when we come to it. But here we may just say, that if this scene does not describe a personal, public, final judgment on men, according to the treatment they have given to Christ — and consequently men within the Christian pale — we shall have to consider again whether our Lord’s teaching on the greatest themes of human interest does indeed possess that incomparable simplicity and transparency of meaning which, by universal consent, has been ascribed to it. If it be said, But how can this be the general judgment, if only those within the Christian pale be embraced by it? — we answer, What is here described, as it certainly does not meet the case of all the family of Adam, is of course *so far* not general. But we have no right to conclude that the whole “judgment of the great day” will be limited to the point of view here presented. Other explanations will come up in the course of our exposition.

**and he shall separate them** — now for the first time; the two classes having been mingled all along up to this awful moment.

**as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats** — (See <sup><1017></sup>Ezekiel 34:17).

**33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand** — the side of honor (<sup><1019></sup>1 Kings 2:19 <sup><1019></sup>Psalm 45:9 110:1, etc.).

**but the goats on the left** — the side consequently of dishonor.

**34. Then shall the King** — Magnificent title, here for the first and only time, save in parabolical language, given to Himself by the Lord Jesus, and that on the eve of His deepest humiliation! It is to intimate that in then addressing the heirs of the kingdom, *He will put on all His regal majesty*.

**say unto them on his right hand, Come** — the same sweet word with which He had so long invited all the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him for rest. Now it is addressed exclusively to such as *have* come and found rest. It is still, “Come,” and to “rest” too; but to rest in a higher style, and in another region.

**ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world** — The whole story of this their blessedness is given by the apostle, in words which seem but an expression of these: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” They were chosen from everlasting to the possession and enjoyment of all spiritual blessings in Christ, and so chosen in order to be holy and blameless in love. This is the holy love whose practical manifestations the King is about to recount in detail; and thus we see that their whole life of love to Christ is the fruit of an eternal purpose of love to them in Christ.

**35. For I was an hungered ... thirsty ... a stranger**, etc.

**36. Naked ... sick ... prison, and ye came unto me**.

**37-39. Then shall the righteous answer him**, etc.

**40. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you**, etc. — Astonishing dialogue this between the King, from the Throne of His glory, and His wondering people! “I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat,” etc. — “Not we,” they reply. “We never did that, Lord: We were born out of due time, and enjoyed not the privilege of ministering unto

Thee.” “But ye did it to these My brethren, now beside you, when cast upon your love.” “Truth, Lord, but was that doing it to Thee? Thy name was indeed dear to us, and we thought it a great honor to suffer shame for it. When among the destitute and distressed we discerned any of the household of faith, we will not deny that our hearts leapt within us at the discovery, and when their knock came to our dwelling, our bowels were moved, as though ‘our Beloved Himself had put in His hand by the hole of the door.’ Sweet was the fellowship we had with them, as if we had ‘entertained angels unawares’; all difference between giver and receiver somehow melted away under the beams of that love of Thine which knit us together; nay, rather, as they left us with gratitude for our poor givings, we seemed the debtors — not they. But, Lord, were we all that time in company with Thee? ... Yes, that scene was all with Me,” replies the King — “Me in the disguise of My poor ones. The door shut against Me by others was opened by you — ‘Ye took Me in.’ Apprehended and imprisoned by the enemies of the truth, ye whom the truth had made free sought Me out diligently and found Me; visiting Me in My lonely cell at the risk of your own lives, and cheering My solitude; ye gave Me a coat, for I shivered; and then I felt warm. With cups of cold water ye moistened My parched lips; when famished with hunger ye supplied Me with crusts, and my spirit revived — “YE DID IT UNTO ME.” What thoughts crowd upon us as we listen to such a description of the scenes of the Last Judgment! And in the light of this view of the heavenly dialogue, how bald and wretched, not to say unscriptural, is that view of it to which we referred at the outset, which makes it a dialogue between Christ and *heathens* who never heard of His name, and of course never felt any stirrings of His love in their hearts! To us it seems a poor, superficial objection to the *Christian* view of this scene, that Christians could never be supposed to ask such questions as the “blessed of Christ’s Father” are made to ask here. If there were any difficulty in explaining this, the difficulty of the other view is such as to make *it*, at least, insufferable. But there is no real difficulty. The surprise expressed is not at their being told that they acted from love to Christ, but that *Christ Himself* was the *Personal Object* of all their deeds: that they found *Him* hungry, and supplied Him with food: that they brought water to *Him*, and slaked His thirst; that seeing *Him* naked and shivering, they put warm clothing upon Him, paid *Him* visits when lying in prison for the truth, and sat by *His* bedside when laid down with sickness. This is the astonishing interpretation which Jesus says “the King” will give to them of their own actions here below. And will any Christian reply, “How could this astonish them? Does not every Christian know that He does these very things, when He does them at all, just as they are here represented?” Nay, rather, is it conceivable that they should *not* be astonished, and almost doubt their own ears, to hear such an account of their own actions upon earth

from the lips of the Judge? And remember, that Judge has come in His glory, and now sits upon the throne of His glory, and all the holy angels are with Him; and that it is from those glorified Lips that the words come forth, “Ye did all this unto ME.” Oh, can we imagine such a word addressed to *ourselves*, and then fancy ourselves replying, “Of course we did — To whom else did we anything? It must be others than we that are addressed, who never knew, in all their good deeds, what they were about?” Rather, can we imagine ourselves not overpowered with astonishment, and scarcely able to credit the testimony borne to us by the King?

**41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed,** etc. — As for you on the left hand, ye did nothing for Me. I came to you also, but ye knew Me not: ye had neither warm affections nor kind deeds to bestow upon Me: I was as one despised in your eyes.” “In *our* eyes, Lord? We never saw Thee before, and never, sure, behaved we so to Thee.” “But thus ye treated these little ones that believe in Me and now stand on My right hand. In the disguise of these poor members of Mine I came soliciting your pity, but ye shut up your bowels of compassion from Me: I asked relief, but ye had none to give Me. Take back therefore your own coldness, your own contemptuous distance: Ye bid Me away from your presence, and now I bid you from Mine — *Depart from Me, ye cursed!*”

**46. And these shall go away** — these “cursed” ones. Sentence, it should seem, was first *pronounced* — in the hearing of the wicked — upon the *righteous*, who thereupon sit as assessors in the judgment upon the wicked (~~400~~1 Corinthians 6:2); but sentence is first *executed*, it should seem, upon the *wicked*, in the sight of the righteous — whose glory will thus not be beheld by the wicked, while *their* descent into “their own place” will be witnessed by the righteous, as BENDEL notes.

**into everlasting punishment** — or, as in ~~415~~Matthew 25:41, “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Compare ~~413~~Matthew 13:42 ~~500~~2 Thessalonians 1:9, etc. This is said to be “prepared for the devil and his angels,” because they were “first in transgression.” But both have one doom, because one unholy character.

**but the righteous into life eternal** — that is, “life everlasting.” The word in both clauses, being in the original the same, should have been the same in the translation also. Thus the decisions of this awful day will be final, irreversible, unending.

## CHAPTER 26

### ⌞181⌟ MATTHEW 26:1-16.

**CHRIST'S FINAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH, AS NOW WITHIN TWO DAYS, AND THE SIMULTANEOUS CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES TO COMPASS IT — THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY — JUDAS AGREES WITH THE CHIEF PRIESTS TO BETRAY HIS LORD. (⌞1418⌟ MARK 14:1-11 ⌞2218⌟ LUKE 22:1-6 ⌞8211⌟ JOHN 12:1-11).**

For the exposition, see on ⌞1418⌟ Mark 14:1-11.

### ⌞1817⌟ MATTHEW 26:17-30.

**PREPARATION FOR AND LAST CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRAITOR, AND INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER. (⌞1412⌟ MARK 14:12-26 ⌞2217⌟ LUKE 22:7-23 ⌞8301⌟ JOHN 13:1-3,10,11,18-30).**

For the exposition, see on ⌞2217⌟ Luke 22:7-23.

### ⌞1831⌟ MATTHEW 26:31-35.

**THE DESERTION OF JESUS BY HIS DISCIPLES AND THE DENIAL OF PETER FORETOLD. (⌞1427⌟ MARK 14:27-31 ⌞2231⌟ LUKE 22:31-38 ⌞8336⌟ JOHN 13:36-38).**

For the exposition, see on ⌞2231⌟ Luke 22:31-38.



⌄1836 **MATTHEW 26:36-46.**

**THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.**  
(⌄1143 **MARK 14:32-42** ⌄2239 **LUKE 22:39-46**).

For the exposition, see on ⌄2239 Luke 22:39-46.

⌄1837 **MATTHEW 26:47-56.**

**BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS - FLIGHT OF HIS DISCIPLES.** (⌄1143 **MARK 14:43-52** ⌄2247 **LUKE 22:47-54** ⌄8813 **JOHN 18:1-12**).

For the exposition, see on ⌄8813 John 18:1-12.

⌄1837 **MATTHEW 26:57-75.**

**JESUS ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM  
CONDEMNED TO DIE, AND SHAMEFULLY ENTREATED —  
THE DENIAL OF PETER.** (⌄1143 **MARK 14:53-72** ⌄2254 **LUKE 22:54-71**  
⌄8813 **JOHN 18:13-18,24-27**).

For the exposition, see on ⌄1143 Mark 14:53-72.

# CHAPTER 27

## ✠MATTHEW 27:1-10.

### JESUS LED AWAY TO PILATE — REMORSE AND SUICIDE OF JUDAS. (✠MARK 15:1 ✠LUKE 23:1 ✠JOHN 18:28).

*Jesus Led Away to Pilate (✠Matthew 27:1,2).*

For the exposition of this portion, see on ✠John 18:28, etc.

*Remorse and Suicide of Judas (✠Matthew 27:3-10).*

This portion is peculiar to Matthew. On the progress of guilt in the traitor, see on ✠Mark 14:1-11; ✠John 13:21-30.

**3. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned** — The condemnation, even though not unexpected, might well fill him with horror. But perhaps this unhappy man expected, that, while he got the bribe, the Lord would miraculously escape, as He had once and again done before, out of His enemies power: and if so, his remorse would come upon him with all the greater keenness.

**repented himself** — but, as the issue too sadly showed, it was “the sorrow of the world, which worketh death” (✠2 Corinthians 7:10).

**and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders** — A remarkable illustration of the power of an awakened conscience. A short time before, the promise of this sordid pelf was temptation enough to his covetous heart to outweigh the most overwhelming obligations of duty and love; now, the possession of it so lashes him that he cannot use it, cannot even keep it!

**4. Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood** — What a testimony this to Jesus! Judas had been with Him in all circumstances for three years; his post, as treasurer to Him and the Twelve (✠John 12:6), gave him peculiar opportunity of watching the spirit, disposition, and habits of his Master; while his covetous nature and thievish practices would incline him to dark and suspicious, rather than frank and generous, interpretations of all that He said and did. If, then, he could have fastened on one questionable feature in all that he had so long witnessed, we may be sure that no such speech as this would ever have escaped his lips,

nor would he have been so stung with remorse as not to be able to keep the money and survive his crime.

**And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that** — “Guilty or innocent is nothing to us: We have Him now — begone!” Was ever speech more hellish uttered?

**5. And he cast down the pieces of silver** — The sarcastic, diabolical reply which he had got, in place of the sympathy which perhaps he expected, would deepen his remorse into an agony.

**in the temple** — the temple proper, commonly called “the sanctuary,” or “the holy place,” into which only the priests might enter. How is this to be explained? Perhaps he flung the money in after them. But thus were fulfilled the words of the prophet — “I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord” (<sup><3113></sup>Zechariah 11:13).

**and departed, and went and hanged himself** — For the details, see on <sup><4018></sup>Acts 1:18.

**6. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury** — “the *Corban*,” or chest containing the money dedicated to sacred purposes (see on <sup><1515></sup>Matthew 15:5).

**because it is the price of blood** — How scrupulous now! But those punctilious scruples made them unconsciously fulfill the Scripture.

**9. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying** — (<sup><3112></sup>Zechariah 11:12,13). Never was a complicated prophecy, otherwise hopelessly dark, more marvellously fulfilled. Various conjectures have been formed to account for Matthew’s ascribing to Jeremiah a prophecy found in the book of Zechariah. But since with this book he was plainly familiar, having quoted one of its most remarkable prophecies of Christ but a few chapters before (<sup><1201></sup>Matthew 21:4,5), the question is one more of critical interest than real importance. Perhaps the true explanation is the following, from LIGHTFOOT: “Jeremiah of old had the first place among the prophets, and hereby he comes to be mentioned above all the rest in <sup><1614></sup>Matthew 16:14; because he stood first in the volume of the prophets [as he proves from the learned DAVID KIMCHI] therefore he is first named. When, therefore, Matthew produceth a text of Zechariah under the name of JEREMY, he only cites the words of the volume of the prophets under his name who stood first in the volume of the prophets. Of which sort is that also of our Savior (<sup><2441></sup>Luke 24:41), “All things must be fulfilled which are written of Me in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms,” or the Book of Hagiographa, in which the Psalms were placed first.”

## ◀171▶ **MATTHEW 27:11-26.**

**JESUS AGAIN BEFORE PILATE — HE SEEKS TO RELEASE HIM BUT AT LENGTH DELIVERS HIM TO BE CRUCIFIED.**

(◀151▶ **MARK 15:1-15** ▶231▶ **LUKE 23:1-25** ▶838▶ **JOHN 18:28-40**).

For the exposition, see on ▶231▶ Luke 23:1-25; ▶838▶ John 18:28-40.

## ◀172▶ **MATTHEW 27:27-33.**

**JESUS SCORNFULLY AND CRUELLY ENTREATED OF THE SOLDIERS, IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED. (◀156▶ **MARK 15:16-22** ▶233▶ **LUKE 23:26-31** ▶842▶ **JOHN 19:2,17**).**

For the exposition, see on ▶156▶ Mark 15:16-22.

## ◀173▶ **MATTHEW 27:34-50.**

**CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS.**

(◀155▶ **MARK 15:25-37** ▶233▶ **LUKE 23:33-46** ▶838▶ **JOHN 19:18-30**).

For the exposition, see on ▶838▶ John 19:18-30.

## ◀175▶ **MATTHEW 27:51-66.**

**SIGNS AND CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS — HE IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS, AND BURIED — THE SEPULCHRE IS GUARDED.**

(◀158▶ **MARK 15:38-47** ▶234▶ **LUKE 23:47-56** ▶838▶ **JOHN 19:31-42**).

*The Veil Rent* (◀175▶ Matthew 27:51).

**51. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom** — This was the thick and gorgeously wrought veil which was hung between the “holy place” and the “holiest of all,” shutting out all access to the presence of God as manifested “from above the mercy seat and from between the cherubim” — “the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was *not yet* made manifest” (◀808▶ Hebrews 9:8).

Into this holiest of all none might enter, not even the high priest, save once a year, on the great day of atonement, and then only with the blood of atonement in his hands, which he sprinkled “upon and before the mercy seat seven times” (<sup><816></sup>Leviticus 16:14) — to signify that *access for sinners to a holy God is only through atoning blood*. But as they had only the blood of bulls and of goats, which could not take away sins (<sup><810></sup>Hebrews 10:4), during all the long ages that preceded the death of Christ the thick veil remained; the blood of bulls and of goats continued to be shed and sprinkled; and once a year access to God through an atoning sacrifice was vouchsafed — *in a picture*, or rather, was *dramatically represented*, in those symbolical actions — nothing more. But *now*, the one atoning Sacrifice being provided in the precious blood of Christ, access to this holy God could no longer be denied; and so the moment the Victim expired on the altar, that thick veil which for so many ages had been the dread symbol of *separation between God and guilty men* was, without a hand touching it, mysteriously “rent in twain from top to bottom” — “the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was NOW made manifest!” How emphatic the statement, *from top to bottom*; as if to say, Come boldly now to the Throne of Grace; *the veil is clean gone*; the mercy seat stands open to the gaze of sinners, and the way to it is sprinkled with the blood of Him — “who through the eternal Spirit hath offered Himself without spot to God!” Before, it was death *to go in*, now it is *death to stay out*. See more on this glorious subject on <sup><819></sup>Hebrews 10:19-22.

*An Earthquake — The Rocks Rent — The Graves Opened, that the Saints Which Slept in Them Might Come Forth after Their Lord's Resurrection* (<sup><175></sup>Matthew 27:51-53).

**51. and the earth did quake** — From what follows it would seem that this earthquake was local, having for its object the rending of the rocks and the opening of the graves.

**and the rocks rent** — “were rent” — the physical creation thus sublimely proclaiming, at the bidding of its Maker, the *concussion* which at that moment was taking place in the moral world at the most critical moment of its history. Extraordinary rents and fissures have been observed in the rocks near this spot.

**52. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose** — These sleeping saints (see on <sup><514></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:14) were Old Testament believers, who — according to the usual punctuation in our version — were quickened into resurrection life at the moment of their Lord's death, but lay in their graves till His resurrection, when they came forth. But it is far more natural, as we think, and consonant with other

Scriptures, to understand that only the graves were opened, probably by the earthquake, at our Lord's death, and this only in preparation for the subsequent exit of those who slept in them, when the Spirit of life should enter into them from their risen Lord, and along with Him they should come forth, trophies of His victory over the grave. Thus, in the opening of the graves at the moment of the Redeemer's expiring, there was a glorious symbolical proclamation that the death which had just taken place had "swallowed up death in victory"; and whereas the saints that slept in them were awakened only by their risen Lord, to accompany Him out of the tomb, it was fitting that "the Prince of Life ... should be *the First* that should rise from the dead" (~~4023~~ Acts 26:23 ~~4151~~ 1 Corinthians 15:20,23 ~~5018~~ Colossians 1:18 ~~6105~~ Revelation 1:5).

**and went into the holy city** — that city where He, in virtue of whose resurrection they were now alive, had been condemned.

**and appeared unto many** — that there might be undeniable evidence of their own resurrection first, and through it of their Lord's. Thus, while it was not deemed fitting that He Himself should appear again in Jerusalem, save to the disciples, provision was made that the fact of His resurrection should be left in no doubt. It must be observed, however, that the resurrection of these sleeping saints was not like those of the widow of Nain's son, of Jairus' daughter, of Lazarus, and of the man who "revived and stood upon his feet," on his dead body touching the bones of Elisha (~~4120~~ 2 Kings 13:21) — which were mere temporary recallings of the departed spirit to the *mortal* body, to be followed by a final departure of it "till the trumpet shall sound." But this was a resurrection *once for all, to life everlasting*; and so there is no room to doubt that they went to glory with their Lord, as bright trophies of His victory over death.

*The Centurion's Testimony* (~~4175~~ Matthew 27:54).

**54. Now when the centurion** — the military superintendent of the execution.

**and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake** — or felt it and witnessed its effects.

**and those things that were done** — reflecting upon the entire transaction.

**they feared greatly** — convinced of the presence of a Divine Hand.

**saying, Truly this was the Son of God** — There cannot be a reasonable doubt that this expression was used in the Jewish sense, and that it points to the claim which Jesus made to be the Son of God, and on which His condemnation expressly turned. The meaning, then, clearly is that He must

have been what He professed to be; in other words, that He was no impostor. There was no medium between those two. See, the similar testimony of the penitent thief — “This man hath done nothing amiss” — on <sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:41.

*The Galilean Women (<sup><4275></sup>Matthew 27:55,56).*

**55. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus** — The sense here would be better brought out by the use of the pluperfect, “which had followed Jesus.”

**from Galilee, ministering unto him** — As these dear women had ministered to Him during His glorious missionary tours *in* Galilee (see on <sup><4281></sup>Luke 8:1-3), so from this statement it should seem that they accompanied him and ministered to His wants *from* Galilee on His final journey to Jerusalem.

**56. Among which was Mary Magdalene** — (See on <sup><4282></sup>Luke 8:2).

**and Mary the mother of James and Joses** — the wife of Cleophas, or rather Clopas, and sister of the Virgin (<sup><4283></sup>John 19:25). See on <sup><4285></sup>Matthew 13:55,56.

**and the mother of Zebedee’s children** — that is, Salome: compare <sup><4286></sup>Mark 15:40. All this about the women is mentioned for the sake of what is afterwards to be related of their purchasing spices to anoint their Lord’s body.

*The Taking Down from the Cross and the Burial  
(<sup><4275></sup>Matthew 27:57-60).*

For the exposition of this portion, see on <sup><4288></sup>John 19:38-42.

*The Women Mark the Sacred Spot that They Might Recognize It on  
Coming Thither to Anoint the Body (<sup><4276></sup>Matthew 27:61).*

**61. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary** — “the mother of James and Joses,” mentioned before (<sup><4275></sup>Matthew 27:56).

**sitting over against the sepulcher** — (See on <sup><4287></sup>Mark 16:1).

*The Sepulchre Guarded (<sup><4276></sup>Matthew 27:62-66).*

**62. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation** — that is, after six o’clock of our *Saturday* evening. The crucifixion took place on the *Friday* and all was not over till shortly before sunset, when the Jewish sabbath commenced; and “that sabbath day was an high day” (<sup><4289></sup>John

19:31), being the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. That day being over at six on Saturday evening, they hastened to take their measures.

**63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver** — Never, remarks BENGEL, will you find the heads of the people calling Jesus by His own name. And yet here there is betrayed a certain uneasiness, which one almost fancies they only tried to stifle in their own minds, as well as crush in Pilate's, in case he should have any lurking suspicion that he had done wrong in yielding to them.

**said, while he was yet alive** — Important testimony this, from the lips of His bitterest enemies, to *the reality of Christ's death*; the corner-stone of the whole Christian religion.

**After three days** — which, according to the customary Jewish way of reckoning, need signify no more than “after the commencement of the third day.”

**I will rise again** — “I rise,” in the present tense, thus reporting not only the *fact* that this prediction of His had reached their ears, but that they understood Him to look forward *confidently* to its occurring on the very day named.

**64. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure** — by a Roman guard.

**until the third day** — after which, if He still lay in the grave, the imposture of His claims would be manifest to all.

**and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead** — Did they really fear this?

**so the last error shall be worse than the first** — the imposture of His pretended resurrection worse than that of His pretended Messiahship.

**65. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch** — The guards had already acted under orders of the Sanhedrim, with Pilate's consent; but probably they were not clear about employing them as a night watch without Pilate's express authority.

**go your way, make it as sure as ye can** — as ye know how, or in the way ye deem securest. Though there may be no irony in this speech, it evidently insinuated that *if* the event should be contrary to their wish, it would not be for want of sufficient human appliances to prevent it.

**66. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone** — which Mark (<sup>416</sup>Mark 16:4) says was “very great.”



**and setting a watch** — to guard it. What more could man do? But while they are trying to prevent the resurrection of the Prince of Life, God makes use of their precautions for His own ends. Their stone-covered, seal-secured sepulcher shall preserve the sleeping dust of the Son of God free from all indignities, in undisturbed, sublime repose; while their watch shall be His guard of honor until the angels shall come to take their place.

# CHAPTER 28

## ✠~~181~~ MATTHEW 28:1-15.

**GLORIOUS ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, THAT CHRIST IS RISEN — HIS APPEARANCE TO THE WOMEN — THE GUARDS BRIBED TO GIVE A FALSE ACCOUNT OF THE RESURRECTION.**  
 (✠~~111~~ MARK 16:1-8 ✠~~121~~ LUKE 24:1-8 ✠~~131~~ JOHN 20:1).

*The Resurrection Announced to the Women (✠~~181~~ Matthew 28:1-8).*

**1. In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn** — after the Sabbath, as it grew toward daylight.

**toward the first day of the week** — Luke (✠~~241~~ Luke 24:1) has it, “very early in the morning” — properly, “at the first appearance of daybreak”; and corresponding with this, John (✠~~131~~ John 20:1) says, “when it was yet dark.” See on ✠~~111~~ Mark 16:2. Not an hour, it would seem, was lost by those dear lovers of the Lord Jesus.

**came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary** — “the mother of James and Joses” (see on ✠~~175~~ Matthew 27:56; ✠~~176~~ Matthew 27:61).

**to see the sepulcher** — with a view to the anointing of the body, for which they had made all their preparations. (See on ✠~~111~~ Mark 16:1,2).

**And, behold, there was** — that is, there had been, before the arrival of the women.

**a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven,** etc. — And this was the state of things when the women drew near. Some judicious critics think all this was transacted while the women were approaching; but the view we have given, which is the prevalent one, seems the more natural. All this august preparation — recorded by Matthew alone — bespoke the grandeur of the exit which was to follow. The angel sat upon the huge stone, to overawe, with the lightning — luster that darted from him, the Roman guard, and do honor to his rising Lord.

**3. His countenance** — appearance.

**was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow** — the one expressing the *glory*, the other the *purity* of the celestial abode from which he came.

**4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men** — Is the sepulcher “sure” now, O ye chief priests? He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh at you.

**5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye** — The “ye” here is emphatic, to contrast their case with that of the guards. “Let those puny creatures, sent to keep the Living One among the dead, for fear of Me shake and become as dead men (<sup><489></sup>Matthew 28:4); but ye that have come hither on another errand, fear not ye.”

**for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified** — Jesus the Crucified.

**6. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said** — See on <sup><245></sup>Luke 24:5-7.

**Come** — as in <sup><413></sup>Matthew 11:28.

**see the place where the Lord lay** — Charming invitation! “Come, see the spot where the Lord of glory lay: now it is an empty grave: He lies not here, but He *lay* there. Come, feast your eyes on it!” But see on <sup><412></sup>John 20:12.

**7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples** — For a precious addition to this, see on <sup><417></sup>Mark 16:7.

**that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee** — to which those women belonged (<sup><475></sup>Matthew 27:55).

**there shall ye see him** — This must refer to those more public manifestations of Himself to large numbers of disciples at once, which He vouchsafed only in Galilee; for individually He was seen of some of those very women almost immediately after this (<sup><489></sup>Matthew 28:9,10).

**Lo, I have told you** — Behold, ye have this word from the world of light!

**8. And they departed quickly** — Mark (<sup><468></sup>Mark 16:8) says “they fled.”

**from the sepulcher with fear and great joy** — How natural this combination of feelings! See on a similar statement of <sup><411></sup>Mark 16:11.

**and did run to bring his disciples word** — “Neither said they anything to any man [by the way]; for they were afraid” (<sup><416></sup>Mark 16:8).

*Appearance to the Women* (<sup><489></sup>Matthew 28:9,10).

This appearance is recorded only by Matthew.

**9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail!** — the usual salute, but from the lips of Jesus bearing a higher signification.

**And they came and held him by the feet** — How truly womanly!

**10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid** — What dear associations would these familiar words — now uttered in a higher style, but by the same Lips — bring rushing back to their recollection!

**go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me** — The brethren here meant must have been His brethren after the flesh (compare <sup><135></sup>Matthew 13:55); for His brethren in the higher sense (see on <sup><137></sup>John 20:17) had several meetings with Him at Jerusalem *before* He went to Galilee, which they would have missed if they had been the persons ordered to Galilee to meet Him.

*The Guards Bribed* (<sup><138></sup>Matthew 28:11-15).

The whole of this important portion is peculiar to Matthew.

**11. Now when they were going** — while the women were on their way to deliver to His brethren the message of their risen Lord.

**some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done** — Simple, unsophisticated soldiers! How could ye imagine that such a tale as ye had to tell would not at once commend itself to your scared employers? Had they doubted this for a moment, would they have ventured to go near them, knowing it was death to a Roman soldier to be proved asleep when on guard? and of course that was the only other explanation of the case.

**12. And when they were assembled with the elders** — But Joseph at least was absent: Gamaliel probably also; and perhaps others.

**and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers** — It would need a good deal; but the whole case of the Jewish authorities was now at stake. With what contempt must these soldiers have regarded the Jewish ecclesiastics!

**13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept** — which, as we have observed, was a capital offense for soldiers on guard.

**14. And if this come to the governor's ears** — rather, “If this come before the governor”; that is, not in the way of mere report, but for judicial investigation.

**we will persuade him, and secure you** — The “we” and the “you” are emphatic here — “we shall [take care to] persuade him and keep you from trouble,” or “save you harmless.” The grammatical form of this clause implies that the thing supposed was expected to happen. The meaning then is, “If this come before the governor — as it likely will — we shall see to it that,” etc. The “persuasion” of Pilate meant, doubtless, quieting him by a bribe, which we know otherwise he was by no means above taking (like Felix afterwards, <sup><4035></sup>Acts 24:26).

**15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught** — thus consenting to brand themselves with infamy.

**and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day** — to the date of the publication of this Gospel. The wonder is that so clumsy and incredible a story lasted so long. But those who are resolved *not* to come to the light will catch at straws. JUSTIN MARTYR, who flourished about A.D. 170, says, in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, that the Jews dispersed the story by means of special messengers sent to every country.

## <sup><4236></sup>MATTHEW 28:16-20.

### JESUS MEETS WITH THE DISCIPLES ON A MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE AND GIVES FORTH THE GREAT COMMISSION.

**16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee** — but certainly not before the second week after the resurrection, and probably somewhat later.

**into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them** — It should have been rendered “the mountain,” meaning some certain mountain which He had named to them — probably the night before He suffered, when He said, “After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee” (<sup><4182></sup>Matthew 26:32 <sup><4148></sup>Mark 14:28). What it was can only be conjectured; but of the two between which opinions are divided — the Mount of the Beatitudes or Mount Tabor — the former is much the more probable, from its nearness to the Sea of Tiberias, where last before this the Narrative tells us that He met and dined with seven of them. (<sup><4201></sup>John 21:1, etc.). That the interview here recorded was the same as that referred to in one

**place only** — <sup><4356></sup>1 Corinthians 15:6 — when “He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remained unto that day, though some were fallen asleep,” is now the opinion of the ablest students of the evangelical history. Nothing can account for such a number as five

hundred assembling at one spot but the expectation of some promised manifestation of their risen Lord: and the promise before His resurrection, twice repeated after it, best explains this immense gathering.

**17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted** — certainly none of “the Eleven,” after what took place at previous interviews in Jerusalem. But if the five hundred were now present, we may well believe this of some of them.

**19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations** — rather, “make disciples of all nations”; for “teaching,” in the more usual sense of that word, comes in afterwards, and is expressed by a different term.

**baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost** — It should be, “into the name”; as in <sup><401></sup>1 Corinthians 10:2, “And were all baptized unto (or rather ‘into’) Moses”; and <sup><402></sup>Galatians 3:27, “For as many of you as have been baptized *into* Christ.”

**20. Teaching them** — This is teaching in the more usual sense of the term; or instructing the converted and baptized disciples.

**to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I** — The “I” here is emphatic. It is enough that *I*

**am with you alway** — “all the days”; that is, till making converts, baptizing, and building them up by Christian instruction, shall be no more.

**even unto the end of the world. Amen** — This glorious Commission embraces two primary departments, the *Missionary* and the *Pastoral*, with two sublime and comprehensive *Encouragements* to undertake and go through with them.

**First**, The MISSIONARY department (<sup><403></sup>Matthew 28:18): “Go, make disciples of all nations.” In the corresponding passage of Mark (<sup><404></sup>Mark 16:15) it is, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” The only difference is, that in this passage the *sphere*, in its world-wide compass and its universality of *objects*, is more fully and definitely expressed; while in the former the great *aim* and certain *result* is delightfully expressed in the command to “make disciples of all nations.” “Go, conquer the world for Me; carry the glad tidings into all lands and to every ear, and deem not this work at an end till all nations shall have embraced the Gospel and enrolled themselves My disciples.” Now, Was all this meant to be done by the Eleven men nearest to Him of the multitude then crowding around the risen Redeemer? Impossible. Was it to be done even in their lifetime? Surely not. In that little band Jesus virtually addressed Himself to all who, in every age, should take up from them the

same work. Before the eyes of the Church's risen Head were spread out, in those Eleven men, all His servants of every age; and one and all of them received His commission at that moment. Well, what next? Set the seal of visible discipleship upon the converts, by "baptizing them into the name," that is, into the whole fullness of the grace "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as belonging to them who believe. (See on <sup><47/34></sup>2 Corinthians 13:14). This done, the Missionary department of your work, which in its own nature is temporary, must merge in another, which is permanent. This is

**Second**, The PASTORAL department (<sup><4830></sup>Matthew 28:20): "Teach them" — teach these baptized members of the Church visible — "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," My apostles, during the three years ye have been. with Me. What must have been the feelings which such a Commission awakened? "WE who have scarce conquered our own misgivings — we, fishermen of Galilee, with no letters, no means, no influence over the humblest creature, conquer the world for Thee, Lord? Nay, Lord, do not mock us." "I mock you not, nor send you a warfare on your own charges. For" — Here we are brought to

**Third**, The ENCOURAGEMENTS to undertake and go through with this work. These are two; one in the van, the other in the rear of the Commission itself.

**First Encouragement:** "All power in *heaven*" — the whole power of Heaven's love and wisdom and strength, "and all power in *earth*" — power over all persons, all passions, all principles, all movements — to bend them to this one high object, the evangelization of the world: All this "*is given unto Me.*" as the risen Lord of all, to be *by Me placed at your command* — "Go ye therefore." But there remains a

**Second Encouragement:** "And lo! I am with you all the days" — not only to perpetuity, but without one day's interruption, "even to the end of the world," The "Amen" is of doubtful genuineness in this place. If, however, it belongs to the text, it is the Evangelist's own closing word.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

# MARK

*Commentary by* **DAVID BROWN**

## INTRODUCTION

THAT the Second Gospel was written by Mark is universally agreed, though by what Mark, not so. The great majority of critics take the writer to be “John whose surname was Mark,” of whom we read in the Acts, and who was “sister’s son to Barnabas” (~~<50400>~~Colossians 4:10). But no reason whatever is assigned for this opinion, for which the tradition, though ancient, is not uniform; and one cannot but wonder how it is so easily taken for granted by WETSTEIN, HUG, MEYER, EBRARD, LANGE, ELLICOTT, DAVIDSON, TREGELLES, etc. ALFORD goes the length of saying it “has been universally believed that he was the same person with the John Mark of the Gospels. But GROTIUS thought differently, and so did SCHLEIERMACHER, CAMPBELL, BURTON, and DA COSTA; and the grounds on which it is concluded that they were two different persons appear to us quite unanswerable. “Of John, surnamed Mark,” says CAMPBELL, in his Preface to this Gospel, “one of the first things we learn is, that he attended Paul and Barnabas in their apostolical journeys, when these two traveled together (~~<41225>~~Acts 12:25 13:5). And when afterwards there arose a dispute between them concerning him, insomuch that they separated, Mark accompanied his uncle Barnabas, and Silas attended Paul. When Paul was reconciled to Mark, which was probably soon after, we find Paul again employing Mark’s assistance, recommending him, and giving him a very honorable testimony (~~<50400>~~Colossians 4:10 ~~<50411>~~2 Timothy 4:11 ~~<50424>~~Philemon 1:24). But we hear not a syllable of his attending Peter as his minister, or assisting him in any capacity. And yet, as we shall presently see, no tradition is more ancient, more uniform, and better sustained by internal evidence, than that Mark, in his Gospel, was but “the interpreter of Peter,” who, at the close of his first Epistle speaks of him as “Marcus my son” (~~<41831>~~1 Peter 5:13), that is, without doubt, his son in the Gospel — converted to Christ through his instrumentality. And when we consider how little the Apostles Peter and Paul were together — how seldom they even met — how different were their tendencies, and how separate their spheres of



labor, is there not, in the absence of all evidence of the fact, something approaching to violence in the supposition that the same Mark was the intimate associate of both? "In brief," adds CAMPBELL, "the accounts given of Paul's attendant, and those of Peter's interpreter, concur in nothing but the name, Mark or Marcus; too slight a circumstance to conclude the sameness of the person from, especially when we consider how common the name was at Rome, and how customary it was for the Jews in that age to assume some Roman name when they went thither."

Regarding the Evangelist Mark, then, as another person from Paul's companion in travel, all we know of his personal history is that he was a convert, as we have seen, of the Apostle Peter. But as to his Gospel, the tradition regarding Peter's hand in it is so ancient, so uniform, and so remarkably confirmed by internal evidence, that we must regard it as an established fact. "Mark," says PAPIAS (according to the testimony of EUSEBIUS, [*Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39]), "becoming *the interpreter of Peter*, wrote accurately, though not in order, whatever he remembered of what was either said or done by Christ; for he was neither a hearer of the Lord nor a follower of Him, but afterwards, as I said, [he was a follower] of Peter, who arranged the discourses for use, but not according to the order in which they were uttered by the Lord." To the same effect IRENAEUS [*Against Heresies*, 3,1]: "Matthew published a Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church at Rome; and after their departure (or decease), Mark, *the disciple and interpreter of Peter*, he also gave forth to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter." And CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA is still more specific, in a passage preserved to us by EUSEBIUS [*Ecclesiastical History*, 6.14]: "Peter having publicly preached the word at Rome, and spoken forth the Gospel by the Spirit, many of those present exhorted Mark, as *having long been a follower of his*, and remembering what he had said, to write what had been spoken; and that having prepared the Gospel, he delivered it to those who had asked him for it; which, when Peter came to the knowledge of, he neither decidedly forbade nor encouraged him." EUSEBIUS' own testimony, however, from other accounts, is rather different: that Peter's hearers were so penetrated by his preaching that they gave Mark, as being *a follower of Peter*, no rest till he consented to write his Gospel, as a memorial of his oral teaching; and "that the apostle, when he knew by the revelation of the Spirit what had been done, was delighted with the zeal of those men, and sanctioned the reading of the writing (that is, of this Gospel of Mark) in the churches" [*Ecclesiastical History*, 2.15]. And giving in another of his works a similar statement, he says that "Peter, from excess of humility, did not think himself qualified to write the Gospel; but Mark, his acquaintance and pupil, is said to have recorded his relations of the actings of Jesus. And Peter

testifies these things of himself; for all things that are recorded by Mark are said to be memoirs of Peter's discourses." It is needless to go farther — to ORIGEN, who says Mark composed his Gospel "as Peter guided" or "directed him, who, in his Catholic Epistle, calls him his son," etc.; and to JEROME, who but echoes EUSEBIUS.

This, certainly, is a remarkable chain of testimony; which, confirmed as it is by such striking internal evidence, may be regarded as establishing the fact that the Second Gospel was drawn up mostly from materials furnished by Peter. In DA COSTA'S *Four Witnesses* the reader will find this internal evidence detailed at length, though all the examples are not equally convincing. But if the reader will refer to our remarks on ⲁⲓⲕⲓⲟⲩ Mark 16:7, and ⲁⲓⲕⲓⲟⲩ John 18:27, he will have convincing evidence of a *Petrine* hand in this Gospel.

It remains only to advert, in a word or two, to the *readers* for whom this Gospel was, in the first instance, designed, and the *date* of it. That it was not for *Jews* but *Gentiles*, is evident from the great number of explanations of Jewish usages, opinions, and places, which to a Jew would at that time have been superfluous, but were highly needful to a Gentile. We can here but refer to ⲁⲓⲕⲓⲟⲩ Mark 2:18 7:3,4 12:18 13:3 14:12 15:42, for examples of these. Regarding the date of this Gospel — about which nothing certain is known — if the tradition reported by IRENAEUS can be relied on that it was written at Rome, "after the departure of Peter and Paul," and if by that word "departure" we are to understand their *death*, we may date it somewhere between the years 64 and 68; but in all likelihood this is too late. It is probably nearer the truth to date it eight or ten years earlier.

# CHAPTER 1

◀◀◀ MARK 1:1-8.

## THE PREACHING AND BAPTISM OF JOHN.

(◀◀◀ MATTHEW 3:1-12 ◀◀◀ LUKE 3:1-18).

**1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God** — By the “Gospel” of Jesus Christ here is evidently meant the blessed Story which our Evangelist is about to tell of His Life, Ministry, Death, Resurrection, and Glorification, and of the begun Gathering of Believers in His Name. The abruptness with which he announces his subject, and the energetic brevity with which, passing by all preceding events, he hastens over the ministry of John and records the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus — as if impatient to come to the Public Life of the Lord of glory — have often been noticed as characteristic of this Gospel — a Gospel whose direct, practical, and singularly vivid setting imparts to it a preciousness peculiar to itself. What strikes every one is, that though the briefest of all the Gospels, this is in some of the principal scenes of our Lord’s history the fullest. But what is not so obvious is, that wherever the finer and subtler feelings of humanity, or the deeper and more peculiar hues of our Lord’s character were brought out, these, though they should be lightly passed over by all the other Evangelists, are sure to be found here, and in touches of such quiet delicacy and power, that though scarce observed by the cursory reader, they leave indelible impressions upon all the thoughtful and furnish a key to much that is in the other Gospels. These few opening words of the Second Gospel are enough to show, that though it was the purpose of this Evangelist to record chiefly the outward and palpable facts of our Lord’s public life, he recognized in Him, in common with the Fourth Evangelist, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father.

**2, 3. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee** — (◀◀◀ Malachi 3:1 ◀◀◀ Isaiah 40:3).

**3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight** — The second of these quotations is given by Matthew and Luke in the same connection, but they reserve the former quotation till they have occasion to return to the Baptist, after his imprisonment (◀◀◀ Matthew 11:10 ◀◀◀ Luke 7:27). (Instead of the words, “as

it is written in the Prophets,” there is weighty evidence in favor of the following reading: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet.” This reading is adopted by all the latest critical editors. If it be the true one, it is to be explained thus — that of the two quotations, the one from Malachi is but a later development of the great primary one in Isaiah, from which the whole prophetic matter here quoted takes its name. But the received text is quoted by IRENÆUS, before the end of the second century, and the evidence in its favor is greater in *amount*, if not in weight. The chief objection to it is, that if this was the true reading, it is difficult to see how the other one could have got in at all; whereas, if it be not the true reading, it is very easy to see how it found its way into the text, as it removes the startling difficulty of a prophecy beginning with the words of Malachi being ascribed to Isaiah). For the exposition, see on ~~1000~~ Matthew 3:1-6,11; ~~1001~~ Matthew 3:11.

### ~~1000~~ MARK 1:9-11.

**BAPTISM OF CHRIST AND DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT UPON HIM IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER. (~~1003~~ MATTHEW 3:13-17 ~~1002~~ LUKE 3:21,22).**

See on ~~1003~~ Matthew 3:13-17.

### ~~1002~~ MARK 1:12,13.

**TEMPTATION OF CHRIST. (~~1005~~ MATTHEW 4:1-11 ~~1006~~ LUKE 4:1-13).**

See on ~~1005~~ Matthew 4:1-11.

### ~~1004~~ MARK 1:14-20.

**CHRIST BEGINS HIS GALILEAN MINISTRY — CALLING OF SIMON AND ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN.**

See on ~~1002~~ Matthew 4:12-22.

## MARK 1:21-39.

**HEALING OF A DEMONIAK IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM AND THEREAFTER OF SIMON'S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS — JESUS, NEXT DAY, IS FOUND IN A SOLITARY PLACE AT MORNING PRAYERS, AND IS ENTREATED TO RETURN, BUT DECLINES, AND GOES FORTH ON HIS FIRST MISSIONARY CIRCUIT.**

(LUKE 4:31-44 MATTHEW 8:14-17 4:23-25).

**21. And they went into Capernaum** — (See on MATTHEW 4:13).

**and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught** — This should have been rendered, “straightway on the sabbaths He entered into the synagogue and taught,” or “continued to teach.” The meaning is, that as He began this practice on the very first sabbath after coming to settle at Capernaum, so He continued it regularly thereafter.

**22. And they were astonished at his doctrine** — or “teaching” — referring quite as much to the manner as the matter of it.

**for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes** — See on MATTHEW 7:28,29.

**23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit** — literally, “in an unclean spirit” — that is, so entirely under demoniacal power that his personality was sunk for the time in that of the spirit. The frequency with which this character of “impurity” is ascribed to evil spirits — some twenty times in the Gospels — is not to be overlooked.

**and he cried out** — as follows:

**24. Saying, Let us alone** — or rather, perhaps, “ah!” expressive of mingled *astonishment* and *terror*.

**what have we to do with thee** — an expression of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament (1 KINGS 17:18 2 KINGS 3:13 2 CHRONICLES 35:21, etc.). It denotes *entire separation of interests*: — that is, “Thou and we have nothing in common; we want not Thee; what wouldst Thou with us?” For the analogous application of it by our Lord to His mother, see on JOHN 2:4.

**thou Jesus of Nazareth** — “Jesus, Nazarene!” an epithet originally given to express contempt, but soon adopted as the current designation by those who held our Lord in honor (<sup><0857></sup>Luke 18:37 <sup><1161></sup>Mark 16:6 <sup><4122></sup>Acts 2:22).

**art thou come to destroy us?** — In the case of the Gadarene demoniac the question was, “Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?” (<sup><1189></sup>Matthew 8:29). Themselves tormentors and destroyers of their victims, they discern in Jesus their own destined tormentor and destroyer, anticipating and dreading what they know and feel to be awaiting them! Conscious, too, that their power was but permitted and temporary, and perceiving in Him, perhaps, the woman’s Seed that was to bruise the head and destroy the works of the devil, they regard His approach to them on this occasion as a signal to let go their grasp of this miserable victim.

**I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God** — This and other even more glorious testimonies to our Lord were given, as we know, with no good will, but in hope that, by the acceptance of them, He might appear to the people to be in league with evil spirits — a calumny which His enemies were ready enough to throw out against Him. But a Wiser than either was here, who invariably rejected and silenced the testimonies that came to Him from beneath, and thus was able to rebut the imputations of His enemies against Him (<sup><1124></sup>Matthew 12:24-30). The expression, “Holy One of God,” seems evidently taken from that Messianic Psalm (<sup><9100></sup>Psalms 16:10), in which He is styled “Thine Holy One.”

**25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him** — A glorious word of command. BENDEL remarks that it was only the testimony borne to Himself which our Lord meant to silence. That he should afterwards cry out for fear or rage (<sup><1126></sup>Mark 1:26) He would right willingly permit.

**26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him** — Luke (<sup><0435></sup>Luke 4:35) says, “When he had thrown him in the midst.” Malignant cruelty — just showing what he *would* have done, if permitted to go farther: it was a last fling!

**and cried with a loud voice** — the voice of enforced submission and despair.

**he came out of him** — Luke (<sup><0435></sup>Luke 4:35) adds, “and hurt him not.” Thus impotent were the malignity and rage of the impure spirit when under the restraint of “the Stronger than the strong one armed” (<sup><1121></sup>Luke 11:21,22).

**27. What thing is this? what new doctrine** — teaching

**is this?** — The audience, rightly apprehending that the miracle was wrought to illustrate the teaching and display the character and glory of the Teacher, begin by asking what novel kind of teaching this could be, which was so marvellously attested.

**28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee** — rather, “the whole region of Galilee”; though some, as MEYER and ELLICOTT, explain it of the country surrounding Galilee.

**29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue** — so also in ~~408~~ Luke 4:38.

**they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John** — The mention of these four — which is peculiar to Mark — is the first of those traces of Peter’s hand in this Gospel, of which we shall find many more. The house being his, and the illness and cure so nearly affecting himself, it is interesting to observe this minute specification of the number and names of the witnesses; interesting also — as the first occasion on which the sacred triumvirate of Peter and James and John are selected from among the rest, to be a threefold cord of testimony to certain events in their Lord’s life (see on ~~418~~ Mark 5:37) — Andrew being present on this occasion, as the occurrence took place in his own house.

**30. But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever** — Luke, as was natural in “the beloved *physician*” (~~5104~~ Colossians 4:14), describes it professionally; calling it a “great fever,” and thus distinguishing it from that lighter kind which the Greek physicians were wont to call “small fevers,” as GALEN, quoted by WETSTEIN, tells us.

**and anon** — immediately.

**they tell him of her** — naturally hoping that His compassion and power towards one of His own disciples would not be less signally displayed than towards the demonized stranger in the synagogue.

**31. And he came and took her by the hand** — rather, “And advancing, He took her,” etc. The beloved physician again is very specific: “And He stood over her.”

**and lifted her up** — This act of condescension, most felt doubtless by Peter, is recorded only by Mark.

**and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them** — preparing their sabbath-meal: in token both of the perfectness and immediateness of the cure, and of her gratitude to the glorious Healer.

**32. And at even, when the sun did set** — so <sup><4086></sup>Matthew 8:16. Luke (<sup><4044></sup>Luke 4:40) says it was setting.

**they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils** — the demonized. From <sup><4034></sup>Luke 13:14 we see how unlawful they would have deemed it to bring their sick to Jesus for a cure during the sabbath hours. They waited, therefore, till these were over, and then brought them in crowds. Our Lord afterwards took repeated occasion to teach the people by example, even at the risk of His own life, how superstitious a straining of the sabbath rest this was.

**33. And all the city was gathered together at the door** — of Peter's house; that is, the sick and those who brought them, and the wondering spectators. This bespeaks the presence of an eye-witness, and is one of those lively examples of word-painting so frequent in this Gospel.

**34. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils** — In <sup><4086></sup>Matthew 8:16 it is said, "He cast out the spirits with His word"; or rather, "with a word" — a word of command.

**and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him** — Evidently they would have spoken, if permitted, proclaiming His Messiahship in such terms as in the synagogue; but once in one day, and that testimony immediately silenced, was enough. See on <sup><4024></sup>Mark 1:24. After this account of His miracles of healing, we have in <sup><4087></sup>Matthew 8:17 this pregnant quotation, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying (<sup><2504></sup>Isaiah 53:4), Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

**35. And in the morning** — that is, of the day after this remarkable sabbath; or, *on the first day of the week*. His choosing this day to inaugurate a new and glorious stage of His public work, should be noted by the reader.

**rising up a great while before day** — "while it was yet night," or long before daybreak.

**he went out** — all unperceived from Peter's house, where He slept.

**and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed** — or, "continued in prayer." He was about to begin His first preaching and healing circuit; and as on similar solemn occasions (<sup><4086></sup>Luke 5:16 6:12 9:18,28,29 <sup><4064></sup>Mark 6:46), He spent some time in special prayer, doubtless with a view to it. What would one not give to have been, during the stillness of those grey morning hours, within hearing — not of His "strong crying and tears," for He had scarce arrived at the stage for that — but of His calm, exalted anticipations of the work which lay immediately before Him, and the



outpourings of His soul about it into the bosom of Him that sent Him! He had doubtless enjoyed some uninterrupted hours of such communings with His heavenly Father ere His friends from Capernaum arrived in search of Him. As for them, they doubtless expected, after such a day of miracles, that the next day would witness similar manifestations. When morning came, Peter, loath to break in upon the repose of his glorious Guest, would await His appearance beyond the usual hour; but at length, wondering at the stillness, and gently coming to see where the Lord lay, he finds it — like the sepulcher afterwards — empty! Speedily a party is made up to go in search of Him, Peter naturally leading the way.

**36. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him** — rather, “pressed after Him.” Luke (~~☞~~ Luke 4:42) says, “The multitudes sought after Him”; but this would be a party from the town. Mark, having his information from Peter himself, speaks only of what related directly to him. “They that were with him” would probably be Andrew his brother, James and John, with a few other choice brethren.

**37. And when they had found him** — evidently after some search.

**they said unto him, All men seek for thee** — By this time, “the multitudes” who, according to Luke (~~☞~~ Luke 4:42), “sought after Him” — and who, on going to Peter’s house, and there learning that Peter and a few more were gone in search of Him, had set out on the same errand — would have arrived, and “came unto Him and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them” (~~☞~~ Luke 4:42); all now urging His return to their impatient townsmen.

**38. And he said unto them, Let us go** — or, according to another reading, “Let us go elsewhere.”

**into the next towns** — rather, “unto the neighboring village-towns”; meaning those places intermediate between towns and villages, with which the western side of the Sea of Galilee was studded.

**that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth** — not from Capernaum, AS DE WETTE miserably interprets, nor from His privacy in the desert place, as MEYER, no better; but from the Father. Compare ~~☞~~ John 16:28, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world,” etc. — another proof, by the way, that the lofty phraseology of the Fourth Gospel was not unknown to the authors of the others, though their design and point of view are different. The language in which our Lord’s reply is given by Luke (~~☞~~ Luke 4:43) expresses the high necessity under which, in this as in every other step of His work, He acted — “I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore” — or, “to this

end” — “am I sent.” An act of self-denial it doubtless was, to resist such pleadings to return to Capernaum. But there were overmastering considerations on the other side.

### ⲁⲓⲓⲛ MARK 1:40-45.

**HEALING OF A LEPER.** (ⲁⲓⲓⲛ MATTHEW 8:1-4 ⲁⲓⲓⲛ LUKE 5:12-16).

See on ⲁⲓⲓⲛ Matthew 8:1-4.

# CHAPTER 2

## MARK 2:1-12.

### HEALING OF A PARALYTIC. (~~4003~~ MATTHEW 9:1-8 ~~4067~~ LUKE 5:17-26).

This incident, as remarked on ~~4003~~ Matthew 9:1, appears to follow next in order of time after the cure of the leper (~~4004~~ Mark 1:40-45).

**1. And again he entered into Capernaum** — “His own city” (~~4003~~ Matthew 9:1).

**and it was noised that he was in the house** — no doubt of Simon Peter (~~4003~~ Mark 1:29).

**2. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door** — This is one of Mark’s graphic touches. No doubt in this case, as the scene occurred at his informant’s own door, these details are the vivid recollections of that honored disciple.

**and he preached the word unto them** — that is, indoors; but in the hearing, doubtless, of the multitude that pressed around. Had He gone forth, as He naturally would, the paralytic’s faith would have had no such opportunity to display itself. Luke (~~4067~~ Luke 5:17) furnishes an additional and very important incident in the scene — as follows: “And it came to pass on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town,” or village, “of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem.” This was the highest testimony yet borne to our Lord’s growing influence, and the necessity increasingly felt by the ecclesiastics throughout the country of coming to some definite judgment regarding Him. “And the power of the Lord was [present] to heal them” — or, “was [efficacious] to heal them,” that is, the sick that were brought before Him. So that the miracle that is now to be described was among the most glorious and worthy to be recorded of many then performed; and what made it so was doubtless the faith which was manifested in connection with it, and the proclamation of the forgiveness of the patient’s sins that immediately preceded it.

**3. And they come unto him** — that is, towards the house where He was.

**bringing one sick of the palsy** — “lying on a bed” (~~40B~~ Matthew 9:2).

**which was borne of four** — a graphic particular of Mark only.

**4. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press** — or, as in Luke (~~40B~~ Luke 5:19), “when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude,” they “went upon the housetop” — the flat or terrace-roof, universal in Eastern houses.

**they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed** — or portable couch

**wherein the sick of the palsy lay** — Luke (~~40B~~ Luke 5:19) says, they “let him down through the tilling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.” Their whole object was to *bring the patient into the presence of Jesus*; and this not being possible in the ordinary way, because of the multitude that surrounded Him, they took the very unusual method here described of accomplishing their object, and succeeded. Several explanations have been given of the way in which this was done; but unless we knew the precise plan of the house, and the part of it from which Jesus taught — which may have been a quadrangle or open court, within the buildings of which Peter’s house was one, or a gallery covered by a veranda — it is impossible to determine precisely how the thing was done. One thing, however, is clear, that we have both the accounts from an eye-witness.

**5. When Jesus saw their faith** — It is remarkable that all the three narratives call it “*their* faith” which Jesus saw. That the patient himself had faith, we know from the proclamation of his forgiveness, which Jesus made before all; and we should have been apt to conclude that his four friends bore him to Jesus merely out of benevolent compliance with the urgent entreaties of the poor sufferer. But here we learn, not only that his bearers had the same faith with himself, but that Jesus marked it as a faith which was not to be defeated — a faith victorious over all difficulties. This was the faith for which He was ever on the watch, and which He never saw without marking, and, in those who needed anything from Him, richly rewarding.

**he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son** — “be of good cheer” (~~40B~~ Matthew 9:2).

**thy sins be forgiven thee** — By the word “be,” our translators perhaps meant “are,” as in Luke (~~40B~~ Luke 5:20). For it is not a command to his sins to depart, but an authoritative proclamation of the man’s pardoned state as a believer. And yet, as the Pharisees understood our Lord to be *dispensing* pardon by this saying, and Jesus not only acknowledges that they were

right, but founds His whole argument upon the correctness of it, we must regard the saying as a royal proclamation of the man's forgiveness by Him to whom it belonged to dispense it; nor could such a style of address be justified on any lower supposition. (See on <sup><4741></sup>Luke 7:41, etc.).

**6. But there were certain of the scribes** — “and the Pharisees” (<sup><4741></sup>Luke 5:21)

**sitting there** — those Jewish ecclesiastics who, as Luke told us (<sup><4741></sup>Luke 5:17), “were come out of every village of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem,” to make their observations upon this wonderful Person, in anything but a teachable spirit, though as yet their venomous and murderous feeling had not showed itself.

**and reasoning in their hearts.**

**7. Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?** — In this second question they expressed a great truth. (See <sup><4742></sup>Isaiah 43:25 <sup><4743></sup>Micah 7:18 <sup><4744></sup>Exodus 34:6,7, etc.). Nor was their first question altogether unnatural, though in our Lord's sole case it was unfounded. That a man, to all appearances like one of themselves, should claim authority and power to forgive sins, they could not, on the first blush of it, but regard as in the last degree startling; nor were they entitled even to weigh such a claim, as worthy of a hearing, save on supposition of resistless evidence afforded by Him in support of the claim. Accordingly, our Lord deals with them as men entitled to such evidence, and supplies it; at the same time chiding them for rashness, in drawing harsh conclusions regarding Himself.

**8. Why reason ye these things in your hearts** — or, as in Matthew, (<sup><4745></sup>Matthew 9:4) “Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?”

**9. Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee** — or “are forgiven thee”;

**or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?** — “Is it easier to command away disease than to bid away sin? If, then, I do the one which you can see, know thus that I have done the other, which you cannot see.”

**10. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins** — that forgiving power dwells in the Person of this Man, and is exercised by Him while on this earth and going out and in with you.

**(he saith to the sick of the palsy),**

**11. I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house** — This taking up the portable couch, and walking home with it, was designed to prove the completeness of the cure.

**12. And immediately he arose, took up the bed** — “Sweet saying!” says BENJEL: “The bed had borne the man: now the man bore the bed.”

**and went forth before them all** — proclaiming by that act to the multitude, whose wondering eyes would follow him as he pressed through them, that He who could work such a glorious miracle of healing, must indeed “have power on earth to forgive sins.”

**We never saw it on this fashion** — “never saw it thus,” or, as we say, “never saw the like.” In Luke (~~4133~~ Luke 5:26) it is, “We have seen strange [unexpected] things to-day” — referring both to the miracles wrought and the forgiveness of sins pronounced by Human Lips. In Matthew (~~4198~~ Matthew 9:8) it is, “They marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.” At forgiving power they wondered not, but that a man, to all appearance like one of themselves, should possess it!

### ~~4123~~ MARK 2:13-17.

#### LEVI'S (OR MATTHEW'S) CALL AND FEAST.

(~~4199~~ MATTHEW 9:9-13 ~~4137~~ LUKE 5:27-32).

See on ~~4199~~ Matthew 9:9-13.

### ~~4128~~ MARK 2:18-22.

#### DISCOURSE ON FASTING.

(~~4194~~ MATTHEW 9:14-17 ~~4135~~ LUKE 5:33-39).

See on ~~4135~~ Luke 5:33-39.

### ~~4123~~ MARK 2:23-28.

#### PLUCKING CORN-EARS ON THE SABBATH DAY.

(~~4121~~ MATTHEW 12:1-8 ~~4131~~ LUKE 6:1-5).

See on ~~4121~~ Matthew 12:1-8.

# CHAPTER 3

## MARK 3:1-12.

**THE HEALING OF A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH DAY, AND RETIREMENT OF JESUS TO AVOID DANGER.**  
(<sup><129</sup>MATTHEW 12:9-21 <sup><136</sup>LUKE 6:6-11).

See on <sup><139</sup>Matthew 12:9-21.

## MARK 3:13-19.

**THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN.**

See on <sup><142</sup>Luke 6:12-19.

## MARK 3:20-30.

**JESUS IS CHARGED WITH MADNESS AND DEMONIAL POSSESSION — HIS REPLY.**  
(<sup><122</sup>MATTHEW 12:22-37 <sup><2114</sup>LUKE 11:14-26).

See on <sup><122</sup>Matthew 12:22-37; <sup><2121</sup>Luke 11:21-26.

## MARK 3:31-35.

**HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN SEEK TO SPEAK WITH HIM AND THE REPLY.** (<sup><126</sup>MATTHEW 12:46-50 <sup><189</sup>LUKE 8:19-21).

See on <sup><126</sup>Matthew 12:46-50.

# CHAPTER 4

## MARK 4:1-34.

### PARABLE OF THE SOWER — REASON FOR TEACHING IN PARABLES — PARABLES OF THE SEED GROWING WE KNOW NOT HOW, AND OF THE MUSTARD SEED.

(<sup><1010></sup>MATTHEW 13:1-23,31,32 <sup><1010></sup>LUKE 8:4-18).

**1. And he began again to teach by the seaside: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude** — or, according to another well-supported reading, “a mighty” or “immense multitude.”

**so that he entered into a ship** — rather, “the ship,” meaning the one mentioned in <sup><1010></sup>Mark 3:9. (See on <sup><1010></sup>Matthew 12:15).

**and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land** — crowded on the seashore to listen to Him. (See on <sup><1010></sup>Matthew 13:1,2.)

**2. And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine** — or “teaching.”

*Parable of the Sower* (<sup><1010></sup>Mark 4:3-9,13-20).

## MARK 4:3,14.

### THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE SOIL.

**3. Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow** — What means this? See on <sup><1010></sup>Mark 4:14.

**First Case:** THE WAYSIDE (<sup><1010></sup>Mark 4:4,15).

**4. And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside** — by the side of the hard path through the field, where the soil was not broken up.

and the fowls *of the air* came and devoured it up — Not only could the seed not get beneath the surface, but “it was trodden down” (<sup><1010></sup>Luke 8:5), and afterwards picked up and devoured by the fowls. What means this? See on <sup><1010></sup>Mark 4:15.



**Second Case:** THE STONY or rather, ROCKY GROUND. (<sup>4005</sup>Mark 4:5,16).

**5. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth** — “the rocky ground”; in Matthew (<sup>4036</sup>Matthew 13:5), “the rocky places”; in Luke (<sup>4086</sup>Luke 8:6), “the rock.” The thing intended is, not ground with stones in it which would not prevent the roots striking downward, but ground where a quite thin surface of earth covers a rock. What means this? See on <sup>4046</sup>Mark 4:16.

**Third Case:** THE THORNY GROUND. (<sup>4007</sup>Mark 4:7,18,19).

**7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit** — This case is that of ground not thoroughly cleaned of the thistles, etc.; which, rising above the good seed, “choke” or “smother” it, excluding light and air, and drawing away the moisture and richness of the soil. Hence it “becomes unfruitful” (<sup>4032</sup>Matthew 13:22); it grows, but its growth is checked, and it never ripens. The evil here is neither a hard nor a shallow soil — there is *softness* enough, and *depth* enough; but it is the existence in it of what draws all the moisture and richness of the soil away to itself, and so *starves the plant*. What now are these “thorns?” See on <sup>4049</sup>Mark 4:19.

**Fourth Case:** THE GOOD GROUND. (<sup>4008</sup>Mark 4:8,20).

**8. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit**, etc. — The goodness of this last soil consists in its qualities being precisely the reverse of the other three soils: from its softness and tenderness, receiving and cherishing the seed; from its depth, allowing it to take firm root, and not quickly losing its moisture; and from its cleanness, giving its whole vigor and sap to the plant. In such a soil the seed “brings forth fruit,” in all different degrees of profusion, according to the measure in which the soil possesses those qualities. See on <sup>4000</sup>Mark 4:20.

**9. And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

After this parable is recorded the Evangelist says:

**10. And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve** — probably those who followed Him most closely and were firmest in discipleship, next to the Twelve.

**asked of him the parable** — The reply would seem to intimate that this parable of the sower was of that fundamental, comprehensive, and introductory character which we have assigned to it (see on <sup>4018</sup>Matthew 13:1).

*Reason for Teaching in Parables* (<sup><4041></sup>Mark 4:11,12,21-25).

**11, 12. And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them,** etc. — See on <sup><4039></sup>Matthew 13:10-17.

**13. Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?** — Probably this was said not so much in the spirit of rebuke, as to call their attention to the exposition of it which He was about to give, and so train them to the right apprehension of His future parables. As in the parables which we have endeavored to explain in <sup><4039></sup>Matthew 13:1-58, we shall take this parable and the Lord's own exposition of the different parts of it together.

**14. The sower soweth the word** — or, as in Luke (<sup><4041></sup>Luke 8:11), “Now the parable is this: The seed is the *word of God*.” But who is “the sower?” This is not expressed here because if “the word of God” be the seed, every scatterer of that precious seed must be regarded as a sower. It is true that in the parable of the tares it is said, “He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man,” as “He that soweth the tares is the devil” (<sup><4039></sup>Matthew 13:37,38). But these are only the great unseen parties, struggling in this world for the possession of man. Each of these has his agents among men themselves; and Christ's agents in the sowing of the good seed are the *preachers* of the word. Thus, as in all the cases about to be described, the sower is the same, and the seed is the same; while the result is entirely different, the whole difference must lie in the *soils*, which mean the *different states of the human heart*. And so, the great general lesson held forth in this parable of the sower is, that however faithful the preacher, and how pure soever his message, *the effect of the preaching of the word depends upon the state of the hearer's heart*. Now follow the cases. See on <sup><4046></sup>Mark 4:4.

**15. And these are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; but, when they have heard,** etc. — or, more fully (<sup><4039></sup>Matthew 13:19), “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.” The great truth here taught is, that *hearts all unbroken and hard are no fit soil for saving truth*. They apprehend it not (<sup><4039></sup>Matthew 13:19) as God's means of restoring them to Himself; it penetrates not, makes no impression, but lies loosely on the surface of the heart, till the wicked one — afraid of losing a victim by his “believing to salvation” (<sup><4042></sup>Luke 8:12) — finds some frivolous subject by whose greater attractions to draw off the attention, and straightway it is gone. Of how many hearers of the word is this the graphic but painful history!

**16. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground,** etc. — “Immediately” the seed in such a case “springs up” — all the quicker from the shallowness of the soil — “because it has no depth of earth.” But the sun, beating on it, as quickly scorches and withers it up, “because it has no root” (<sup><018></sup>Mark 4:6), and “lacks moisture” (<sup><018></sup>Luke 8:6). The great truth here taught is that *hearts superficially impressed are apt to receive the truth with readiness, and even with joy* (<sup><018></sup>Luke 8:13); *but the heat of tribulation or persecution because of the word, or the trials which their new profession brings upon them quickly dries up their relish for the truth, and withers all the hasty promise of fruit which they showed.* Such disappointing issues of a faithful and awakening ministry — alas, how frequent are they!

**18. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,**

**19. And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in** — or “the pleasures of this life” (<sup><018></sup>Luke 8:14).

**choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful** — First, “The cares of this world” — anxious, unrelaxing attention to the business of this present life; second, “The deceitfulness of riches” — of those riches which are the fruit of this worldly “care”; third, “The pleasures of this life,” or “the lusts of other things entering in” — the enjoyments in themselves may be innocent, which worldly prosperity enables one to indulge. These “choke” or “smother” the word; drawing off so much of one’s attention, absorbing so much of one’s interest, and using up so much of one’s time, that only the dregs of these remain for spiritual things, and a ragged, hurried, and heartless formalism is at length all the religion of such persons. What a vivid picture is this of the mournful condition of many, especially in great commercial countries, who once promised much fruit! “They bring no fruit to perfection” (<sup><018></sup>Luke 8:14); indicating how much *growth* there may be, in the early stages of such a case, and *promise* of fruit — which after all never *ripens*.

**20. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred** — A heart soft and tender, stirred to its depths on the great things of eternity, and jealously guarded from worldly engrossments, such only is the “honest and good heart” (<sup><018></sup>Luke 8:15), which “keeps,” that is, “retains” the seed of the word, and bears fruit just in proportion as it is such a heart. Such “bring forth fruit with *patience*” (<sup><018></sup>Mark 4:15), or continuance, “enduring to the end”; in contrast with those in whom the word is “choked” and brings no fruit *to perfection*. The

“thirtyfold” is designed to express the *lowest* degree of fruitfulness; the “hundredfold” the *highest*; and the “sixtyfold” the *intermediate* degrees of fruitfulness. As a “hundredfold,” though not unexampled (<sup><0052></sup>Genesis 26:12), is a rare return in the natural husbandry, so the highest degrees of spiritual fruitfulness are too seldom witnessed. The closing words of this introductory parable seem designed to call attention to the *fundamental* and *universal* character of it.

**21. And he said unto them, Is a candle** — or “lamp”

**brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?** — “that they which enter in may see the light” (<sup><0186></sup>Luke 8:16). See on <sup><0185></sup>Matthew 5:15, of which this is nearly a repetition.

**22. For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested**, etc. — See on <sup><0026></sup>Matthew 10:26,27; but the connection there and here is slightly different. Here the idea seems to be this — “I have privately expounded to you these great truths, but only that ye may proclaim them publicly; and if ye will not, others will. For these are not designed for secrecy. They are imparted to be diffused abroad, and they shall be so; yea, a time is coming when the most hidden things shall be brought to light.”

**23. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear** — This for the second time on the same subject (see on <sup><0009></sup>Mark 4:9).

**24. And he saith unto them, Take heed what ye hear** — In Luke (<sup><0188></sup>Luke 8:18) it is, “Take heed how ye hear.” The one implies the other, but both precepts are very weighty.

**with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you** — See on <sup><0022></sup>Matthew 7:2.

**and unto you that hear** — that is, thankfully, teachably, profitably.

**shall more be given.**

**25. For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath** — or “seemeth to have,” or “thinketh he hath.” (See on <sup><0132></sup>Matthew 13:12). This “having” and “thinking he hath” are not different; for when it hangs loosely upon him, and is not appropriated to its proper ends and uses, it both is and is not his.

*Parable of the Seed Growing We Know not How* (<sup><0026></sup>Mark 4:26-29).

This beautiful parable is peculiar to Mark. Its design is to teach the *Imperceptible Growth* of the word sown in the heart, from its earliest stage of development to the ripest fruits of practical righteousness.

**26, 27. So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day** — go about his other ordinary occupations, leaving it to the well-known laws of vegetation under the genial influences of heaven. This is the sense of “the earth bringing forth fruit of *herself*,” in <sup><40027></sup>Mark 4:27.

**28. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear** — beautiful allusion to the succession of similar stages, though not definitely marked periods, in the Christian life, and generally in the kingdom of God.

**29. But when the fruit is brought forth** — to maturity

**immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come** — This charmingly points to the transition from the earthly to the heavenly condition of the Christian and the Church.

*Parable of the Mustard Seed* (<sup><40030></sup>Mark 4:30-32).

For the exposition of this portion, see on <sup><40031></sup>Matthew 13:31,32.

**33. And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it** — Had this been said in the corresponding passage of Matthew, we should have concluded that what that Evangelist recorded was but a specimen of other parables spoken on the same occasion. But Matthew (<sup><40034></sup>Matthew 13:34) says, “All *these* things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables”; and as Mark records only some of the parables which Matthew gives, we are warranted to infer that the “many such parables” alluded to here mean no more than the full complement of them which we find in Matthew.

**34. But without a parable spake he not unto them** — See on <sup><40035></sup>Matthew 13:34.

**and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples** — See on <sup><40022></sup>Mark 4:22.

## ◀1065 MARK 4:35-5:20.

### JESUS CROSSING THE SEA OF GALILEE, MIRACULOUSLY STILLS A TEMPEST — HE CURES THE DEMONIAK OF GADARA. (◀1083 MATTHEW 8:23-34 ◀1022 LUKE 8:22-39).

The time of this section is very definitely marked by our Evangelist, and by him alone, in the opening words.

*Jesus Stills a Tempest on the Sea of Galilee (◀1065 Mark 4:35-41).*

**35. And the same day** — on which He spoke the memorable parables of the preceding section, and of the thirteenth chapter.

**when the even was come** — (See on ◀1065 Mark 6:35). This must have been the earlier evening — what we should call the afternoon — since after all that passed on the other side, when He returned to the west side, the people were waiting for Him in great numbers (◀1023 Mark 4:21 ◀1040 Luke 8:40).

**he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side** — to the east side of the lake, to grapple with a desperate case of possession, and set the captive free, and to give the Gadarenes an opportunity of hearing the message of salvation, amid the wonder which that marvellous cure was fitted to awaken and the awe which the subsequent events could not but strike into them.

**36. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship** — that is, without any preparation, and without so much as leaving the vessel, out of which He had been all day teaching.

**And there were also with him other little ships** — with passengers, probably, wishing to accompany Him.

**37. And there arose a great storm of wind** — “a tempest of wind.” To such sudden squalls the Sea of Galilee is very liable from its position, in a deep basin, skirted on the east by lofty mountain ranges, while on the west the hills are intersected by narrow gorges through which the wind sweeps across the lake, and raises its waters with great rapidity into a storm.

**and the waves beat into the ship** — kept beating or pitching on the ship.

**so that it was now full** — rather, “so that it was already filling.” In Matthew (◀1024 Matthew 8:24), “insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves”; but this is too strong. It should be, “so that the ship was getting covered by the waves.” So we must translate the word used in Luke

(<sup><4083</sup>Luke 8:23) — not as in our version — “And there came down a storm on the lake, and they were filled [with water]” — but “they were getting filled,” that is, those who sailed; meaning, of course, that their ship was so.

**38. And he was in the hinder part of the ship** — or stern.

**asleep on a pillow** — either a place in the vessel made to receive the head, or a cushion for the head to rest on. It was evening; and after the fatigues of a busy day of teaching under the hot sun, having nothing to do while crossing the lake, He sinks into a deep sleep, which even this tempest raging around and tossing the little vessel did not disturb.

**and they awake him, and say unto him, Master** — or “Teacher.” In Luke (<sup><4083</sup>Luke 8:24) this is doubled — in token of their life-and-death earnestness — “Master, Master.”

**carest thou not that we perish?** — Unbelief and fear made them sadly forget their place, to speak so. Luke has it, “Lord, save us, we perish.” When those accustomed to fish upon that deep thus spake, the danger must have been imminent. They say nothing of what would become of *Him*, if they perished; nor think, whether, if He could not perish, it was likely He would let this happen to them; but they hardly knew what they said.

**39. And he arose, and rebuked the wind** — “and the raging of the water” (<sup><4083</sup>Luke 8:24).

**and said unto the sea, Peace, be still** — two sublime words of command, from a Master to His servants, the elements.

**And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm** — The sudden hushing of the wind would not at once have calmed the sea, whose commotion would have settled only after a considerable time. But the word of command was given to both elements at once.

**40. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful?** — There is a natural apprehension under danger; but there was unbelief in their fear. It is worthy of notice how considerably the Lord defers this rebuke till He had first removed the danger, in the midst of which they would not have been in a state to listen to anything.

**how is it that ye have no faith?** — next to none, or none in present exercise. In Matthew (<sup><4083</sup>Matthew 8:26) it is, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” *Faith* they had, for they applied to Christ for relief: but *little*, for they were afraid, though Christ was in the ship. Faith dispels fear, but only in proportion to its strength.

**41. And they feared exceedingly** — were struck with deep awe.

**and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?** — “What is this?” Israel has all along been singing of JEHOVAH, “Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them!” “The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea!” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 89:9 93:4). But, lo, in this very boat of ours is One of our own flesh and blood, who with His word of command hath done the same! Exhausted with the fatigues of the day, He was but a moment ago in a deep sleep, undisturbed by the howling tempest, and we had to waken Him with the cry of our terror; but rising at our call, His majesty was felt by the raging elements, for they were instantly hushed — “WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS?”



# CHAPTER 5

*Glorious Cure of the Gadarene Demoniac* (~~Ⓜ~~Mark 5:1-20).

**1. And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.**

**2. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately** — (see ~~Ⓜ~~Mark 5:6).

**there met him a man with an unclean spirit** — “which had devils [demons] long time” (~~Ⓛ~~Luke 8:27). In Matthew (~~Ⓜ~~Matthew 8:28), “there met him two men possessed with devils.” Though there be no discrepancy between these two statements — more than between two witnesses, one of whom testifies to something done by one person, while the other affirms that there were two — it is difficult to see how the principal details here given could apply to more than one case.

**3. Who had his dwelling among the tombs** — Luke (~~Ⓛ~~Luke 8:27) says, “He ware no clothes, neither abode in any house.” These tombs were hewn out of the rocky caves of the locality, and served for shelters and lurking places (~~Ⓛ~~Luke 8:26).

**4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains**, etc. — Luke says (~~Ⓛ~~Luke 8:29) that “oftentimes it [the unclean spirit] had caught him”; and after mentioning how they had vainly tried to bind him with chains and fetters, because, “he brake the bands,” he adds, “and was driven of the devil [demon] into the wilderness.” The dark tyrant — power by which he was held clothed him with superhuman strength and made him scorn restraint. Matthew (~~Ⓜ~~Matthew 8:28) says he was “exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.” He was the terror of the whole locality.

**5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones** — Terrible as he was to others, he himself endured untold misery, which sought relief in tears and self-inflicted torture.

**6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him** — not with the spontaneous alacrity which says to Jesus, “Draw me, we will *run* after thee,” but inwardly compelled, with terrific rapidity, before the Judge, to receive sentence of expulsion.

**7. What have I to do with thee, Jesus, Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not** — or, as in <sup>4089</sup>Matthew 8:29, “Art Thou come to torment us before the time?” (See on <sup>4104</sup>Mark 1:24). Behold the *tormentor* anticipating, dreading, and entreating exemption from *torment*! In Christ they discern their destined Tormentor; the time, they know, is fixed, and they feel as if it were come already! (<sup>3429</sup>James 2:19).

**8. For he said unto him** — that is, before the unclean spirit cried out.

**Come out of the man, unclean spirit!** — Ordinarily, obedience to a command of this nature was immediate. But here, a certain delay is permitted, the more signally to manifest the power of Christ and accomplish His purposes.

**9. And he asked him, What is thy name?** — The object of this question was to extort an acknowledgment of the virulence of demoniacal power by which this victim was enthralled.

**And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many** — or, as in Luke (<sup>4080</sup>Luke 8:30) “because many devils [demons] were entered into him.” A legion, in the Roman army, amounted, at its full complement, to six thousand; but here the word is used, as such words with us, and even this one, for an indefinitely large number — large enough however to rush, as soon as permission was given, into two thousand swine and destroy them.

**10. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country** — The entreaty, it will be observed, was made by *one spirit*, but in behalf of *many* — “*he* besought Him not to send *them*, etc.” — just as in <sup>4089</sup>Mark 5:9, “*he* answered *we* are many.” But what do they mean by entreating so earnestly not to be ordered out of the country? Their next petition (<sup>4152</sup>Mark 5:12) will make that clear enough.

**11. Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains** — rather, “to the mountain,” according to what is clearly the true reading. In <sup>4089</sup>Matthew 8:30, they are said to have been “a good way off.” But these expressions, far from being inconsistent, only confirm, by their precision, the minute accuracy of the narrative.

**a great herd of swine feeding** — There can hardly be any doubt that the owners of these were Jews, since to them our Lord had now come to proffer His services. This will explain what follows.

**12. And all the devils besought him, saying** — “if thou cast us out” (<sup>4089</sup>Matthew 8:31).

**Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them** — Had they spoken out all their mind, perhaps this would have been it: “If we must quit our hold of this man, suffer us to continue our work of mischief in another form, that by entering these swine, and thus destroying the people’s property, we may steel their hearts against Thee!”

**13. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave** — In Matthew (<sup><4082></sup>Matthew 8:32) this is given with majestic brevity — “Go!” The owners, if Jews, drove an illegal trade; if heathens, they insulted the national religion: in either case the permission was just.

**And the unclean spirits went out** — of the man.

**and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently** — rushed.  
**down a steep place** — down the hanging cliff.

**into the sea (they were about two thousand)** — The number of them is given by this graphic Evangelist alone. and were choked in the sea — “perished in the waters” (<sup><4082></sup>Matthew 8:32).

**14. And they that fed the swine fled, and told it** — “told everything, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils” (<sup><4083></sup>Matthew 8:33).

**in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done** — Thus had they the evidence, both of the herdsmen and of their own senses, to the reality of both miracles.

**15. And they come to Jesus** — Matthew (<sup><4084></sup>Matthew 8:34) says, “Behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus.”

**and see him that was possessed with the devil** — the demonized person.

**and had the legion, sitting** — “at the feet of Jesus,” adds Luke (<sup><4085></sup>Luke 8:35); in contrast with his former *wild* and *wandering* habits.

**and clothed** — As our Evangelist had not told us that he “ware no clothes,” the meaning of this statement could only have been conjectured but for “the beloved physician” (<sup><4087></sup>Luke 8:27), who supplies the missing piece of information here. This is a striking case of what are called *Undesigned Coincidences* amongst the different Evangelists; one of them taking a thing for granted, as familiarly known at the time, but which we should never have known but for one or more of the others, and without the knowledge of which some of their statements would be unintelligible. The clothing which the poor man would feel the want of the moment his consciousness returned to him, was doubtless supplied to him by some of the Twelve.

**and in his right mind** — but now, oh, in what a lofty sense! (Compare an analogous, though a different kind of case, <sup><2068</sup>Daniel 4:34-37).

**and they were afraid** — Had this been awe only, it had been natural enough; but other feelings, alas! of a darker kind, soon showed themselves.

**16. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil** — (“the demonized person”).

**and also concerning the swine** — Thus had they the double testimony of the herdsmen and their own senses.

**17. And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts** — Was it the owners only of the valuable property now lost to them that did this? Alas, no! For Luke (<sup><4087</sup>Luke 8:37) says, “Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought Him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear.” The evil spirits had thus, alas! their object. Irritated, the people could not suffer His presence; yet awe-struck, they dared not order Him off: so they entreat Him to withdraw, and — He takes them at their word.

**18. he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him** — the grateful heart, fresh from the hand of demons, clinging to its wondrous Benefactor. How exquisitely natural!

**19. Howbeit, Jesus suffered him not**, etc. — To be a missionary for Christ, in the region where he was so well known and so long dreaded, was a far nobler calling than to follow Him where nobody had ever heard of him, and where other trophies not less illustrious could be raised by the same power and grace.

**20. And he departed, and began to publish** — not only among his friends, to whom Jesus immediately sent him, but

**in Decapolis** — so called, as being a region of ten cities. (See on <sup><4025</sup>Matthew 4:25).

**how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel** — Throughout that considerable region did this monument of mercy proclaim his new-found Lord; and some, it is to be hoped, did more than “marvel.”

## MARK 5:21-43.

### THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS RAISED TO LIFE — THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD HEALED.

(MARK MATTHEW 9:18-26 MARK LUKE 8:41-56).

The occasion of this scene will appear presently.

*Jairus' Daughter* (MARK Mark 5:21-24).

**21. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side** — from the Gadarene side of the lake, where He had parted with the healed demoniac, to the west side, at Capernaum.

**much people gathered unto him** — who “gladly received Him; for they were all waiting for Him” (MARK Luke 8:40). The abundant teaching earlier that day (MARK Mark 4:1, etc., and MARK Matthew 13:1-58) had only whetted the people’s appetite: and disappointed, as would seem, that He had left them in the evening to cross the lake, they remain hanging about the beach, having got a hint, probably through some of His disciples, that He would be back the same evening. Perhaps they witnessed at a distance the sudden calming of the tempest. The tide of our Lord’s popularity was now fast rising.

**and he was nigh unto the sea.**

**22. And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue** — of which class there were but few who believed in Jesus (MARK John 7:48). One would suppose from this that the ruler had been with the multitude on the shore, anxiously awaiting the return of Jesus, and immediately on His arrival had accosted Him as here related. But Matthew (MARK Matthew 9:18) tells us that the ruler came to Him while He was in the act of speaking at His own table on the subject of fasting; and as we must suppose that this converted publican ought to know what took place on that memorable occasion when he made a feast to his Lord, we conclude that here the right order is indicated by the First Evangelist alone.

**Jairus by name** — or “Jaeirus.” It is the same name as *Jair*, in the Old Testament (MARK Numbers 32:41 MARK Judges 10:3 MARK Esther 2:5).

**and when he saw him, he fell at his feet** — in Matthew (MARK Matthew 9:18), “worshipped Him.” The meaning is the same in both.

**23. And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter** — Luke (MARK Luke 8:42) says, “He had one only daughter, about twelve years of age.” According to a well-known rabbin, quoted by LIGHTFOOT, a daughter.

till she had completed her twelfth year, was called “little,” or “a little maid”; after that, “a young woman.”

**lieth at the point of death** — Matthew (<sup><4085</sup>Matthew 9:18) gives it thus: “My daughter is even now dead” — “has just expired.” The news of her death reached the father after the cure of the woman with the issue of blood: but Matthew’s brief account gives only the *result*, as in the case of the centurion’s servant (<sup><4085</sup>Matthew 8:5, etc.).

**come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live** — or, “that she may be healed and live,” according to a fully preferable reading. In one of the class to which this man belonged, so steeped in prejudice, such faith would imply more than in others.

*The Woman with an Issue of Blood Healed* (<sup><4084</sup>Mark 5:24-34).

**24. And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him** — The word in Luke (<sup><4082</sup>Luke 8:42) is stronger — “choked,” “stifled Him.”

**26. And had suffered many things of many physicians** — The expression perhaps does not necessarily refer to the suffering she endured under medical treatment, but to the much varied treatment which she underwent.

**and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse** — pitiable case, and affectingly aggravated; emblem of our natural state as fallen creatures (<sup><2005</sup>Ezekiel 16:5,6), and illustrating the worse than vanity of all human remedies for spiritual maladies (<sup><2083</sup>Hosea 5:13). The higher design of all our Lord’s miracles of healing irresistibly suggests this way of viewing the present case, the propriety of which will still more appear as we proceed.

**27. When she had heard of Jesus, came** — This was the right experiment at last. What had she “heard of Jesus?” No doubt it was His marvellous cures she had heard of; and the hearing of these, in connection with her bitter experience of the vanity of applying to any other, had been blessed to the kindling in her soul of a firm confidence that He who had so willingly wrought such cures on others was able and would not refuse to heal her also.

**in the press behind** — shrinking, yet seeking.

**touched his garment** — According to the ceremonial law, the touch of anyone having the disease which this woman had would have defiled the person touched. Some think that the recollection of this may account for her

stealthily approaching Him in the crowd behind, and touching but the hem of His garment. But there was an instinct in the faith which brought her to Jesus, which taught her, that if that touch could set her free from the defiling disease itself, it was impossible to communicate defilement to Him, and that this wondrous Healer must be above such laws.

**28. For she said** — “within herself” (<sup><4021></sup>Matthew 9:21).

**If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole** — that is, if I may but *come in contact* with this glorious Healer *at all*. Remarkable faith this!

**29. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up** — Not only was her issue of blood stanchd (<sup><4044></sup>Luke 8:44), but the cause of it was thoroughly removed, insomuch that by her bodily sensations she immediately knew herself perfectly cured.

**30. And Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue** — or “efficacy.”

**had gone out of him** — He was conscious of the forthgoing of His healing power, which was not — as in prophets and apostles — something *foreign to Himself* and imparted merely, but what He had *dwelling within Him* as “His own fullness.”

**turned him about in the press** — crowd.

**and said, Who touched my clothes?**

**31. And his disciples said unto him** — Luke says (<sup><4085></sup>Luke 8:45), “When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master.”

**Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?** — “Askest thou, Lord, who touched Thee? Rather ask who touched Thee not in such a throng.” “And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me” — “a certain person has touched Me” — “for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me” (<sup><4086></sup>Luke 8:46). Yes, the multitude “*thronged and pressed Him*” — they *jostled against Him*, but all *involuntarily*; they were merely *carried along*; but one, one only — “a certain person — TOUCHED Him,” with the conscious, voluntary, dependent touch of faith, reaching forth its hand expressly to have contact with Him. This and this only Jesus acknowledges and seeks out. Even so, as AUGUSTINE long ago said, *multitudes still come similarly close to Christ in the means of grace, but all to no purpose, being only sucked into the crowd*. The voluntary, living contact of faith is that electric conductor which alone draws virtue out of Him.

**32. And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing** — not for the purpose of summoning forth a culprit, but, as we shall presently see, to obtain from the healed one a testimony to what He had done for her.

**33. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her** — alarmed, as a humble, shrinking female would naturally be, at the necessity of so public an exposure of herself, yet conscious that she had a tale to tell which would speak for her.

**came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth** — In Luke (<sup><4087></sup>Luke 8:47) it is, “When the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.” This, though it tried the modesty of the believing woman, was just what Christ wanted in dragging her forth, her public testimony to the facts of her case — the disease, with her abortive efforts at a cure, and the instantaneous and perfect relief which her touching the Great Healer had brought her.

**34. And he said unto her, Daughter** — “be of good comfort” (<sup><4088></sup>Luke 8:48).

**thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague** — Though healed as soon as she believed, it seemed to her a stolen cure — she feared to acknowledge it. Jesus therefore sets His royal seal upon it. But what a glorious dismissal from the lips of Him who is “our Peace” is that, “Go in peace!”

*Jairus’ Daughter Raised to Life* (<sup><4089></sup>Mark 5:35-43).

**35. Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?** — the Teacher.

**36. he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe** — Jesus, knowing how the heart of the agonized father would sink at the tidings, and the reflections at the *delay* which would be apt to rise in his mind, hastens to reassure him, and in His accustomed style: “Be not afraid, only believe” — words of unchanging preciousness and power! How vividly do such incidents bring out Christ’s knowledge of the human heart and tender sympathy! (<sup><3015></sup>Hebrews 4:15).

**37. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James** — (See on <sup><40129></sup>Mark 1:29).

**38. And he cometh** — rather, “they come.”



**to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly** — “the minstrels and the people making a noise” (<sup><1023></sup>Matthew 9:23) — lamenting for the dead. (See <sup><1482></sup>2 Chronicles 35:25 <sup><3100></sup>Jeremiah 9:20 <sup><31516></sup>Amos 5:16).

**39. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth** — so brief her state of death as to be more like a short sleep.

**40. And they laughed him to scorn** — rather, simply, “laughed at Him” — “knowing that she was dead” (<sup><1053></sup>Luke 8:53); an important testimony this to the reality of her death.

**But when he had put them all out** — The word is strong — “turned them all out”; meaning all those who were making this noise, and any others that may have been there from sympathy, that only those might be present who were most nearly concerned, and those whom He had Himself brought as witnesses of the great act about to be done.

**he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him** — Peter, and James, and John.

**and entereth in where the damsel was lying.**

**41. And he took the damsel by the hand** — as He did Peter’s mother-in-law (<sup><1003></sup>Mark 1:31).

**and said unto her, Talitha cumi** — The words are *Aramaic*, or *Syro-Chaldaic*, the then language of Palestine. Mark loves to give such wonderful words just as they were spoken. See <sup><1073></sup>Mark 7:34 14:36.

**42. And straightway the damsel** — The word here is different from that in <sup><1053></sup>Mark 5:39-41, and signifies “young maiden,” or “little girl.”

**arose, and walked** — a vivid touch evidently from an eye-witness.

**And they were astonished with a great astonishment** — The language here is the strongest.

**43. And he charged them straitly** — strictly.

**that no man should know it** — The only reason we can assign for this is His desire not to let the public feeling regarding Him come too precipitately to a crisis.

**and commanded that something should be given her to eat** — in token of perfect restoration.

# CHAPTER 6

## MARK 6:1-6.

**CHRIST REJECTED AT NAZARETH.**  
(~~4058~~ MATTHEW 13:54-58 ~~4046~~ LUKE 4:16-30).

See on ~~4049~~ Luke 4:16-30.

## MARK 6:7-13.

**MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.**  
(~~4006~~ MATTHEW 10:1,5-15 ~~4001~~ LUKE 9:1-6).

See on ~~4008~~ Matthew 10:1; ~~4005~~ Matthew 10:5-15.

## MARK 6:14-29.

**HEROD THINKS JESUS A RESURRECTION OF THE  
MURDERED BAPTIST — ACCOUNT OF HIS DEATH.**  
(~~4040~~ MATTHEW 14:1-12 ~~4007~~ LUKE 9:7-9).

*Herod's View of Christ* (~~4034~~ Mark 6:14-16).

**14. And King Herod** — that is, Herod Antipas, one of the three sons of Herod the Great, and own brother of Archelaus (~~4022~~ Matthew 2:22), who ruled as *ethnarch* over Galilee and Perea.

**heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad); and he said** — “unto his servants” (~~4040~~ Matthew 14:2), his councillors or court ministers.

**That John the Baptist was risen from the dead** — The murdered prophet haunted his guilty breast like a specter, and seemed to him alive again and clothed with unearthly powers, in the person of Jesus.

**15. Others said, That it is Elias. And others, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets** — (See on ~~4064~~ Matthew 16:14).

**16. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead** — “himself has risen”; as if the innocence and sanctity of his faithful reprover had not suffered that he should lie long dead.

*Account of the Baptist’s Imprisonment and Death* (~~MARK~~ Mark 6:17-29).

**17. For Herod himself had sent forth, and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison** — in the castle of Machaerus, near the southern extremity of Herod’s dominions, and adjoining the Dead Sea [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 18.5,2].

**for Herodias’ sake** — She was the granddaughter of Herod the Great.

**his brother Philip’s wife** — and therefore the niece of both brothers. This Philip, however, was not the tetrarch of that name mentioned in ~~LUKE~~ Luke 3:1 (see on ~~LUKE~~ Luke 3:1), but one whose distinctive name was “Herod Philip,” another son of Herod the Great — who was disinherited by his father. Herod Antipas’ own wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia; but he prevailed on Herodias, his half-brother Philip’s wife, to forsake her husband and live with him, on condition, says JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 18.5,1], that he should put away his own wife. This involved him afterwards in war with Aretas, who totally defeated him and destroyed his army, from the effects of which he was never able to recover himself.

**18. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife** — Noble fidelity! It was not lawful because Herod’s wife and Herodias husband were both living; and further, because the parties were within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity (see ~~LEVITICUS~~ Leviticus 20:21); Herodias being the daughter of Aristobulus, the brother of both Herod and Philip [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 18.5,4].

**19. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him** — rather, as in the *Margin*, “had a grudge against him.” Probably she was too proud to speak to him; still less would she quarrel with him.

**and would have killed him; but she could not.**

**20. For Herod feared John** — but, as BENGEL notes, John feared not Herod.

**knowing that he was a just man and an holy** — Compare the ease of Elijah with Ahab, after the murder of Naboth (~~1 KINGS~~ 1 Kings 21:20).

**and observed him** — rather, as in the *Margin*, “kept” or “saved him”; that is, from the wicked designs of Herodias, who had been watching for some pretext to get Herod entangled and committed to despatch him.

**and when he heard him, he did many things** — many good things under the influence of the Baptist on his conscience.

**and heard him gladly** — a striking statement this, for which we are indebted to our graphic Evangelist alone, illustrating the working of contrary principles in the slaves of passion. But this only shows how far Herodias must have wrought upon him, as Jezebel upon Ahab, that he should at length agree to what his awakened conscience kept him long from executing.

**21. And when a convenient day** — for the purposes of Herodias.

**was come, that Herod** — rather, “A convenient day being come,” when Herod.

**on his birthday, made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee** — This graphic minuteness of detail adds much to the interest of the tragic narrative.

**22. And when the daughter of the said Herodias** — that is, — her daughter by her proper husband, Herod Philip: Her name was Salome [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 18.5,4].

**came in and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel** — “the girl” (See on ~~Mark~~ Mark 5:42).

**Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.**

**23. And he** — the king, so called, but only by courtesy (see on ~~Mark~~ Mark 6:14).

**sware unto her Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, unto the half of my kingdom** — Those in whom passion and luxury have destroyed self-command will in a capricious moment say and do what in their cool moments they bitterly regret.

**24. And she said, The head of John the Baptist** — Abandoned women are more shameless and heartless than men. The Baptist’s fidelity marred the pleasures of Herodias, and this was too good an opportunity of getting rid of him to let slip.

**25. I will that thou give me by and by** — rather, “at once.”

**in a charger** — large, flat trencher — “the head of John the Baptist.”

**26. And the king was exceeding sorry** — With his feelings regarding John, and the truths which so told upon his conscience from that preacher's lips, and after so often and carefully saving him from his paramour's rage, it must have been very galling to find himself at length entrapped by his own rash folly.

**yet for his oath's sake** — See how men of no principle, but troublesome conscience, will stick at breaking a rash oath, while yielding to the commission of the worst crimes!

**and for their sakes which sat with him** — under the influence of that false shame, which could not brook being thought to be troubled with religious or moral scruples. To how many has this proved a fatal snare!

**he would not reject her.**

**27. And immediately the king sent an executioner** — one of the guards in attendance. The word is Roman, denoting one of the Imperial Guard.

**and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison** — after, it would seem, more than twelve months' imprisonment. Blessed martyr! Dark and cheerless was the end reserved for thee: but now thou hast thy Master's benediction, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (<sup>4006</sup>Matthew 11:6), and hast found the life thou gavest away (<sup>4008A</sup>Matthew 10:39). But where are they in whose skirts is found thy blood?

**28. And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother** — Herodias did not shed the blood of the stern reprover; she only got it done, and then gloated over it, as it streamed from the trunkless head.

**29. And when his disciples heard of it** — that is, the Baptist's own disciples.

**they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb** — "and went and told Jesus" (<sup>4012</sup>Matthew 14:12). If these disciples had, up to this time, stood apart from Him, as adherents of John (<sup>4012</sup>Matthew 11:2), perhaps they now came to Jesus, not without some secret reflection on Him for His seeming neglect of their master; but perhaps, too, as orphans, to cast in their lot henceforth with the Lord's disciples. How Jesus felt, or what He said, on receiving this intelligence, is not recorded; but He of whom it was said, as He stood by the grave of His friend Lazarus, "Jesus wept," was not likely to receive such intelligence without deep emotion. And one reason why He might not be unwilling that a small body of John's disciples should cling to him to the last, might be to provide some attached friends

who should do for his precious body, on a small scale, what was afterwards to be done for His own.

## MARK 6:30-56.

**THE TWELVE ON THEIR RETURN, HAVING REPORTED THE SUCCESS OF THEIR MISSION, JESUS CROSSES THE SEA OF GALILEE WITH THEM, TEACHES THE PEOPLE, AND MIRACULOUSLY FEEDS THEM TO THE NUMBER OF FIVE THOUSAND — HE SENDS HIS DISCIPLES BY SHIP AGAIN TO THE WESTERN SIDE, WHILE HE HIMSELF RETURNS AFTERWARDS WALKING ON THE SEA — INCIDENTS ON LANDING. (<sup><4143></sup>MATTHEW 14:13-36 <sup><4193></sup>LUKE 9:10-17 <sup><4185></sup>JOHN 6:1-24).**

Here, for the first time, all the four streams of sacred text run parallel. The occasion and all the circumstances of this grand section are thus brought before us with a vividness quite remarkable.

*Five Thousand Miraculously Fed (<sup><4150></sup>Mark 6:30-44).*

**30. And the apostles gathered themselves together** — probably at Capernaum, on returning from their mission (<sup><4107></sup>Mark 6:7-13).

**and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught** — Observe the various reasons He had for crossing to the other side. First, Matthew (<sup><4143></sup>Matthew 14:13) says, that “when Jesus heard” of the murder of His faithful forerunner — from those attached disciples of his who had taken up his body and laid it in a sepulcher (see on <sup><4129></sup>Mark 6:29) — “He departed by ship into a desert place apart”; either to avoid some apprehended consequences to Himself, arising from the Baptist’s death (<sup><4103></sup>Matthew 10:23), or more probably to be able to indulge in those feelings which that affecting event had doubtless awakened, and to which the bustle of the multitude around Him was very unfavorable. Next, since He must have heard the report of the Twelve with the deepest interest, and probably with something of the emotion which He experienced on the return of the Seventy (see on <sup><2007></sup>Luke 10:17-22), He sought privacy for undisturbed reflection on this begun preaching and progress of His kingdom. Once more, He was wearied with the multitude of “comers and goers” — depriving Him even of leisure enough to take His food — and wanted *rest*: “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a

while,” etc. Under the combined influence of all these considerations, our Lord sought this change.

**32. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately** — “over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias,” says John (<sup><RB></sup>John 6:1), the only one of the Evangelists who so fully describes it; the others having written when their readers were supposed to know something of it, while the last wrote for those at a greater distance of time and place. This “desert place” is more definitely described by Luke (<sup><RB></sup>Luke 9:10) as “belonging to the city called Bethsaida.” This must not be confounded with the town so called on the western side of the lake (see on <sup><RB></sup>Matthew 11:21). This town lay on its northeastern side, near where the Jordan empties itself into it: in Gaulonitis, out of the dominions of Herod Antipas, and within the dominions of Philip the Tetrarch (<sup><RB></sup>Luke 3:1), who raised it from a village to a city, and called it *Julias*, in honor of Julia, the daughter of Augustus [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 18.2,1].

**33. And the people** — the multitudes.

**saw them departing, and many knew him** — The true reading would seem to be: “And many saw them departing, and knew or recognized [them].”

**and ran afoot** — Here, perhaps, it should be rendered “by land” — running round by the head of the lake, and taking one of the fords of the river, so as to meet Jesus, who was crossing with the Twelve by ship.

**thither out of all cities, and outwent them** — got before them.

**and came together unto him** — How exceedingly graphic is this! every touch of it betokening the presence of an eye-witness. John (<sup><RB></sup>John 6:3) says, that “Jesus went up into a mountain” — somewhere in that hilly range, the green tableland which skirts the eastern side of the lake.

**34. And Jesus, when he came out of the ship** — having gone on shore.

**saw much people** — a great multitude.

**and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd** — At the sight of the multitudes who had followed Him by land and even got before Him, He was so moved, as was His wont in such cases, with compassion, because they were like shepherdless sheep, as to forego both privacy and rest that He might minister to them. Here we have an important piece of information from the Fourth Evangelist (<sup><RB></sup>John 6:4), “And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh” — rather, “Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was nigh.”

This accounts for the multitudes that now crowded around Him. They were on their way to keep that festival at Jerusalem. But Jesus did not go up to this festival, as John expressly tells us, (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~John 7:1) — remaining in Galilee, because the ruling Jews sought to kill Him.

**35. And when the day was now far spent** — “began to wear away” or “decline,” says Luke (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~Luke 9:12). Matthew (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~Matthew 14:15) says, “when it was evening”; and yet he mentions a later evening of the same day (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~Mark 6:23). This earlier evening began at three P.M.; the latter began at sunset.

**36. Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat** — John tells us (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~John 6:5,6) that “Jesus said to Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? (And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do).” The subject may have been introduced by some remark of the disciples; but the precise order and form of what was said by each can hardly be gathered with precision, nor is it of any importance.

**37. He answered and said unto them** — “They need not depart” (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~Matthew 14:10).

**Give ye them to eat** — doubtless said to prepare them for what was to follow.

**And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?** — “Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little” (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~John 6:7).

**38. He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes** — John is more precise and full: “One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?” (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~John 6:8,9). Probably this was the whole stock of provisions then at the command of the disciples — no more than enough for one meal to them — and entrusted for the time to this lad. “He said, Bring them hither to me” (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~Matthew 14:18).

**39. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass** — or “green hay”; the rank grass of those bushy wastes. For, as John (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲉ~~John 6:10) notes, “there was much grass in the place.”



**40. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties —**

Doubtless this was to show at a glance the number fed, and to enable all to witness in an orderly manner this glorious miracle.

**41. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven —**

Thus would the most distant of them see distinctly what He was doing.

**and blessed** — John (<sup><RB1></sup>John 6:11) says, “And when he had given thanks.” The sense is the same. This thanksgiving for the meal, and benediction of it as the food of thousands, was the crisis of the miracle.

**and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them** — thus virtually holding forth these men as His future ministers.

**and the two fishes divided he among them all.**

**42. And they did all eat, and were filled** — All the four Evangelists mention this: and John (<sup><RB1></sup>John 6:11) adds, “and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would” — to show that vast as was the multitude, and scanty the provisions, the meal to each and all of them was a plentiful one. “When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost” (<sup><RB2></sup>John 6:12). This was designed to bring out the whole extent of the miracle.

**43. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes** — “Therefore (says <sup><RB1></sup>John 6:13), they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.” The article here rendered “baskets” in all the four narratives was part of the luggage taken by Jews on a journey — to carry, it is said, both their provisions and hay to sleep on, that they might not have to depend on Gentiles, and so run the risk of ceremonial pollution. In this we have a striking corroboration of the truth of the four narratives. Internal evidence renders it clear, we think, that the first three Evangelists wrote independently of each other, though the fourth must have seen all the others. But here, each of the first three Evangelists uses the same word to express the apparently insignificant circumstance that the baskets employed to gather up the fragments were of the kind which even the Roman satirist, JUVENAL, knew by the name of *cophinus*, while in both the narratives of the feeding of the Four Thousand the baskets used are expressly said to have been of the kind called *spuris*. (See <sup><RB1></sup>Mark 8:19,20.)

**44. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men** — “besides women and children” (<sup><RB1></sup>Matthew 14:21). Of these, however,

there would probably not be many; as only the males were obliged to go to the approaching festival.

*Jesus Recrosses to the Western side of the Lake Walking on the Sea*  
(~~4165~~Mark 6:45-56).

One very important particular given by John alone (~~4165~~John 6:15) introduces this portion: “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.”

**45. And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before** — Him.

**unto Bethsaida** — Bethsaida of Galilee (~~4162~~John 12:21). John (~~4167~~John 6:17) says they “went over the sea towards Capernaum” — the wind, probably, occasioning this slight deviation from the direction of Bethsaida.

**while he sent away the people** — “the multitude.” His object in this was to put an end to the misdirected excitement in His favor (~~4165~~John 6:15), into which the disciples themselves may have been somewhat drawn. The word “constrained” implies reluctance on their part, perhaps from unwillingness to part with their Master and embark at night, leaving Him alone on the mountain.

**46. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray** — thus at length getting that privacy and rest which He had vainly sought during the earlier part of the day; opportunity also to pour out His soul in connection with the extraordinary excitement in His favor that evening — which appears to have marked the zenith of His reputation, for it began to decline the very next day; and a place whence He might watch the disciples on the lake, pray for them in their extremity, and observe the right time for coming to them, in a new manifestation of His glory, on the sea.

**47. And when even was come** — the later evening (see on ~~4165~~Mark 6:35). It had come even when the disciples embarked (~~4163~~Matthew 14:23 ~~4166~~John 6:16).

**the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land** — John says (~~4167~~John 6:17), “It was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.” Perhaps they made no great effort to push across at first, having a lingering hope that their Master would yet join them, and so allowed the darkness to come on. “And the sea arose” (adds the beloved disciple, ~~4168~~John 6:18), “by reason of a great wind that blew.”

**48. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them** — putting forth all their strength to buffet the waves and bear on against a head wind, but to little effect. He “saw” this from His mountain top, and through the darkness of the night, for His heart was all with them: yet would He not go to their relief till His own time came.

**and about the fourth watch of the night** — The Jews, who used to divide the night into three watches, latterly adopted the Roman division into four watches, as here. So that, at the rate of three hours to each, the fourth watch, reckoning from six P.M., would be three o’clock in the morning. “So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs” (<sup>489</sup>John 6:19) — rather more than halfway across. The lake is about seven miles broad at its widest part. So that in eight or nine hours they had only made some three and a half miles. By this time, therefore, they must have been in a state of exhaustion and despondency bordering on despair; and now at length, having tried them long enough.

**he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea** — “and draweth nigh unto the ship” (<sup>489</sup>John 6:19).

**and would have passed by them** — but only in the sense of <sup>428</sup>Luke 24:28 <sup>432</sup>Genesis 32:26; compare <sup>488</sup>Genesis 18:3,5 42:7.

**49. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out** — “for fear” (<sup>445</sup>Matthew 14:26). He would appear to them at first like a dark moving speck upon the waters; then as a human figure; but in the dark tempestuous sky, and not dreaming that it could be their Lord, they take it for a spirit. Compare <sup>426</sup>Luke 24:37.

**50. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: It is I; be not afraid** — There is something in these two little words — given by Matthew, Mark and John (<sup>447</sup>Matthew 14:27 <sup>469</sup>Mark 6:50 <sup>469</sup>John 6:20) — “It is I,” which from the mouth that spake it and the circumstances in which it was uttered, passes the power of language to express. Here were they in the midst of a raging sea, their little bark the sport of the elements, and with just enough of light to descry an object on the waters which only aggravated their fears. But Jesus deems it enough to dispel all apprehension to let them know that *He was there*. From other lips that “I am” would have merely meant that the person speaking was such a one and not another person. That, surely, would have done little to calm the fears of men expecting every minute, it may be, to go to the bottom. But spoken by One who at that moment was “treading upon the waves of the sea,” and was about to hush the raging elements with His word, what was it but the Voice which cried of old in the ears of Israel, even from the days of Moses, “I

AM”; “I, EVEN I, AM HE!” Compare <sup><BIB></sup>John 18:5,6 8:58. Now, that Word is “made flesh, and dwells among us,” uttering itself from beside us in dear familiar tones — “It is the Voice of my Beloved!” How far was this apprehended by these frightened disciples? There was one, we know, in the boat who outstripped all the rest in susceptibility to such sublime appeals. It was not the deep-toned writer of the Fourth Gospel, who, though he lived to soar beyond all the apostles, was as yet too young for prominence, and all unripe. It was Simon Barjonas. Here follows a very remarkable and instructive episode, recorded by Matthew alone:

*Peter Ventures to Walk upon the Sea* (<sup><BIB></sup>Matthew 14:28-32).

### <sup><BIB></sup>MATTHEW 14:28:

*And Peter answered Him, and said, Lord, If it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water* — not “let me,” but “give me the word of *command*” — “command,” or “order me to come unto Thee upon the waters.”

### <sup><BIB></sup>MATTHEW 14:29:

*And He said, Come* — Sublime word, issuing from One conscious of power over the raging element, to bid it serve both Himself and whomsoever else He pleased!

*And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked upon the water* — “waters.”

*to come to Jesus* — “It was a bold spirit,” says BISHOP HALL, “that could wish it; more bold that could act it — not fearing either the softness or the roughness of that uncouth passage.”

### <sup><BIB></sup>MATTHEW 14:30:

*But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me* — The wind was as boisterous before, but Peter “saw” it not, seeing only the power of Christ, in the lively exercise of faith. Now he “sees” the fury of the elements, and immediately the power of Christ to bear him up fades before his view, and this makes him “afraid” — as how could he be otherwise, without any *felt* power to keep him up? He then “begins to sink”; and finally, conscious that his experiment had failed, he casts himself, in a sort of desperate confidence, upon his “Lord” for deliverance!

⌄<sup>408</sup> **MATTHEW 14:31:**

*And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? — This rebuke was not administered while Peter was sinking, nor till Christ had him by the hand: first reinvigorating his faith, and then with it enabling him again to walk upon the crested wave. Useless else had been this loving reproof, which owns the *faith* that had ventured on the deep upon the bare word of Christ, but asks why that *distrust* which so quickly marred it.*

⌄<sup>409</sup> **MATTHEW 14:32:**

*And when they — Jesus and Peter.*

*were come into the ship, the wind ceased.*

**51. And he went up unto them into the ship** — John (⌄<sup>410</sup> John 6:21) says, “Then they willingly received him into the ship” — or rather, “Then were they willing to receive Him” (with reference to their previous terror); but implying also a glad welcome, their first fears now converted into wonder and delight. “And immediately,” adds the beloved disciple, “they were at the land whither they went,” or “were bound.” This additional miracle, for as such it is manifestly related, is recorded by the fourth Evangelist alone. As the storm was suddenly calmed, so the little bark — propelled by the secret power of the Lord of nature now sailing in it — glided through the now unruffled waters, and, while they were wrapt in wonder at what had happened, not heeding their rapid motion, *was found* at port, to their still further surprise.

“Then are they glad, because at rest; And quiet now they be; So to the haven He them brings; Which they desired to see.”

Matthew (⌄<sup>411</sup> Matthew 14:33) says, “Then they that were in the ship came [that is, ere they got to land] and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.” But our Evangelist is wonderfully striking.

**and the wind ceased and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered** — The Evangelist seems hardly to find language strong enough to express their astonishment.

**52. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves; for their heart was hardened** — What a singular statement! The meaning seems to be that if they had but “considered [reflected upon] the miracle of the loaves,” wrought but a few hours before, they would have *wondered at nothing* which He might do within the whole circle of power and grace.

*Incidents on Landing* (~~4063~~ Mark 6:53-56).

The details here are given with a rich vividness quite peculiar to this charming Gospel.

**53. And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret** — from which the lake sometimes takes its name, stretching along its western shore. Capernaum was their landing-place (~~4063~~ John 6:24,25).

**and drew to the shore** — a nautical phrase, nowhere else used in the New Testament.

**54. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him** — “immediately they recognized Him”; that is, the people did.

**55. and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was** — At this period of our Lord’s ministry the popular enthusiasm in His favor was at its height.

**56. and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment** — having heard, no doubt, of what the woman with the issue of blood experienced on doing so (~~4063~~ Mark 5:25-29), and perhaps of other unrecorded cases of the same nature.

**and as many as touched him** — or “it” — the border of His garment.

**were made whole** — All this they *continued* to do and to experience while our Lord was in that region. The *time* corresponds to that mentioned (~~4000~~ John 7:1), when He “walked in Galilee,” instead of appearing in Jerusalem at the passover, “because the Jews,” that is, *the rulers*, “sought to kill Him” — while *the people* sought to enthrone Him!

# CHAPTER 7

## MARK 7:1-23.

### DISCOURSE ON CEREMONIAL POLLUTION. (MATTHEW 15:1-20).

See on Matthew 15:1-20.

## MARK 7:24-37.

### THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN AND HER DAUGHTER — A DEAF AND DUMB MAN HEALED. (MATTHEW 15:21-31).

#### *The Syrophoenician Woman and Her Daughter (Mark 7:24-30).*

The first words of this narrative show that the incident followed, in point of time, immediately on what precedes it.

**24. And from thence he arose, and went into the borders** — or “unto the borders.”

**of Tyre and Sidon** — the two great Phoenician seaports, but here denoting the territory generally, to the frontiers of which Jesus now came. But did Jesus actually enter this heathen territory? The whole narrative, we think, proceeds upon the supposition that He did. His immediate object seems to have been to avoid the wrath of the Pharisees at the withering exposure He had just made of their traditional religion.

**and entered into an house, and would have no man know it** — because He had not come there to minister to heathens. But though not “sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24), He hindered not the lost sheep of the vast Gentile world from coming to Him, nor put them away when they did come — as this incident was designed to show.

**but he could not be hid** — Christ’s fame had early spread from Galilee to this very region (Mark 3:8 Luke 6:17).

**25. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit** — or, as in Matthew (<sup>4052</sup>Matthew 15:22), “was badly demonized.”

**heard of him** — One wonders how; but distress is quick of hearing.

**26. The woman was a Greek** — that is, “a Gentile,” as in the *Margin*.

**a Syrophoenician by nation** — so called as inhabiting the Phoenician tract of Syria. JUVENAL uses the same term, as was remarked by JUSTIN MARTYR and TERTULLIAN. Matthew (<sup>4052</sup>Matthew 15:22) calls her “a woman of Canaan” — a more intelligible description to his Jewish readers (compare <sup>4053</sup>Judges 1:30,32,33).

**and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter** — “She cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil” (<sup>4052</sup>Matthew 15:22). Thus, though no Israelite herself, she salutes Him as Israel’s promised Messiah. Here we must go to <sup>4053</sup>Matthew 15:23-25 for some important links in the dialogue omitted by our Evangelist.

#### <sup>4052</sup>MATTHEW 15:23:

*But he answered her not a word* — The design of this was first, perhaps, to show that He was not *sent* to such as she. He had said expressly to the Twelve, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles” (<sup>4005</sup>Matthew 10:5); and being now among them Himself, He would, for consistency’s sake, let it be seen that He had not gone thither for *missionary* purposes. Therefore He not only kept silence, but had actually left the house, and — as will presently appear — was proceeding on His way back, when this woman accosted Him. But another reason for keeping silence plainly was to try and whet her faith, patience, and perseverance. And it had the desired effect: “She *cried after them*,” which shows that He was already on His way from the place.

*And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us* — They thought her troublesome with her importunate cries, just as they did the people who brought young children to be blessed of Him, and they ask their Lord to “send her away,” that is, to grant her request and be rid of her; for we gather from His reply that they meant to solicit favor for her, though not for her sake so much as their own.

#### <sup>4054</sup>MATTHEW 15:24:

*But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel* — a speech evidently intended for the disciples themselves,



to satisfy them that, though the grace He was about to show to this Gentile believer was *beyond His strict* commission, He had not gone *spontaneously* to dispense it. Yet did even this speech open a gleam of hope, could she have discerned it. For thus might she have spoken: “I am not SENT, did He say? Truth, Lord, Thou comest not hither in quest of *us*, but I come in quest of *Thee*; and must I go empty away? So did not the woman of Samaria, whom when Thou foundest her on Thy way to Galilee, Thou sentest away to make many rich! But this our poor Syrophoenician could not attain to. What, then, can she answer to such a speech? Nothing. She has reached her lowest depth, her darkest moment: she will just utter her last cry:

⌌**MATTHEW 15:25:**

*Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me!* — This appeal, so artless, wrung from the depths of a believing heart, and reminding us of the publican’s “God be merciful to me a sinner,” moved the Redeemer at last to break silence — but in what style? Here we return to our own Evangelist.

**27. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled** — “Is there hope for me here? ... Filled FIRST?” “Then my turn, it seems, *is* coming!” — but then, “The CHILDREN first? ... Ah! when, on that rule, shall my turn ever come!” But ere she has time for these ponderings of His word, another word comes to supplement it.

**for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it unto the dogs** — Is this the death of her hopes? Nay, rather it is life from the dead. Out of the eater shall come forth meat (⌌<sup>07144</sup>Judges 14:14). “At evening-time, it shall be light” (⌌<sup>38417</sup>Zechariah 14:7). “Ah! I have it now. Had He kept silence, what could I have done but go unblest? but He hath spoken, and the victory is mine.”

**28. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord** — or, as the same word is rendered in ⌌<sup>4157</sup>Matthew 15:27. “Truth, Lord.”

**yet the dogs eat of the children’s crumbs** — which fall from their master’s table” (⌌<sup>4157</sup>Matthew 15:27). “I thank Thee, O blessed One, for that word! That’s my whole case. Not of the children? True. A dog? True also: Yet the dogs under the table are allowed to eat of the children’s crumbs — the droppings from their master’s full table: Give me that, and I am content: One crumb of power and grace from Thy table shall cast the devil out of my daughter.” Oh, what lightning quickness, what reach of instinctive ingenuity, do we behold in this heathen woman!

**29. And he said unto her** — “O woman, great is thy faith” (<sup><4158></sup>Matthew 15:28). As BENGEL beautifully remarks, Jesus “marvelled” only at two things — *faith* and *unbelief* (see <sup><4109></sup>Luke 7:9).

**For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter** — That moment the deed was done.

**30. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed** — But Matthew (<sup><4158></sup>Matthew 15:28) is more specific; “And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.” The wonderfulness of this case in all its features has been felt in every age of the Church, and the balm it has administered, and will yet administer, to millions will be known only in that day that shall reveal the secrets of all hearts.

*Deaf and Dumb Man Healed* (<sup><4073></sup>Mark 7:31-37).

**31. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the Sea of Galilee** — or, according to what has very strong claims to be regarded as the true text here, “And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre, He came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee.” The manuscripts in favor of this reading, though not the most numerous, are weighty, while the versions agreeing with it are among the most ancient; and all the best critical editors and commentators adopt it. In this case we must understand that our Lord, having once gone out of the Holy Land the length of Tyre, proceeded as far north as Sidon, though without ministering, so far as appears, in those parts, and then bent His steps in a southeasterly direction. There is certainly a difficulty in the supposition of so long a *detour* without any missionary object: and some may think this sufficient to cast the balance in favor of the received reading. Be this as it may, on returning from these coasts of Tyre, He passed

**through the midst of the coasts** — frontiers.

**of Decapolis** — crossing the Jordan, therefore, and approaching the lake on its east side. Here Matthew, who omits the details of the cure of this deaf and dumb man, introduces some particulars, from which we learn that it was only one of a great number. “And Jesus,” says that Evangelist (<sup><4159></sup>Matthew 15:29-31), “departed from thence, and came nigh unto the Sea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain” — the mountain range bounding the lake on the northeast, in Decapolis: “And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them lame, blind, dumb, maimed” — not “mutilated,” which is but a secondary sense of the word, but “deformed” — “and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitude [multitudes] wondered, when they saw the dumb to

speaking, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel” — who after so long and dreary an absence of visible manifestation, had returned to bless His people as of old (compare [Luke 7:16](#)). Beyond this it is not clear from the Evangelist’s language that the people saw into the claims of Jesus. Well, of these cases Mark here singles out one, whose cure had something peculiar in it.

**32. And they bring unto him one that was deaf ... and they beseech him to put his hand upon him** — In their eagerness they appear to have been somewhat too officious. Though usually doing as here suggested, He will deal with this case in His own way.

**33. And he took him aside from the multitude** — As in another case He “took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town” ([Mark 8:23](#)), probably to fix his undistracted attention on Himself, and, by means of certain actions He was about to do, to awaken and direct his attention to the proper source of relief.

**and put his fingers into his ears** — As his indistinct articulation arose from his deafness, our Lord addresses Himself to this first. To the impotent man He said, “Wilt thou be made whole?” to the blind men, “What will ye that I shall do unto you?” and “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” ([John 5:6](#) [Matthew 20:32](#) [9:28](#)). But as this patient could *hear* nothing, our Lord substitutes symbolical actions upon each of the organs affected.

**and he spit and touched his tongue** — moistening the man’s parched tongue with saliva from His own mouth, as if to lubricate the organ or facilitate its free motion; thus indicating the source of the healing virtue to be His own person. (For similar actions, see [Mark 8:23](#) [John 9:6](#)).

**34. And looking up to heaven** — ever acknowledging His Father, even while the healing was seen to flow from Himself (see on [John 5:19](#)).

**he sighed** — “over the wreck,” says TRENCH, “which sin had brought about, and the malice of the devil in deforming the fair features of God’s original creation.” But, we take it, there was a yet more painful impression of that “evil thing and bitter” whence all our ills have sprung, and which, when “Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses” ([Matthew 8:17](#)), became mysteriously His own. “In thought of these his brows benign, Not even in healing, cloudless shine.”; KEBLE

**and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened** — Our Evangelist, as remarked on [Mark 5:41](#), loves to give such wonderful words just as they were spoken.

**35. And straightway his ears were opened** — This is mentioned first as the source of the other derangement.

**and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain** — The cure was thus alike instantaneous and perfect.

**36. And he charged them that they should tell no man** — Into this very region He had sent the man out of whom had been cast the legion of devils, to proclaim “what the Lord had done for him” (ⲁⲓⲃⲉⲛ Mark 5:19). Now He will have them “tell no man.” But in the former case there was no danger of obstructing His ministry by “blazing the matter” (ⲁⲓⲃⲉⲛ Mark 1:45), as He Himself had left the region; whereas now He was sojourning in it.

*but* the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it — They could not be restrained; nay, the prohibition seemed only to whet their determination to publish His fame.

**37. And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well** — reminding us, says TRENCH, Of the words of the first creation (ⲁⲓⲃⲉⲛ Genesis 1:31, *Septuagint*), upon which we are thus not unsuitably thrown back, for Christ’s work is in the truest sense “a new creation,”

**he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak** — “and they glorified the God of Israel” (ⲁⲓⲃⲉⲛ Matthew 15:31). See on ⲁⲓⲃⲉⲛ Mark 7:31.

# CHAPTER 8

## ~~<100>~~ MARK 8:1-26.

**FOUR THOUSAND MIRACULOUSLY FED — A SIGN FROM HEAVEN SOUGHT AND REFUSED — THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES — A BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA RESTORED TO SIGHT. (~~<100>~~ MATTHEW 15:32-16:12).**

This section of miscellaneous matter evidently follows the preceding one in point of time, as will be seen by observing how it is introduced by Matthew.

*Feeding of the Four Thousand (~~<100>~~ Mark 8:1-9).*

**1. In those days the multitude being very great,** etc.

**2. I have compassion on the multitude** — an expression of that deep emotion in the Redeemer's heart which always preceded some remarkable interposition for relief. (See ~~<1044>~~ Matthew 14:14 20:34 ~~<1044>~~ Mark 1:41 ~~<1073>~~ Luke 7:13; also ~~<1086>~~ Matthew 9:36, before the mission of the Twelve; compare ~~<1028>~~ Judges 2:18 10:16).

**because they have now been with me** — in constant attendance.

**three days, and have nothing to eat:**

**3. And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way** — In their eagerness they seem not to have thought of the need of provisions for such a length of time; but the Lord thought of it. In Matthew (~~<1052>~~ Matthew 15:32) it is, "I will not send them away fasting" — or rather, "To send them away fasting I am unwilling."

**4. From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?** — Though the question here is the same as when He fed the five thousand, they evidently *now* meant no more by it than that *they* had not the means of feeding the multitude; modestly leaving the Lord to decide what was to be done. And this will the more appear from His not now trying them, as before, by saying, "They need not depart, give ye them to eat"; but simply asking what they had, and then giving His directions.

**5. And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven** — It was important in this case, as in the former, that the precise number of the loaves should be brought out. Thus also does the distinctness of the two miracles appear.

**9. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away** — Had not our Lord distinctly referred, in this very chapter and in two successive sentences, to the feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand as two distinct miracles, many critics would have insisted that they were but two different representations of one and the same miracle, as they do of the two expulsions of the buyers and sellers from the temple, at the beginning and end of our Lord's ministry. But even in spite of what our Lord says, it is painful to find such men as NEANDER endeavoring to identify the two miracles. The localities, though both on the eastern side of the lake, were different; the time was different; the preceding and following circumstances were different; the period during which the people continued fasting was different — in the one case not even one entire day, in the other three days; the number fed was different — five thousand in the one case, in the other four thousand; the number of the loaves was different — five in the one case, in the other seven; the number of the fishes in the one case is definitely stated by all the four Evangelists — two; in the other case both give them indefinitely — “a few small fishes”; in the one case the multitude were commanded to sit down “upon the green grass”; in the other “on the ground”; in the one case the number of the baskets taken up filled with the fragments was twelve, in the other seven; but more than all, perhaps, because apparently quite incidental, in the one case the name given to the kind of baskets used is the same in all the four narratives — the *cophinus* (see on <sup><4168></sup>Mark 6:43); in the other case the name given to the kind of baskets used, while it is the same in both the narratives, is quite different — the *spuris*, a basket large enough to hold a man's body, for Paul was let down in one of these from the wall of Damascus (<sup><4025></sup>Acts 9:25). It might be added, that in the one case the people, in a frenzy of enthusiasm, would have taken Him by force to make Him a king; in the other case no such excitement is recorded. In view of these things, who could have believed that these were one and the same miracle, even if the Lord Himself had not expressly distinguished them?

*Sign from Heaven Sought* (<sup><4080></sup>Mark 8:10-13).

**10. And straightway he entered into a ship** — “into the ship,” or “embarked.”

**with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha** — In Matthew (<sup><4059></sup>Matthew 15:39) it is “the coasts of Magdala.” Magdala and

Dalmanutha were both on the western shore of the lake, and probably not far apart. From the former the surname “Magdalene” was probably taken, to denote the residence of Mary Magdalene. Dalmanutha may have been a village, but it cannot now be identified with certainty.

**11. seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him** — not in the least desiring evidence for their conviction, but hoping to entrap Him. The first part of the answer is given in Matthew alone (<sup><106></sup>Matthew 16:2,3): “He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather; for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering [sullen, gloomy]. Hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?” The same simplicity of purpose and careful observation of the symptoms of approaching events which they showed in common things would enable them to “discern the signs of the times” — or rather “seasons,” to which the prophets pointed for the manifestation of the Messiah. The scepter had departed from Judah; Daniel’s seventy weeks were expiring, etc.; and many other significant indications of the close of the old economy, and preparations for a freer and more comprehensive one, might have been discerned. But all was lost upon them.

**12. And he sighed deeply in his spirit** — The language is very strong. These glimpses into the interior of the Redeemer’s heart, in which our Evangelist abounds, are more precious than rubies. The state of the Pharisaic heart, which prompted this desire for a fresh sign, went to His very soul.

**and saith, Why doth this generation** — “this wicked and adulterous generation” (<sup><106></sup>Matthew 16:4).

**seek after a sign?** — when they have had such abundant evidence already.

**There shall no sign be given unto this generation** — literally, “If there shall be given to this generation a sign”; a Jewish way of expressing a solemn and peremptory determination to the contrary (compare <sup><301></sup>Hebrews 4:5 <sup><106></sup>Psalms 95:11, *Margin*). “A generation incapable of appreciating such demonstrations shall not be gratified with them.” In <sup><106></sup>Matthew 16:4 He added, “but the sign of the prophet Jonas.” (See on <sup><102></sup>Matthew 12:39,40.)

**13. And he left them** — no doubt with tokens of displeasure.

*The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees* (<sup><104></sup>Mark 8:14-21).

**14. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf** — This is another example of that graphic circumstantiality which gives such a charm to this briefest of the

four Gospels. The circumstance of the “one loaf” only remaining, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark, was more suggestive of their Master’s recent miracles than the entire absence of provisions.

**15. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees** — “and of the Sadducees” (<sup><106></sup>Matthew 16:6).

**and of the leaven of Herod** — The teaching or “doctrine” (<sup><102></sup>Matthew 16:12) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was quite different, but both were equally pernicious; and the Herodians, though rather a political party, were equally envenomed against our Lord’s spiritual teaching. See on <sup><104></sup>Matthew 12:14. The *penetrating* and *diffusive* quality of leaven, for good or bad, is the ground of the comparison.

**16. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread** — But a little while ago He was tried with the obduracy of the Pharisees; now He is tried with the obtuseness of His own disciples. The *nine* questions following each other in rapid succession (<sup><107></sup>Mark 8:17-21) show how deeply He was hurt at this want of spiritual apprehension, and worse still, their low thoughts of Him, as if He would utter so solemn a warning on so petty a subject. It will be seen, however, from the very form of their conjecture, “It is because *we* have no bread,” and our Lord’s astonishment that they should not by that time have known better with what He took up His attention — that He ever left *the whole care for His own temporal wants to the Twelve*: that He did this so entirely, that finding they were reduced to their last loaf they felt as if unworthy of such a trust, and could not think but that the same thought was in their Lord’s mind which was pressing upon their own; but that in this they were so far wrong that it hurt His feelings — sharp just in proportion to His love — that such a thought of Him should have entered their minds! Who that, like angels, “desire to look into these things” will not prize such glimpses above gold?

**17. have ye your heart yet hardened?** — How strong an expression to use of true-hearted disciples! See on <sup><105></sup>Mark 6:52.

**18. Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not?** — See on <sup><103></sup>Matthew 13:13.

**and do ye not remember?**

**19. When I brake the five loaves among five thousand** — “the five thousand.”

**how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?** etc.



**21. How is it that ye do not understand?** — “do not understand that the warning I gave you could not have been prompted by any such petty consideration as the want of loaves in your scrip.” Profuse as were our Lord’s miracles, we see from this that they were not wrought at random, but that He carefully noted their minutest details, and desired that this should be done by those who witnessed, as doubtless by all who read the record of them. Even the different kind of baskets used at the two miraculous feedings, so carefully noted in the two narratives, are here also referred to; the one smaller, of which there were twelve, the other much larger, of which there were seven.

*Blind Man at Bethsaida Restored to Sight* (~~4182~~Mark 8:22-26).

**22. And he cometh to Bethsaida** — Bethsaida Julias, on the northeast side of the lake, whence after this He proceeded to Caesarea Philippi (~~4182~~Mark 8:27).

**and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him** — See on ~~4183~~Mark 7:32.

**23. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town** — Of the deaf and dumb man it is merely said that “He took him aside” (~~4183~~Mark 7:33); but this blind man He *led by the hand* out of the town, doing it Himself rather than employing another — great humility, exclaims BENGEL — that He might gain his confidence and raise his expectation.

**and when he had spit on his eyes** — the organ affected — See on ~~4183~~Mark 7:33.

**and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught.**

**24. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking** — This is one of the cases in which one edition of what is called the received text differs from another. That which is decidedly the best supported, and has also internal evidence on its side is this: “I see men; for I see [them] as trees walking” — that is, he could distinguish them from trees only by their motion; a minute mark of truth in the narrative, as ALFORD observes, describing how human objects had appeared to him during that gradual failing of sight which had ended in blindness.

**25. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly** — Perhaps the one operation perfectly restored the *eyes*, while the other imparted immediately the *faculty of using them*. It is the only recorded example of a *progressive* cure, and it certainly illustrates similar methods in the spiritual

kingdom. Of the four recorded cases of sight restored, all the patients save one either *came* or *were brought* to the Physician. In the case of the man born blind, *the Physician came* to the patient. So some seek and find Christ; of others He is found who seek Him not.

**26. Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town** — Besides the usual reasons against going about “blazing the matter,” retirement in this case would be salutary to himself.

## ⌌ **MARK 8:27-38.**

**PETER’S NOBLE CONFESSION OF CHRIST — OUR LORD’S  
FIRST EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING  
SUFFERINGS, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION — HIS  
REBUKE OF PETER, AND WARNING TO ALL THE TWELVE.  
(⌌ MATTHEW 16:13-27 ⌌ LUKE 9:18-26).**

For the exposition, see on ⌌ Matthew 16:13-28.

# CHAPTER 9

## ~~<1191>~~ MARK 9:1-13.

**JESUS IS TRANSFIGURED — CONVERSATION ABOUT ELIAS.** (~~<1158>~~ MATTHEW 16:28-17:13 ~~<1172>~~ LUKE 9:27-36).

See on ~~<1127>~~ Luke 9:27-36.

## ~~<1194>~~ MARK 9:14-32.

**HEALING OF A DEMONIAK BOY — SECOND EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION.** (~~<1174>~~ MATTHEW 17:14-23 ~~<1185>~~ LUKE 9:37-45).

*Healing of the Demoniac Boy* (~~<1194>~~ Mark 9:14-29).

**14. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them** — This was “on the next day, when they were come down from the hill” (~~<1187>~~ Luke 9:37). The Transfiguration appears to have taken place at night. In the morning, as He came down from the hill on which it took place — with Peter, and James, and John — on approaching the other nine, He found them surrounded by a great multitude, and the scribes disputing or discussing with them. No doubt these cavillers were twitting the apostles of Jesus with their inability to cure the demoniac boy of whom we are presently to hear, and insinuating doubts even of their Master’s ability to do it; while they, zealous for their Master’s honor, would no doubt refer to His past miracles in proof of the contrary.

**15. And straightway all the people** — the multitude.

**when they beheld him, were greatly amazed** — were astounded.

**and running to him saluted him** — The singularly strong expression of surprise, the sudden arrest of the discussion, and the rush of the multitude towards Him, can be accounted for by nothing less than something amazing in His appearance. There can hardly be any doubt that *His countenance still retained traces of His transfiguration-glory*. (See

<sup><12429</sup>Exodus 34:29,30). So BENDEL, DE WETTE, MEYER, TRENCH, ALFORD. No wonder, if this was the case, that they not only ran to Him, but saluted Him. Our Lord, however, takes no notice of what had attracted them, and probably it gradually faded away as He drew near; but addressing Himself to the scribes, He demands the subject of their discussion, ready to meet them where they had pressed hard upon His half-instructed and as yet timid apostles.

**16. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?** — Ere they had time to reply, the father of the boy, whose case had occasioned the dispute, himself steps forward and answers the question; telling a piteous tale of deafness, and dumbness, and fits of epilepsy — ending with this, that the disciples, though entreated, could not perform the cure.

**17. And one of the multitude answered, and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son** — “mine only child” (<sup><1188</sup>Luke 9:38).

**which hath a dumb spirit** — a spirit whose operation had the effect of rendering his victim speechless, and deaf also (<sup><1125</sup>Mark 9:25). In Matthew’s report of the speech (<sup><1175</sup>Matthew 17:15), the father says “he is lunatic”; this being another and most distressing effect of the possession.

**18. And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away** — rather, “becomes withered,” “dried up,” or “paralyzed”; as the same word is everywhere else rendered in the New Testament. Some additional particulars are given by Luke, and by our Evangelist below. “Lo,” says he in <sup><1139</sup>Luke 9:39, “a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly [or with difficulty] departeth from him.”

**and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not** — Our Lord replies to the father by a severe rebuke to the disciples. As if wounded at the exposure before such a multitude, of the weakness of His disciples’ faith, which doubtless He felt as a reflection on Himself, He puts them to the blush before all, but in language fitted only to raise expectation of what He Himself would do.

**19. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation** — “and perverse,” or “perverted” (<sup><1177</sup>Matthew 17:17 <sup><1141</sup>Luke 9:41).

**how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?** — language implying that it was a shame to them to want the faith necessary to perform this cure, and that it needed some. patience to put up with them. It is to us surprising that some interpreters, as CHRYSOSTOM and CALVIN, should represent this rebuke as addressed, not to the disciples at all, but to the

scribes who disputed with them. Nor does it much, if at all, mend the matter to view it as addressed to both, as most expositors seem to do. With BENGEL, DE WETTE, and MEYER, we regard it as addressed directly to the nine apostles who were unable to expel this evil spirit. And though, in ascribing this inability to their “want of faith” and the “perverted turn of mind” which they had drunk in with their early training, the rebuke would undoubtedly apply, with vastly greater force, to those who twitted the poor disciples with their inability, it would be to change the whole nature of the rebuke to suppose it addressed to those who had *no faith at all*, and were *wholly perverted*. It was because faith sufficient for curing this youth was to be expected of the disciples, and because they should by that time have got rid of the perversity in which they had been reared, that Jesus exposes them thus before the rest. And who does not see that this was fitted, more than anything else, to impress upon the by-standers the severe loftiness of the training He was giving to the Twelve, and the unsophisticated footing He was on with them?

**Bring him unto me** — The order to bring the patient to Him was instantly obeyed; when, lo! as if conscious of the presence of his Divine Tormentor, and expecting to be made to quit, the foul spirit rages and is furious, determined to die hard, doing all the mischief he can to this poor child while yet within his grasp.

**20. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him** — Just as the man with the legion of demons, “when he *saw* Jesus, ran and worshipped Him” (Mark 5:6), so this demon, *when he saw Him*, immediately “tare him.” The feeling of terror and rage was the same in both cases.

**and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming** — Still Jesus does nothing, but keeps conversing with the father about the case — partly to have its desperate features told out by him who knew them best, in the hearing of the spectators; partly to let its virulence have time to show itself; and partly to deepen the exercise of the father’s soul, to draw out his faith, and thus to prepare both him and the by-standers for what He was to do.

**21. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child**, etc. — Having told briefly the affecting features of the case, the poor father, half dispirited by the failure of the disciples and the aggravated virulence of the malady itself in presence of their Master, yet encouraged too by what he had heard of Christ, by the severe rebuke He had given to His disciples for not having faith enough to cure the boy, and by the dignity with which He had ordered him to be

brought to Him — in this mixed state of mind, he closes his description of the case with these touching words:

**22. but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us** — “us,” says the father; for it was a sore family affliction. Compare the language of the Syrophoenician woman regarding her daughter, “Lord, help *me*.” Still nothing is done: the man is but *struggling into faith*: it must come a step farther. But he had to do with Him who breaks not the bruised reed, and who knew how to inspire what He demanded. The man had said to Him, “*If Thou canst do.*”

**23. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe** — The man had said, “If Thou canst do anything.” Jesus replies.

**all things are possible to him that believeth** — “My doing all depends on thy believing.” To impress this still more, He redoubles upon the believing: “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” Thus the Lord helps the birth of faith in that struggling soul; and now, though with pain and sore travail, it comes to the birth, as TRENCH, borrowing from OLSHAUSEN, expresses it. Seeing the case stood still, waiting not upon the Lord’s power but his own faith, the man becomes immediately conscious of conflicting principles, and rises into one of the noblest utterances on record.

**24. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief** — that is, “It is useless concealing from Thee, O Thou mysterious, mighty Healer, the unbelief that still struggles in this heart of mine; but that heart bears me witness that I do believe in Thee; and if distrust still remains, I disown it, I wrestle with it, I seek help from Thee against it.” Two things are very remarkable here: First, *The felt and owned presence of unbelief*, which only the strength of the man’s faith could have so revealed to his own consciousness. Second, *His appeal to Christ for help against his felt unbelief* — a feature in the case quite unparalleled, and showing, more than all protestations could have done, the insight he had attained into the existence of a *power in Christ more glorious than any he had besought for his poor child*. The work was done; and as the commotion and confusion in the crowd was now increasing, Jesus at once, as Lord of spirits, gives the word of command to the dumb and deaf spirit to be gone, never again to return to his victim.

**26. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead** — The malignant, cruel spirit, now conscious that his time was come, gathers up his whole strength, with intent by a last stroke to kill his victim, and had nearly succeeded. But the Lord of life was there; the Healer of all maladies,

the Friend of sinners, the Seed of the woman, “the Stronger than the strong man armed,” was there. The very faith which Christ declared to be enough for everything being now found, it was not possible that the serpent should prevail. Fearfully is he permitted to bruise the *heel*, as in this case; but his own *head* shall go for it — his works shall be destroyed (<sup><418></sup>1 John 3:8).

**27. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.**

**28. Why could not we cast him out?**

**29. And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting** — that is, as nearly all good interpreters are agreed, “this kind of evil spirits cannot be expelled,” or “so desperate a case of demoniacal possession cannot be cured, but by prayer and fasting.” But since the Lord Himself says that His disciples could not fast while He was with them, perhaps this was designed, as ALFORD hints, for their after-guidance — unless we take it as but a definite way of expressing the general truth, that great and difficult duties require special preparation and self-denial. But the answer to their question, as given in <sup><417></sup>Matthew 17:20,21 is fuller: “And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief. For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (<sup><417></sup>Matthew 17:20). See on <sup><412></sup>Mark 11:23. “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (<sup><417></sup>Matthew 17:21), that is, though nothing is impossible to faith, yet such a height of faith as is requisite for such triumphs is not to be reached either in a moment or without effort — either with God in prayer or with ourselves in self-denying exercises. Luke (<sup><406></sup>Luke 9:43) adds, “And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God” — “at the majesty” or “mightiness of God,” in this last miracle, in the Transfiguration, etc.; or, at the *divine grandeur* of Christ rising upon them daily.

*Second Explicit Announcement of His Approaching Death and Resurrection* (<sup><403></sup>Mark 9:30-32).

**30. And they departed thence, and passed** — were passing along.

**through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it** — By comparing <sup><417></sup>Matthew 17:22,23 and <sup><406></sup>Luke 9:43,44 with this, we gather, that as our Lord’s reason for going through Galilee more privately than usual on this occasion was to reiterate to them the announcement which had so shocked them at the first mention of it, and thus familiarize them with it by little and little, so this was His reason for enjoining silence upon them as to their present movements.

**31. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them** — “Let these sayings sink down into your ears” (<sup><0344></sup>Luke 9:44); not what had been passing between them as to His grandeur, but what He was now to utter.

**The Son of man is delivered** — The use of the present tense expresses how near at hand He would have them to consider it. As BENDEL says, steps were already in course of being taken to bring it about.

**into the hands of men** — This remarkable antithesis, “the Son of *man* shall be delivered into the hands of *men*,” it is worthy of notice, is in all the three Evangelists.

**and they shall kill him** — that is, “Be not carried off your feet by all that grandeur of Mine which ye have lately witnessed, but bear in mind what I have already told you and now distinctly repeat, that that Sun in whose beams ye now rejoice is soon to set in midnight gloom.”

**and after he is killed, he shall rise the third day.**

**32. But they understood not that saying** — “and it was hid from them, [so] that they perceived it not” (<sup><0345></sup>Luke 9:45).

**and were afraid to ask him** — Their most cherished ideas were so completely dashed by such announcements, that they were afraid of laying themselves open to rebuke by asking Him any questions. But “they were Exceeding sorry” (<sup><0723></sup>Matthew 17:23). While the other Evangelists, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark, notice their ignorance and their fear, Matthew, who was one of them, retains a vivid recollection of their sorrow.

## <sup><0353></sup>MARK 9:33-50.

**STRIFE AMONG THE TWELVE WHO SHOULD BE  
GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, WITH  
RELATIVE TEACHING — INCIDENTAL REBUKE OF JOHN  
FOR EXCLUSIVENESS. (= <sup><0306></sup>MATTHEW 18:1-9 <sup><0346></sup>LUKE 9:46-  
50).**

*Strife among the Twelve, with Relative Teaching* (<sup><0353></sup>Mark 9:33-37).

**33. What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?** — From this we gather that after the painful communication He had made to them, the Redeemer had allowed them to travel so much of the way by themselves; partly, no doubt, that He might have privacy for Himself to dwell on what lay before Him, and partly that they might be induced to



weigh together and prepare themselves for the terrible events which He had announced to them. But if so, how different was their occupation!

**34. But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest** — From <sup><1818></sup>Matthew 18:1 we should infer that the subject was introduced, not by our Lord, but by the disciples themselves, who came and asked Jesus who should be greatest. Perhaps one or two of them first referred the matter to Jesus, who put them off till they should all be assembled together at Capernaum. He had all the while “perceived the thought of their heart” (<sup><1847></sup>Luke 9:47); but now that they were all together “in the house,” He questions them about it, and they are put to the blush, conscious of the *temper* towards each other which it had kindled. This raised the whole question afresh, and at this point our Evangelist takes it up. The subject was suggested by the recent announcement of the Kingdom (<sup><1869></sup>Matthew 16:19-28), the transfiguration of their Master, and especially the preference given to three of them at that scene.

**35. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all** — that is, “let him be” such: he must be prepared to take the last and lowest place. See on <sup><1102></sup>Mark 10:42-45.

**36. And he took a child** — “a little child” (<sup><1812></sup>Matthew 18:2); but the word is the same in both places, as also in <sup><1847></sup>Luke 9:47.

**and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms** — This beautiful trait is mentioned by our Evangelist alone.

**he said unto them** — Here we must go to Matthew (<sup><1818></sup>Matthew 18:3,4) for the first of this answer: “Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven:” that is, “Conversion must be thorough; not only must the heart be turned to God in general, and from earthly to heavenly things, but in particular, except ye be converted from that carnal ambition which still rankles within you, into that freedom from all such feelings which ye see in this child, ye have neither part nor lot in the kingdom at all; and he who in this feature has most of the child, is highest there.” Whosoever, therefore, shall “humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven”: “for he that is [willing to be] least among you all, the same shall be great” (<sup><1848></sup>Luke 9:48).

**37. Whosoever shall receive one of such children** — so manifesting the spirit unconsciously displayed by this child.

**in my name** — from love to Me.

**receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but Him that sent me** — (See on <sup><100></sup>Matthew 10:40).

*Incidental Rebuke of John for Exclusiveness* (<sup><100></sup>Mark 9:38-41).

**38. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbade him, because he followeth not us** — The link of connection here with the foregoing context lies, we apprehend, in the emphatic words which our Lord had just uttered, “in My name.” “Oh,” interposes John — young, warm, but not sufficiently apprehending Christ’s teaching in these matters — “that reminds me of something that we have just done, and we should like to know if we did right. We saw one casting out devils “in *Thy name*,” and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. Were we right, or were we wrong?” Answer — “Ye were wrong.” “But we did it because he followeth not us.” “No matter.”

**39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me** — soon, that is, readily “speak evil of me.”

**40. For he that is not against us is on our part** — Two principles of immense importance are here laid down: “First, No one will readily speak evil of Me who has the faith to do a miracle in My name; and second, If such a person cannot be supposed to be *against* us, ye are to consider him *for* us.” Let it be carefully observed that our Lord does not say this man should *not* have “followed them,” nor yet that it was indifferent whether he did or not; but simply teaches how such a person was to be regarded, *although he did not* — namely, as a reverer of His name and a promoter of His cause.

**41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward** — (See on <sup><100></sup>Matthew 10:42).

*Continuation of Teaching Suggested by the Disciple’s Strife*  
(<sup><100></sup>Mark 9:42-50).

What follows appears to have no connection with the incidental reproof of John immediately preceding. As that had interrupted some important teaching, our Lord hastens back from it, as if no such interruption had occurred.

**42. For whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me** — or, shall cause them to stumble; referring probably to the effect which such unsavory disputes as they had held would have upon the

inquiring and hopeful who came in contact with them, leading to the belief that after all they were no better than others.

**it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck** — The word here is simply “millstone,” without expressing of which kind. But in <sup><1816></sup>Matthew 18:6 it is the “ass-turned” kind, far heavier than the small hand-mill turned by female slaves, as in <sup><2735></sup>Luke 17:35. It is of course the same which is meant here.

**and he were cast into the sea** — meaning, that if by such a death that stumbling were prevented, and so its eternal consequences averted, it would be a happy thing for them. Here follows a striking verse in <sup><1817></sup>Matthew 18:7, “Woe unto the world because of offenses!” (There will be stumblings and falls and loss of souls enough from the world’s treatment of disciples, without any addition from you: dreadful will be its doom in consequence; see that ye share not in it). “For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!” (The struggle between light and darkness will inevitably cause stumblings, but not less guilty is he who wilfully makes any to stumble).

**43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell** — See <sup><1829></sup>Matthew 5:29,30. The only difference between the words there and here is that there they refer to impure inclinations; here, to an ambitious disposition, an irascible or quarrelsome temper, and the like: and the injunction is to strike at the root of such dispositions and cut off the occasions of them.

**47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire** — On the words “hell” and “hell-fire,” or “the hell of fire,” see on <sup><1822></sup>Matthew 5:22.

**48. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched** — See on <sup><1833></sup>Matthew 5:30; The “unquenchableness” of this fire has already been brought before us (see on <sup><1812></sup>Matthew 3:12); and the awfully vivid idea of an undying worm, everlastingly consuming an unconsumable body, is taken from the closing words of the evangelical prophet (<sup><2469></sup>Isaiah 66:24), which seem to have furnished the later Jewish Church with its current phraseology on the subject of future punishment (see LIGHTFOOT).

**49. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt** — A difficult verse, on which much has been written — some of it to little purpose. “Every one” probably means “Every follower of mine”; and the “fire” with which he “must be salted” probably means

“a fiery trial” to season him. (Compare <sup>308P</sup>Malachi 3:2, etc.). The reference to salting the sacrifice is of course to that maxim of the Levitical law, that every acceptable sacrifice must be sprinkled with salt, to express symbolically its soundness, sweetness, wholesomeness, acceptability. But as it had to be *roasted* first, we have here the further idea of a salting with fire. In this case, “every sacrifice,” in the next clause, will mean, “Every one who would be found an acceptable offering to God”; and thus the whole verse may perhaps be paraphrased as follows: “Every disciple of Mine shall have a fiery trial to undergo, and everyone who would be found an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God, must have such a *salting*, like the Levitical sacrifices.” Another, but, as it seems to us, farfetched as well as harsh, interpretation — suggested first, we believe, by MICHAELIS, and adopted by ALEXANDER — takes the “every sacrifice which must be salted with fire” to mean those who are “cast into hell,” and the *preservative* effect of this salting to refer to the preservation of the lost not only *in* but *by means of* the fire of hell. Their reason for this is that the other interpretation changes the meaning of the “fire,” and the characters too, from the lost to the saved, in these verses. But as our Lord confessedly ends His discourse with the case of His own true disciples, the transition to them in <sup>408P</sup>Mark 9:48 is perfectly natural; whereas to apply the preservative salt of the sacrifice to the preserving quality of hell-fire, is equally contrary to the symbolical sense of salt and the Scripture representations of future torment. Our Lord has still in His eye the unseemly jarrings which had arisen among the Twelve, the peril to themselves of allowing any indulgence to such passions, and the severe self-sacrifice which salvation would cost them.

**50. Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his saltness** — its power to season what it is brought into contact with.

**wherewith will ye season it?** — How is this property to be restored? See on <sup>416P</sup>Matthew 5:13.

**Have salt in yourselves** — See to it that ye retain in yourselves those precious qualities that will make you a blessing to one another, and to all around you.

**and** — with respect to the miserable strife out of which all this discourse has sprung, in one concluding word.

**have peace one. with another** — This is repeated in <sup>516P</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:13.

# CHAPTER 10

**MARK 10:1-12.**

**FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE — DIVORCE.**  
(**MATTHEW 19:1-12** **LUKE 9:51**).

See on **Matthew 19:1-12**.

**MARK 10:13-19.**

**LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.**  
(**MATTHEW 19:13-15** **LUKE 18:15-17**).

See on **Luke 18:15-17**.

**MARK 10:17-31.**

**THE RICH YOUNG RULER.**  
(**MATTHEW 19:16-30** **LUKE 18:18-30**).

See on **Luke 18:18-30**.

**MARK 10:32-45.**

**THIRD EXPLICIT AND STILL FULLER ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING SUFFERINGS, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION — THE AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF JAMES AND JOHN, AND THE REPLY. (**MATTHEW 20:17-28** **LUKE 18:31-34**).**

*Third Announcement of His approaching Sufferings, Death, and Resurrection (**Mark 10:32-34**).*

**32. And they were in the way** — on the road.

**going up to Jerusalem** — in Perea, and probably somewhere between Ephraim and Jericho, on the farther side of the Jordan, and to the northeast of Jerusalem.

**and Jesus went before them** — as GROTIUS says, in the style of an intrepid Leader.

**and they were amazed** — or “struck with astonishment” at His courage in advancing to certain death.

**and as they followed, they were afraid** — for their own safety. These artless, lifelike touches — not only from an eye-witness, but one whom the noble carriage of the Master struck with wonder and awe — are peculiar to Mark, and give the second Gospel a charm all its own; making us feel as if we ourselves were in the midst of the scenes it describes. Well might the poet exclaim: “The Savior, what a noble flame Was kindled in His breast, When, hasting to Jerusalem, He march’d before the rest!” COWPER

**And he took again the twelve** — referring to His previous announcements on this sad subject.

**and began to tell them what things should happen unto him** — “were going to befall Him.” The word expresses something already begun but not brought to a head, rather than something wholly future.

**33. Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem** — for the last time, and — “all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished” (<sup>Q33</sup>Luke 18:31).

**the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles** — This is the first express statement that the Gentiles would combine with the Jews in His death; the two grand divisions of the human race for whom He died thus taking part in crucifying the Lord of Glory, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON observe.

**34. And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again** — Singularly explicit as this announcement was, Luke (<sup>Q34</sup>Luke 18:34) says “they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” The meaning of the words they could be at no loss to understand, but their import in relation to His Messianic kingdom they could not penetrate; the whole prediction being right in the teeth of their preconceived notions. That they should have clung so tenaciously to the popular notion of an “unsuffering” Messiah,

may surprise us; but it gives inexpressible weight to their after-testimony to a suffering and dying Savior.

*Ambitious Request of James and John — The Reply*  
(<sup>4185</sup>Mark 10:35-45).

**35. And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying** — Matthew (<sup>4100</sup>Matthew 20:20) says their “mother came to Him with her sons, worshipping Him and desiring,” etc. (Compare <sup>4126</sup>Matthew 27:56, with <sup>4150</sup>Mark 15:40).

Salome was her name (<sup>4161</sup>Mark 16:1). We cannot be sure with which of the parties the movement originated; but as our Lord, even in Matthew’s account, addresses Himself to James and John, taking no account of the mother, it is likely the mother was merely set on by them. The thought was doubtless suggested to her sons by the recent promise to the Twelve of “thrones to sit on, when the Son of man should sit on the throne of His glory” (<sup>4088</sup>Matthew 19:28); but after the reproof so lately given them (<sup>4189</sup>Mark 9:33, etc.). they get their mother to speak for them.

**Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire** — thus cautiously approaching the subject.

**36. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?** — Though well aware what was in their mind and their mother’s, our Lord will have the unseemly petition uttered before all.

**37. Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory** — that is, Assign to us the two places of highest honor in the coming kingdom. The semblance of a plea for so presumptuous a request might possibly have been drawn from the fact that one of the two usually leaned on the breast of Jesus, or sat next Him at meals, while the other was one of the favored three.

**38. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask** — How gentle the reply to such a request, preferred at such a time, after the sad announcement just made!

**can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?** — To “drink of a cup” is in Scripture a figure for getting one’s fill either of good (<sup>4105</sup>Psalm 16:5 <sup>4105</sup>23:5 <sup>4116</sup>116:13 <sup>4100</sup>Jeremiah 16:7) or of ill (<sup>4178</sup>Psalm 75:8 <sup>4181</sup>John 18:11 <sup>4140</sup>Revelation 14:10). Here it is the cup of suffering.

**and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with** — (Compare for the language, <sup>4107</sup>Psalm 42:7). The object of this question seems to have been to try how far those two men were *capable* of the

dignity to which they aspired and this on the principle that he who is able to suffer most for His sake will be the nearest to Him in His kingdom.

**39. And they said unto him, We can** — Here we see them owning their mother's petition for them as their own; and doubtless they were perfectly sincere in professing their willingness to follow their Master to any suffering He might have to endure. As for James, he was the first of the apostles who was honored, and showed himself able to be baptized with his Master's baptism of blood (<sup>4412</sup>Acts 12:1,2); while *John*, after going through all the persecutions to which the infant Church was exposed from the Jews, and sharing in the struggles and sufferings occasioned by the first triumphs of the Gospel among the Gentiles, lived to be the victim, after all the rest had got to glory, of a bitter persecution in the evening of his days, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. Yes, they were dear believers and blessed men, in spite of this unworthy ambition, and their Lord knew it; and perhaps the foresight of what they would have to pass through, and the courageous testimony He would yet receive from them, was the cause of that gentleness which we cannot but wonder at in His reproof.

**And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized** — No doubt this prediction, when their sufferings at length came upon them, cheered them with the assurance, not that they would sit on His right and left hand — for of that thought they would be heartily ashamed — but that “if they suffered with Him, they should be also glorified together.”

**40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand in not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared** — “of My Father” (<sup>4413</sup>Matthew 20:23). The supplement which our translators have inserted is approved by some good interpreters, and the proper sense of the word rendered “but” is certainly in favor of it. But besides that it makes the statement too elliptical — leaving too many words to be supplied — it seems to make our Lord repudiate the right to assign to each of His people his place in the kingdom of glory; a thing which He nowhere else does, but rather the contrary. It is true that He says their place is “prepared for them by His Father.” But that is true of their admission to heaven at all; and yet from His great white throne Jesus will Himself adjudicate the kingdom, and authoritatively invite into it those on His right hand, calling them the “blessed of His Father”; so little inconsistency is there between the eternal choice of them by His Father, and that public adjudication of them, not only to heaven in general, but each to his own position in it, which all Scripture assigns to Christ. The true rendering, then, of this clause, we take it, is this: “But to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give, save



to them for whom it is prepared.” When therefore He says, “It is not Mine to give,” the meaning is, “I cannot give it as a *favor* to whomsoever I *please*, or on a principle of *favoritism*; it belongs exclusively to those for whom it is prepared,” etc. And if this be His meaning, it will be seen how far our Lord is from disclaiming the right to assign to each his proper place in His Kingdom; that on the contrary, He expressly asserts it, merely announcing that the principle of distribution is quite different from what these petitioners supposed. Our Lord, it will be observed, does not *deny* the petition of James and John, or say they shall *not* occupy the place in His kingdom which they now improperly sought: — for aught we know, *that may be their true place*. All we are sure of is, that their asking it was displeasing to Him “to whom all judgment is committed,” and so was not fitted to gain their object, but just the reverse. (See what is taught in <sup>248</sup>Luke 14:8-11). One at least of these brethren, as ALFORD strikingly remarks, saw on the right and on the left hand of their Lord, as He hung upon the tree, the crucified thieves; and bitter indeed must have been the remembrance of this ambitious prayer at that moment.

**41. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John** — or “were moved with indignation,” as the same word is rendered in <sup>249</sup>Matthew 20:24. The expression “*began to be*,” which is of frequent occurrence in the Gospels, means that more passed than is expressed, and that we have but the result. And can we blame the ten for the indignation which they felt? Yet there was probably a spice of the old spirit of rivalry in it, which in spite of our Lord’s recent lengthened, diversified, and most solemn warnings against it, had not ceased to stir in their breasts.

**42. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule** — are recognized or acknowledged as rulers.

**over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and their great ones exercise authority upon them** — as superiors exercising an acknowledged authority over inferiors.

**43. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister** — a subordinate servant.

**44. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest** — or “first.”

**shall be** — that is, “let him be, or “shall be he who is prepared to be.”

**servant of all** — one in the lowest condition of service.

**45. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many** — “instead of many,”

that is, “In the kingdom about to be set up, this principle shall have no place. All My servants shall there be equal; and the only greatness known to it shall be the greatness of humility and devotedness to the service of others. He that goes down the deepest in these services of self-denying humility shall rise the highest and hold the chiefest place in that kingdom; even as the Son of man, whose abasement and self-sacrifice for others, transcending all, gives Him of right a place above all!” As “the Word in the beginning with God,” He *was* ministered unto; and as the risen Redeemer in our nature He now *is* ministered unto, “angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him” (~~4106~~1 Peter 3:22); but not for this came He hither. The Served of all came to be the Servant of all; and His last act was the grandest Service ever beheld by the universe of God — “HE GAVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY!”, etc. Many” is here to be taken, not in contrast with *few* or with *all*, but in opposition to *one* — the one Son of man for the many sinners.

## ~~4106~~ MARK 10:46-52.

### BLIND BARTIMAEUS HEALED. (~~4119~~ MATTHEW 20:29-34 ~~4285~~ LUKE 18:35-43).

See on ~~4285~~ Luke 18:35-43.

# CHAPTER 11

## MARK 11:1-11.

**CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. (MATTHEW 21:1-9 LUKE 19:29-40 JOHN 12:12,19).**

See on Luke 19:29-40.

## MARK 11:11-26.

**THE BARREN FIG TREE CURSED WITH LESSONS FROM IT - SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE, ON THE SECOND AND THIRD DAYS OF THE WEEK. (MATTHEW 21:12-22 LUKE 19:45-48).**

**11. And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon** — surveyed.

**all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out into Bethany with the twelve** — Thus briefly does our Evangelist dispose of this His first day in Jerusalem, after the triumphal entry. Nor do the Third and Fourth Gospels give us more light. But from Matthew (Matthew 21:10,11,14-16) we learn some additional and precious particulars, for which see on Luke 19:45-48. It was not now safe for the Lord to sleep in the city, nor, from the day of His Triumphal Entry, did He pass one night in it, save the last fatal one.

*The Barren Fig Tree Cursed (Mark 11:12-14).*

**12. And on the morrow** — The Triumphal Entry being on the first day of the week, this following day was Monday.

**when they were come from Bethany** — “in the morning” (Matthew 21:18).

**he was hungry** — How was that? Had he stolen forth from that dear roof at Bethany to the “mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God?” (Luke 6:12); or, “in the morning,” as on a former occasion,

“risen up a great while before day, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (<sup><4103></sup>Mark 1:35); not breaking His fast thereafter, but bending His steps straight for the city, that He might “work the works of Him that sent Him while it was day?” (<sup><4104></sup>John 9:4). We know not, though one lingers upon and loves to trace out the every movement of that life of wonders. One thing, however we are sure of — it was *real bodily hunger* which He now sought to allay by the fruit of this fig tree, “if haply He might find any thing thereon”; not a mere *scene* for the purpose of teaching a lesson, as some early heretics maintained, and some still seem virtually to hold.

**13. And seeing a fig tree** — (In <sup><4219></sup>Matthew 21:19, it is “one fig tree,” but the sense is the same as here, “a certain fig tree,” as in <sup><4189></sup>Matthew 8:19, etc.). Bethphage, which adjoined Bethany, derives his name from its being a *fig region* — “House of figs.”

**afar off having leaves** — and therefore promising fruit, which in the case of figs come before the leaves.

**he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet** — What the precise import of this explanation is, interpreters are not agreed. Perhaps all that is meant is, that as the proper fig season had not arrived, no fruit would have been expected even of this tree but for the leaves which it had, which were in this case prematurely and unnaturally developed.

**14. And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever** — That word did not *make* the tree barren, but sealed it up in its own barrenness. See on <sup><4133></sup>Matthew 13:13-15.

**And his disciples heard it** — and marked the saying. This is introduced as a connecting link, to explain what was afterwards to be said on the subject, as the narrative has to proceed to the other transactions of this day.

### *Second Cleansing of the Temple* (<sup><4115></sup>Mark 11:15-18).

For the exposition of this portion, see on <sup><4266></sup>Luke 19:45-48.

### *Lessons from the Cursing of the Fig Tree* (<sup><4112></sup>Mark 11:20-26).

**20. And in the morning** — of Tuesday, the third day of the week: He had slept, as during all this week, at Bethany.

**as they passed by** — going into Jerusalem again.

**they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots** — no partial blight, leaving life in the root; but it was now dead, root and branch. In <sup><4219></sup>Matthew 21:19

it is said it withered away as soon as it was cursed. But the full blight had not appeared probably at once; and in the dusk perhaps, as they returned to Bethany, they had not observed it. The precision with which Mark distinguishes the days is not observed by Matthew, intent only on holding up the truths which the incident was designed to teach. In Matthew the whole is represented as taking place at once, just as the two stages of Jairus' daughter — dying and dead — are represented by him as one. The only difference is between a mere summary and a more detailed narrative, each of which only confirms the other.

**21. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him** — satisfied that a miracle so very peculiar — a miracle, not of *blessing*, as all His other miracles, but of *cursing* — could not have been wrought but with some higher reference, and fully expecting to hear something weighty on the subject.

**Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away** — so connecting the two things as to show that he traced the death of the tree entirely to the curse of his Lord. Matthew (<sup>4121</sup>Matthew 21:20) gives this simply as a general exclamation of surprise by the disciples “how soon” the blight had taken effect.

**22. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.**

**23. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed ... he shall have whatsoever he saith** — Here is the lesson now. From the nature of the case supposed — that they might wish a mountain removed and cast into the sea, a thing far removed from anything which they could be thought actually to desire — it is plain that not physical but moral obstacles to the progress of His kingdom were in the Redeemer's view, and that what He designed to teach was the great lesson, that *no obstacle should be able to stand before a confiding faith in God*.

**24. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them** — This verse only *generalizes* the assurance of <sup>4122</sup>Mark 11:23; which seems to show that it was designed for the special encouragement of *evangelistic* and *missionary* efforts, while this is a directory for *prevailing prayer in general*.

**25. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses**, etc. — This is repeated from the Sermon on the Mount (see on <sup>4123</sup>Matthew 6:12); to remind them that if this was necessary to the

acceptableness of all prayer, much more *when great things were to be asked and confidently expected.*

⋈1127 MARK 11:27-33.

**THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED — HIS REPLY.**

(⋈123 MATTHEW 21:23-27 ⋈210 LUKE 20:1-8).

See on ⋈123 Matthew 21:23-27.

# CHAPTER 12

## MARK 12:1-12.

### PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN. (<sup>41233</sup>MATTHEW 21:33-46 <sup>42119</sup>LUKE 20:9-18).

See on <sup>41213</sup>Matthew 21:33-46.

## MARK 12:13-40.

### ENTANGLING QUESTIONS ABOUT TRIBUTE THE RESURRECTION, AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT, WITH THE REPLIES — CHRIST BAFFLES THE PHARISEES BY A QUESTION ABOUT DAVID, AND DENOUNCES THE SCRIBES. (<sup>41225</sup>MATTHEW 22:15-46 <sup>42111</sup>LUKE 20:20-47).

The time of this section appears to be still the third day (Tuesday) of Christ's last week. Matthew introduces the subject by saying (<sup>41215</sup>Matthew 22:15), "Then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk."

**13. And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees** — "their disciples," says Matthew (<sup>41216</sup>Matthew 22:16); probably young and zealous scholars in that hardening school.

**and of the Herodians** — (See on <sup>41214</sup>Matthew 12:14). In <sup>42111</sup>Luke 20:20 these willing tools are called "spies, which should feign themselves just [righteous] men, that they might take hold of His words, that so they might deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor." Their plan, then, was to entrap Him into some expression which might be construed into disaffection to the Roman government; the Pharisees themselves being notoriously discontented with the Roman yoke.

*Tribute to Caesar* (<sup>41214</sup>Mark 12:14-17).

**14. And when they were come, they say unto him, Master** — Teacher.

**we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth** — By

such flattery — though they said only the truth — they hoped to throw Him off His guard.

**Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?** — It was the civil poll tax paid by all enrolled in the “census.” See on <sup><4072></sup>Matthew 17:25.

**15. Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy** — “their wickedness” (<sup><4018></sup>Matthew 22:18); “their craftiness” (<sup><4019></sup>Luke 20:23). The malignity of their hearts took the form of craft, pretending what they did not feel — an anxious desire to be guided aright in a matter which to a scrupulous few might seem a question of some difficulty. Seeing perfectly through this,

**He said unto them, Why tempt ye me?** — “hypocrites!”

**bring me a penny that I may see it** — “the tribute money” (<sup><4019></sup>Matthew 22:19).

**16. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image** — stamped upon the coin.

**and superscription?** — the words encircling it on the obverse side.

**And they said unto him, Caesar’s.**

**17. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s** — Putting it in this general form, it was impossible for sedition itself to dispute it, and yet it dissolved the snare.

**and to God the things that are God’s** — How much is there in this profound but to them startling addition to the maxim, and how incomparable is the whole for fullness, brevity, clearness, weight!

**and they marvelled at him** — “at His answer, and held their peace” (<sup><4019></sup>Luke 20:26), “and left Him, and went their way” (<sup><4022></sup>Matthew 22:22).

*The Resurrection* (<sup><4028></sup>Mark 12:18-27).

**18. Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection** — “neither angel nor spirit” (<sup><4017></sup>Acts 23:7). They were the materialists of the day. See on <sup><4016></sup>Acts 23:6.

**and they asked him, saying** — as follows:

**19-22. Master, Moses wrote unto us** — (<sup><0515></sup>Deuteronomy 25:5).

**If a man’s brother die, and leave his wife behind him ... And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.**



**23. In the resurrection therefore when they shall rise**, etc.

**24. Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures** — regarding the future state.

**neither the power of God?** — before which a thousand such difficulties vanish.

**25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage** — “neither can they die any more” (<sup><218></sup>Luke 20:36). Marriage is ordained to perpetuate the human family; but as there will be no breaches by death in the future state, this ordinance will cease.

**but are as the angels which are in heaven** — In Luke (<sup><218></sup>Luke 20:36) it is “equal unto the angels.” But as the subject is death and resurrection, we are not warranted to extend the equality here taught beyond the one point — the *immortality* of their nature. A beautiful clause is added in Luke (<sup><218></sup>Luke 20:36) — “and are the children of God” — not in respect of *character*, which is not here spoken of, but of *nature* — “being the children of the resurrection,” as rising to an undecaying existence (<sup><618></sup>Romans 8:21,23), and so being the children of their Father’s immortality (<sup><516></sup>1 Timothy 6:16).

**26. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses** — “even Moses” (<sup><218></sup>Luke 20:37), whom they had just quoted for the purpose of entangling Him.

**how in the bush God spake unto him** — either “at the bush,” as the same expression is rendered in <sup><218></sup>Luke 20:37, that is, when he was there; or “in the [section of his history regarding the] bush.” The structure of our verse suggests the latter sense, which is not unusual.

**saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?** — (<sup><618></sup>Exodus 3:6).

**27. He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living** — not “the God of dead but [the God] of living persons.” The word in brackets is almost certainly an addition to the genuine text, and critical editors exclude it. “For all live unto Him” (<sup><218></sup>Luke 20:38) — “in His view,” or “in His estimation.” This last statement — found only in Luke — though adding nothing to the argument, is an important additional illustration. It is true, indeed, that to God no human being is dead or ever will be, but all mankind sustain an abiding conscious relation to Him; but the “all” here means “those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world.” These sustain a gracious covenant relation to God which cannot be dissolved. (Compare <sup><618></sup>Romans 6:10,11). In this sense our Lord affirms that for Moses to call the Lord the “GOD” of His patriarchal servants, if at that moment they had

no existence, would be unworthy of Him. He “would be *ashamed* to be called their God, if He had not prepared for them a city” (<sup><8116></sup>Hebrews 11:16). It was concluded by some of the early Fathers, from our Lord’s resting His proof of the Resurrection on such a passage as this, instead of quoting some much clearer testimonies of the Old Testament, that the Sadducees, to whom this was addressed, acknowledged the authority of no part of the Old Testament but the Pentateuch; and this opinion has held its ground even till now. But as there is no ground for it in the New Testament, so JOSEPHUS is silent upon it; merely saying that they rejected the Pharisaic traditions. It was because the Pentateuch was regarded by all classes as the fundamental source of the Hebrew religion, and all the succeeding books of the Old Testament but as developments of it, that our Lord would show that even there the doctrine of the Resurrection was taught. And all the rather does He select this passage, as being not a bare annunciation of the doctrine in question, but as expressive of that glorious truth *out of which the Resurrection springs*. “And when the multitude heard this” (says <sup><4123></sup>Matthew 22:23), “they were astonished at His doctrine.” “Then,” adds <sup><4219></sup>Luke 20:39,40, “certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said” — enjoying His victory over the Sadducees. “And after that they durst not ask Him any [question at all]” — neither party could; both being for the time utterly foiled.

### *The Great Commandment* (<sup><4128></sup>Mark 12:28-34).

“But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together” (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 22:34).

**28. And one of the scribes** — “a lawyer,” says Matthew (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 22:35); that is, teacher of the law.

**came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him** — manifestly in no bad spirit. When Matthew (<sup><4123></sup>Matthew 22:35) therefore says he came “tempting,” or “trying him,” as one of the Pharisaic party who seemed to enjoy the defeat He had given to the Sadducees, we may suppose that though somewhat priding himself upon his insight into the law, and not indisposed to measure his knowledge with One in whom he had not yet learned to believe, he was nevertheless an honest-hearted, fair disputant.

**Which is the first commandment of all?** — first in importance; the primary, leading commandment, the most fundamental one. This was a question which, with some others, divided the Jewish teachers into rival schools. Our Lord’s answer is in a strain of respect very different from what He showed to cavillers — ever observing His own direction, “Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine;

lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (~~4005~~ Matthew 7:6).

**29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is** — The readings here vary considerably. TISCHENDORF and TREGELLES read simply, “the first is”; and they are followed by MEYER and ALFORD. But though the authority for the precise form of the received text is slender, a form almost identical with it seems to have most weight of authority. Our Lord here gives His explicit sanction to the distinction between commandments of a more *fundamental* and *primary* character, and commandments of a more *dependent* and *subordinate* nature; a distinction of which it is confidently asserted by a certain class of critics that the Jews knew nothing, that our Lord and His apostles nowhere lay down, and which has been invented by Christian divines. (Compare ~~4123~~ Matthew 23:23).

**Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord** — This every devout Jew recited twice every day, and the Jews do it to this day; thus keeping up the great ancient national protest against the polytheisms and pantheisms of the heathen world: it is the great utterance of the national faith in One Living and Personal God — “ONE JEHOVAH!”

**30. And thou shalt** — We have here the language of *law*, expressive of God’s *claims*. What then are we here bound down to do? One word is made to express it. And what a word! Had the essence of the divine law consisted in *deeds*, it could not possibly have been expressed in a single word; for no one deed is comprehensive of all others embraced in the law. But as it consists in *an affection of the soul*, one word suffices to express it — but only one. *Fear*, though due to God and enjoined by Him, is *limited* in its sphere and *distant* in character. *Trust*, *hope*, and the like, though essential features of a right state of heart towards God, are called into action only by *personal necessity*, and so are — in a good sense, it is true, but still are properly — *selfish* affections; that is to say, they have respect to *our own well-being*. But LOVE is an *all-inclusive* affection, embracing not only every other affection proper to its object, but all that is proper to be *done* to its object; for as love spontaneously seeks to please its object, so, in the case of men to God, it is the native well spring of a voluntary obedience. It is, besides, the most *personal* of all affections. One may fear an event, one may hope for an *event*, one may rejoice in an *event*; but one can love only a *Person*. It is the *tenderest*, the most *unselfish*, the most *divine* of all affections. Such, then, is the affection in which the essence of the divine law is declared to consist.

**Thou shalt love** — We now come to the glorious Object of that demanded affection.

**Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God** — that is, Jehovah, the Self-Existent One, who has revealed Himself as the “I AM,” and there is *none else*; who, though by His name JEHOVAH apparently at an unapproachable distance from His finite creatures, yet bears to *thee* a real and definite relationship, out of which arises *His claim* and *thy duty* — of LOVE. But with what are we to love Him? Four things are here specified. First, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God”

**with thy heart** — This sometimes means “the whole inner man” (as <sup><1023></sup>Proverbs 4:23); but that cannot be meant here; for then the other three particulars would be superfluous. Very often it means “our emotional nature” — the seat of *feeling* as distinguished from our intellectual nature or the seat of *thought*, commonly called the “mind” (as in <sup><1040></sup>Philippians 4:7). But neither can this be the sense of it here; for here the heart is distinguished both from the “mind” and the “soul.” The “heart,” then, must here mean the *sincerity* of both the thoughts and the feelings; in other words, *uprightness* or *true-heartedness*, as opposed to a *hypocritical* or *divided* affection. But next, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God” with thy soul. This is designed to command our emotional nature: Thou shalt put *feeling* or *warmth* into thine affection. Further, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God”

**with thy mind** — This commands our intellectual nature: Thou shalt put *intelligence* into thine affection — in opposition to a blind devotion, or mere devoteeism. Lastly, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God”

**with thy strength** — This commands our energies: Thou shalt put *intensity* into thine affection — “Do it with thy might” (<sup><1010></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10). Taking these four things together, the command of the Law is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with all thy powers* — with a *sincere*, a *fervid*, an *intelligent*, an *energetic* love.” But this is not all that the Law demands. God will have all these qualities in their most perfect exercise. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” says the Law, “with *all thy heart*,” or, with perfect sincerity; “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy soul*,” or, with the utmost fervor; “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy mind*,” or, in the fullest exercise of an enlightened reason; and “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy strength*,” or, with the whole energy of our being! So much for the First Commandment.

**31. And the second is like** — “unto it” (<sup><1029></sup>Matthew 22:39); as demanding the same affection, and only the extension of it, in its proper measure, to the creatures of Him whom we thus love — our *brethren* in the participation of

the same nature, and *neighbors*, as connected with us by ties that render each dependent upon and necessary to the other.

**Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself** — Now, as we are not to love ourselves supremely, this is virtually a command, in the first place, *not* to love our neighbor with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And thus it is a condemnation of the idolatry of the creature. Our supreme and uttermost affection is to be reserved for God. But as *sincerely* as ourselves we are to love all mankind, and with *the same readiness to do and suffer for them* as we should reasonably desire them to show to us. The golden rule (<sup>4072</sup>Matthew 7:12) is here our best interpreter of the nature and extent of these claims.

**There is none other commandment greater than these** — or, as in <sup>4124</sup>Matthew 22:40, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (see on <sup>4187</sup>Matthew 5:17). It is as if He had said, “This is all Scripture in a nutshell; the whole law of human duty in a portable, pocket form.” Indeed, it is so *simple* that a child may understand it, so *brief* that all may remember it, so *comprehensive* as to embrace all possible cases. And from its very nature it is *unchangeable*. It is inconceivable that God should require from his rational creatures anything *less*, or in substance anything *else*, under any *dispensation*, in any *world*, at any *period* throughout eternal duration. He cannot but claim this — all this — alike in *heaven*, in *earth*, and in *hell*! And this incomparable summary of the divine law belonged to the *Jewish religion*! As it shines in its own self-evidencing splendor, so it reveals its own true source. The religion from which the world has received it could be none other than a *God-given religion*!

**32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master** — Teacher.

**thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he** — The genuine text here seems clearly to have been, “There is one,” without the word “God”; and so nearly all critical editors and expositors read.

**33. And to love him with all the heart ... and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices** — more, that is, than all positive institutions; thereby showing insight into the essential difference between what is *moral* and in its own nature *unchangeable*, and what is obligatory only *because enjoined*, and only so *long as enjoined*.

**34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly** — rather, “intelligently,” or “sensibly”; not only in a good spirit, but with a promising measure of insight into spiritual things.

**he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God** — for he had but *to follow out a little further* what he seemed sincerely to own, to find his way into the kingdom. He needed only the experience of another eminent scribe who at a later period said, “We know that *the law is spiritual*, but *I am carnal*, sold under sin”: who exclaimed, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?” but who added, “I thank God through Jesus Christ!” (<sup><4174></sup>Romans 7:14,24,25). Perhaps among the “great company of the priests” and other Jewish ecclesiastics who “were obedient to the faith,” almost immediately after the day of Pentecost (<sup><4067></sup>Acts 6:7), this upright lawyer was one. But for all his nearness to the Kingdom of God, it may be he never entered it.

**And no man after that durst ask any question** — all feeling that they were no match for Him, and that it was vain to enter the lists with Him.

*Christ Baffles the Pharisees Regarding David* (<sup><4125></sup>Mark 12:35-37).

**35. And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple** — and “while the Pharisees were gathered together” (<sup><4124></sup>Matthew 22:41).

**How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?** — How come they to give it out that Messiah is to be the son of David? In Matthew (<sup><4124></sup>Matthew 22:42), Jesus asks them, “What think ye of Christ?” or of the promised and expected Messiah? “Whose son is He [to be]? They say unto Him, The son of David.” The sense is the same. “He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord?” (<sup><4124></sup>Matthew 22:42,43).

**36. For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool** — (<sup><4011></sup>Psalms 110:1).

**37. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?** — There is but one solution of this difficulty. Messiah is at once inferior to David as his son according to the flesh, and superior to him as the Lord of a kingdom of which David is himself a subject, not the sovereign. The human and divine natures of Christ, and the spirituality of His kingdom — of which the highest earthly sovereigns are honored if they be counted worthy to be its subjects — furnish the only key. to this puzzle.

**And the common people** — the immense crowd.

**heard him gladly** — “And no man was able to answer Him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions” (<sup><4124></sup>Matthew 22:46).

*The Scribes Denounced* (<sup><4128></sup>Mark 12:38-40).

**38. And he said unto them in his doctrine** — rather, “in His teaching”; implying that this was but a specimen of an extended discourse, which Matthew gives in full (<sup><1316></sup>Matthew 23:1-39). Luke says (<sup><206></sup>Luke 20:45) this was “in the audience of all the people said unto His disciples.”

**Beware of the scribes, which love** — or like.

**to go in long clothing** — (see on <sup><1316></sup>Matthew 23:5).

**and love salutations in the market-places,**

**39. And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms** — or positions.

**at feasts** — On this love of distinction, see on <sup><2417></sup>Luke 14:7; <sup><1085></sup>Matthew 6:5.

**40. Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation** — They took advantage of their helpless condition and confiding character to obtain possession of their property, while by their “long prayers” they made them believe they were raised far above “filthy lucre.” So much the “greater damnation” awaited them. (Compare <sup><1333></sup>Matthew 23:33). A lifelike description this of the Romish clergy, the true successors of “the scribes.”

## <sup><1124></sup>MARK 12:41-44.

### THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES. (<sup><2011></sup>LUKE 21:1-4).

See on <sup><2011></sup>Luke 21:1-4.



# CHAPTER 13

## MARK 13:1-37.

### CHRIST'S PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND WARNINGS SUGGESTED BY IT TO PREPARE FOR HIS SECOND COMING. (~~410E~~ MATTHEW 24:1-51 ~~420F~~ LUKE 21:5-36).

Jesus had uttered all His mind against the Jewish ecclesiastics, exposing their character with withering plainness, and denouncing, in language of awful severity, the judgments of God against them for that unfaithfulness to their trust which was bringing ruin upon the nation. He had closed this His last public discourse (~~410E~~ Matthew 23:1-39) by a passionate lamentation over Jerusalem, and a solemn farewell to the temple. "And," says Matthew (~~410E~~ Matthew 24:1), "Jesus went out and departed from the temple" — never more to re-enter its precincts, or open His mouth in public teaching. *With this act ended His public ministry.* As He withdrew, says OLSHAUSEN, the gracious presence of God left the sanctuary; and the temple, with all its service, and the whole theocratic constitution, was given over to destruction. What immediately followed is, as usual. most minutely and graphically described by our Evangelist.

**1. And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him** — The other Evangelists are less definite. "As some spake," says Luke (~~420F~~ Luke 21:5); "His disciples came to Him," says Matthew (~~410E~~ Matthew 24:2). Doubtless it was the speech of one, the mouthpiece, likely, of others.

**Master** — Teacher.

**see what manner of stones and what buildings are here** — wondering probably, how so massive a pile could be overthrown, as seemed implied in our Lord's last words regarding it. JOSEPHUS, who gives a minute account of the wonderful structure, speaks of stones forty cubits long [*Wars of the Jews*, 5.5.1]. and says the pillars supporting the porches were twenty-five cubits high, all of one stone, and that of the whitest marble [*Wars of the Jews*, 5.5.2]. Six days' battering at the walls, during the siege, made no impression upon them [*Wars of the Jews*, 6.4.1]. Some of the



under-building, yet remaining, and other works, are probably as old as the first temple.

**2. And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings?** — “Ye call My attention to these things? I have seen them. Ye point to their massive and durable appearance: now listen to their fate.”

**there shall not be left** — “left here” (<sup>414B</sup>Matthew 24:2).

**one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down** — Titus ordered the whole city and temple to be demolished [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 7.1.1]; Eleazar wished they had all died before seeing that holy city destroyed by enemies’ hands, and before the temple was so profanely *dug up* [*Wars of the Jews*, 7.8.7].

**3. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, over against the temple** — On their way from Jerusalem to Bethany they would cross Mount Olivet; on its summit He seats Himself, over against the temple, having the city all spread out under His eye. How graphically is this set before us by our Evangelist!

**Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately** — The other Evangelists tell us merely that “the disciples” did so. But Mark not only says that it was four of them, but names them; and they were the first *quarternion* of the Twelve.

**4. Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?** — “and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?” They no doubt looked upon the date of all these things as one and the same, and their notions of the things themselves were as confused as of the times of them. Our Lord takes His own way of meeting their questions.

*Prophecies of the Destruction of Jerusalem* (<sup>413B</sup>Mark 13:5-31).

**5. And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:**

**6. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ** — (see <sup>414B</sup>Matthew 24:5) — “and the time draweth nigh” (<sup>420B</sup>Luke 21:8); that is, the time of the kingdom in its full splendor.

**and shall deceive many** — “Go ye not therefore after them” (<sup>420B</sup>Luke 21:8). The reference here seems not to be to pretended Messiahs, deceiving those who rejected the claims of Jesus, of whom indeed there were plenty — for our Lord is addressing His own genuine disciples — but to persons

pretending to be Jesus Himself, returned in glory to take possession of His kingdom. This gives peculiar force to the words, “Go ye not therefore after them.”

**7. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled** — (See on <sup><4133></sup>Mark 13:13, and compare <sup><2181></sup>Isaiah 8:11-14).

**for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet** — In Luke (<sup><2119></sup>Luke 21:9), “the end is not by and by,” or “immediately.” Worse must come before all is over.

**8. These are the beginnings of sorrows** — “of travail-pangs,” to which heavy calamities are compared. (See <sup><2081></sup>Jeremiah 4:31, etc.). The annals of TACITUS tell us how the Roman world was convulsed, before the destruction of Jerusalem, by rival claimants of the imperial purple.

**9. But take heed to yourselves: for** — “before all these things” (<sup><2112></sup>Luke 21:12); that is, before these public calamities come.

**they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten** — These refer to *ecclesiastical* proceedings against them.

**and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings** — before *civil* tribunals next.

**for my sake, for a testimony against them** — rather “unto them” — to give you an opportunity of bearing testimony to Me before them. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the best commentary on this announcement. (Compare <sup><4007></sup>Matthew 10:17,18).

**10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations** — “for a witness, and then shall the end come” (<sup><4244></sup>Matthew 24:14). God never sends judgment without previous warning; and there can be no doubt that the Jews, already dispersed over most known countries, had nearly all heard the Gospel “as a witness,” before the end of the Jewish state. The same principle was repeated and will repeat itself to “*the end*.”

**11. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand** — “Be not anxious beforehand.”

**what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate** — “Be not filled with apprehension, in the prospect of such public appearances for Me, lest ye should bring discredit upon My name, nor think it necessary to prepare beforehand what ye are to say.”

**but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost** — (See on <sup><4009></sup>Matthew 10:19,20.)

**13. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake** — Matthew (<sup><1842</sup>Matthew 24:12) adds this important intimation: “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many” — “of the many,” or “of the most,” that is, of the generality of professed disciples — “shall wax cold.” Sad illustrations of the effect of abounding iniquity in cooling the love even of faithful disciples we have in the *Epistle of James*, written about the period here referred to, and too frequently ever since.

**but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved** — See on (<sup><1021</sup>Matthew 10:21,22; and compare (<sup><8108</sup>Hebrews 10:38,39, which is a manifest allusion to these words of Christ; also (<sup><4121</sup>Revelation 2:10. Luke (<sup><2118</sup>Luke 21:18) adds these reassuring words: “But there shall not an hair of your heads perish.” Our Lord had just said (<sup><2116</sup>Luke 21:16) that they should be *put to death*; showing that this precious promise is far above immunity from mere bodily harm, and furnishing a key to the right interpretation of the ninety-first Psalm and such like.

**14. But when ye shall see** — “Jerusalem compassed by armies” — by encamped armies; in other words, when ye shall see it *besieged*, and

**the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not** — that is, as explained in Matthew (<sup><1845</sup>Matthew 24:15), “standing in the holy place.”

(**let him that readeth understand**) — readeth that prophecy. That “the abomination of desolation” here alluded to was intended to point to the Roman ensigns, as the symbols of an idolatrous, and so unclean pagan power, may be gathered by comparing what Luke says in the corresponding verse (<sup><2120</sup>Luke 21:20); and commentators are agreed on it. It is worthy of notice, as confirming this interpretation, that in I Maccabees 1:54 — which, though apocryphal *Scripture*, is authentic *history* — the expression of Daniel (<sup><2113</sup>Daniel 11:31 12:11) is applied to the idolatrous profanation of the Jewish altar by Antiochus Epiphanes.

**then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains** — The ecclesiastical historian, EUSEBIUS, early in the fourth century, tells us that the Christians fled to *Pella*, at the northern extremity of Perea, being “prophetically directed” — perhaps by some prophetic intimation more explicit than this, which would be their chart — and that thus they escaped the predicted calamities by which the nation was overwhelmed.

**15. And let him that is on the housetop not get down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house** — that is, let him take the outside flight of steps from the roof to the ground; a graphic way of denoting the extreme urgency of the case, and the danger of being

tempted, by the desire to save his property, to delay till escape should become impossible.

**16. And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.**

**17. But woe to them** — or, “alas for them.”

**that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days** — in consequence of the aggravated suffering which those conditions would involve.

**18. And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter** — making escape perilous, or tempting you to delay your flight. Matthew (<sup><4184></sup>Matthew 24:20) adds, “neither on the sabbath day,” when, from fear of a breach of its sacred rest, they might be induced to remain.

**19. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be** — Such language is not unusual in the Old Testament with reference to tremendous calamities. But it is matter of literal fact that there was crowded into the period of the Jewish war an amount and complication of suffering perhaps unparalleled; as the narrative of JOSEPHUS, examined closely and arranged under different heads, would show.

**20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh** — that is, no human life.

**should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days** — But for this merciful “shortening,” brought about by a remarkable concurrence of causes, the whole nation would have perished, in which there yet remained a remnant to be afterwards gathered out. This portion of the prophecy closes, in Luke, with the following vivid and important glance at the subsequent fortunes of the chosen people: “And they shall fall by the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (<sup><42124></sup>Luke 21:24). The language as well as the idea of this remarkable statement is taken from <sup><2780></sup>Daniel 8:10,13. What, then, is its import here? It implies, first, that a time is coming when Jerusalem shall cease to be “trodden down of the Gentiles”; which it was then by pagan, and since and till now is by Mohammedan unbelievers: and next, it implies that the period when this treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles is to cease will be when “the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” or “completed.” But what does this mean? We may gather the meaning of it from <sup><6103></sup>Romans 11:1-36 in which the divine purposes and procedure towards

the chosen people from first to last are treated in detail. In <sup><6125></sup>Romans 11:25 these words of our Lord are thus reproduced: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” See the exposition of that verse, from which it will appear that “till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in” — or, in our Lord’s phraseology, “till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” — does not mean “till the general conversion of the world to Christ,” but “till the Gentiles have had their *full time* of that place in the Church which the Jews had before them.” After that period of *Gentilism*, as before of *Judaism*, “Jerusalem” and Israel, no longer “trodden down by the Gentiles,” but “grafted into their own olive tree,” shall constitute, with the believing Gentiles, one Church of God, and fill the whole earth. What a bright vista does this open up!

**21. And then, if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo he is there; believe him not** — So <sup><6723></sup>Luke 17:23. No one can read JOSEPHUS’ account of what took place before the destruction of Jerusalem without seeing how strikingly this was fulfilled.

**to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect** — implying that this, though all *but* done, will prove impossible. What a precious assurance! (Compare <sup><3109></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

**23. But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all things** — He had just told them that the seduction of the elect would prove impossible; but since this would be all but accomplished, He bids them be on their guard, as the proper means of averting that catastrophe. In Matthew (<sup><4803></sup>Matthew 24:26-28) we have some additional particulars: “Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” See on <sup><6723></sup>Luke 17:23,24. “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” See on <sup><6723></sup>Luke 17:37.

**24. But in those days, after that tribulation** — “Immediately after the tribulation of those days” (<sup><4803></sup>Matthew 24:29).

**the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.**

**25. And the stars of heaven shall fall** — “and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (<sup><6723></sup>Luke 21:25,26).

**and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken** — Though the grandeur of this language carries the mind over the head of all periods but that of Christ's Second Coming, nearly every expression will be found used of the Lord's coming in terrible national judgments: as of Babylon (<sup>2339</sup>Isaiah 13:9-13); of Idumea (<sup>2341</sup>Isaiah 34:1,2,4,8-10); of Egypt (<sup>2342</sup>Ezekiel 32:7,8); compare also <sup>2387</sup>Psalms 18:7-15 <sup>2343</sup>Isaiah 24:1,17-19 <sup>2344</sup>Joel 2:10,11, etc. We cannot therefore consider the mere strength of this language a proof that it refers exclusively or primarily to the precursors of the final day, though of course in "*that day*" it will have its most awful fulfillment.

**26. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory** — In <sup>2345</sup>Matthew 24:30, this is given most fully: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man," etc. That this language finds its highest interpretation in the Second Personal Coming of Christ, is most certain. But the question is, whether that be the primary sense of it as it stands here? Now if the reader will turn to <sup>2346</sup>Daniel 7:13,14, and connect with it the preceding verses, he will find, we think, the true key to our Lord's meaning here. There the powers that oppressed the Church — symbolized by rapacious wild beasts — are summoned to the bar of the Great God, who as the Ancient of days seats Himself, with His assessors, on a burning Throne: thousand thousands ministering to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before Him. "The judgment is set, and the books are opened." Who that is guided by the *mere words* would doubt that this is a description of the Final Judgment? And yet nothing is clearer than that it is *not*, but a description of a vast *temporal* judgment, upon organized bodies of men, for their incurable hostility to the kingdom of God upon earth. Well, after the doom of these has been pronounced and executed, and room thus prepared for the unobstructed development of the kingdom of God over the earth, what follows? "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like THE SON OF MAN came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they [the angelic attendants] brought Him near before Him." For what purpose? To receive investiture in the kingdom, which, as Messiah, of right belonged to Him. Accordingly, it is added, "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Comparing this with our Lord's words, He seems to us, by "the Son of man [on which phrase, see on <sup>2347</sup>John 1:51] coming in the clouds with great power and glory," to mean, that when judicial vengeance shall once have been executed upon Jerusalem, and the ground thus cleared for the unobstructed

establishment of His own kingdom, His true regal claims and rights would be visibly and gloriously asserted and manifested. See on <sup><1128></sup>Luke 9:28 (with its parallels in <sup><1170></sup>Matthew 17:1 <sup><1102></sup>Mark 9:2), in which nearly the same language is employed, and where it can hardly be understood of anything else than *the full and free establishment of the kingdom of Christ on the destruction of Jerusalem*. But what is that “sign of the Son of man in heaven?” Interpreters are not agreed. But as before Christ came to destroy Jerusalem some appalling portents were seen in the air, so before His Personal appearing it is likely that something *analogous* will be witnessed, though of what nature it would be vain to conjecture.

**27. And then shall he send his angels** — “with a great sound of a trumpet” (<sup><1061></sup>Matthew 24:31).

**and shall gather together his elect**, etc. — As the tribes of Israel were anciently gathered together by sound of trumpet (<sup><1093></sup>Exodus 19:13,16,19 <sup><1026></sup>Leviticus 23:24 <sup><1001></sup>Psalms 81:3-5), so any mighty gathering of God’s people, by divine command, is represented as collected by sound of trumpet (<sup><1073></sup>Isaiah 27:13; compare <sup><1115></sup>Revelation 11:15); and the ministry of angels, employed in all the great operations of Providence, is here held forth as the agency by which the present assembling of the elect is to be accomplished. LIGHTFOOT thus explains it: “When Jerusalem shall be reduced to ashes, and that wicked nation cut off and rejected, then shall the Son of man send His ministers with the trumpet of the Gospel, and they shall gather His elect of the several nations, from the four corners of heaven: so that God shall not want a Church, although that ancient people of His be rejected and cast off: but that ancient Jewish Church being destroyed, a new Church shall be called out of the Gentiles.” But though something like this appears to be the primary sense of the verse, in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem, no one can fail to see that the language swells beyond any gathering of a human family into a Church upon earth, and forces the thoughts onward to that gathering of the Church “at the last trump,” to meet the Lord in the air, which is to wind up the present scene. Still, this is not, in our judgment, the *direct* subject of the prediction; for <sup><1138></sup>Mark 13:28 limits the whole prediction to the generation then existing.

**28. Now learn a parable of the fig tree** — “Now from the fig tree learn the parable,” or the high lesson which this teaches.

**When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves** — “its leaves.”

**29. So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass** — rather, “coming to pass.”



**know that it** — “the kingdom of God” (<sup><2131></sup>Luke 21:31).

**is nigh, even at the doors** — that is, the full manifestation of it; for till then it admitted of no full development. In Luke (<sup><2128></sup>Luke 21:28) the following words precede these: “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” — their redemption, in the first instance certainly, from Jewish oppression (<sup><3124></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 <sup><2152></sup>Luke 11:52); but in the highest sense of these words, redemption from all the oppressions and miseries of the present state at the second appearing of the Lord Jesus.

**30. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass fill all these things be done** — or “fulfilled” (<sup><1268></sup>Matthew 24:34 <sup><2132></sup>Luke 21:32). Whether we take this to mean that the whole would be fulfilled within the limits of the generation then current, or, according to a usual way of speaking, that the generation then existing would not pass away without seeing a *begun* fulfillment of this prediction, the facts entirely correspond. For either the whole was fulfilled in the destruction accomplished by Titus, as many think; or, if we stretch it out, according to others, till the thorough dispersion of the Jews a little later, under Adrian, every requirement of our Lord’s words seems to be met.

**31. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away** — the strongest possible expression of the divine authority by which He spake; not as Moses or Paul might have said of their own inspiration, for such language would be unsuitable in any merely human mouth.

*Warnings to Prepare for the Coming of Christ Suggested by the Foregoing Prophecy* (<sup><1132></sup>Mark 13:32-37).

It will be observed that, in the foregoing prophecy, as our Lord approaches the crisis of the day of vengeance on Jerusalem and redemption for the Church — at which stage the analogy between that and the day of final vengeance and redemption waxes more striking — His language rises and swells beyond all temporal and partial vengeance, beyond all earthly deliverances and enlargements, and ushers us resistlessly into the scenes of the final day. Accordingly, in these six concluding verses it is manifest that preparation for “THAT DAY” is what our Lord designs to inculcate.

**32. But of that day and that hour** — that is, the precise time.

**knoweth no man** — literally, no one.

**no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father** — This very remarkable statement regarding “the Son” is peculiar to Mark. Whether it means that the Son was *not at that time in possession*



*of the knowledge* referred to, or simply that it was not *among the things which He had received to communicate* — has been matter of much controversy even among the firmest believers in the proper Divinity of Christ. In the latter sense it was taken by some of the most eminent of the ancient Fathers, and by LUTHER, MELANCTHON, and most of the older Lutherans; and it is so taken by BENGEL, LANGE, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, CHRYSOSTOM and others understood it to mean that *as man* our Lord was ignorant of this. It is taken literally by CALVIN, GROTIUS, DE WETTE, MEYER, FRITZSCHE, STIER, ALFORD, and ALEXANDER.

**33. Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is.**

**34. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey,** etc. — The idea thus far is similar to that in the opening part of the parable of the talents (<sup><1254></sup>Matthew 25:14,15).

**and commanded the porter** — the gatekeeper.

**to watch** — pointing to the official duty of the ministers of religion to give warning of approaching danger to the people.

**35. Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning** — an allusion to the four Roman watches of the night.

**36. Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping** — See on <sup><1278></sup>Luke 12:35-40; <sup><1212></sup>Luke 12:42-46.

**37. And what I say unto you** — this discourse, it will be remembered, was delivered in private.

**I say unto all, Watch** — anticipating and requiring the diffusion of His teaching by them among all His disciples, and its perpetuation through all time.

# CHAPTER 14

## MARK 14:1-11.

**THE CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES TO PUT JESUS TO DEATH — THE SUPPER AND THE — ANOINTING AT BETHANY — JUDAS AGREES WITH THE CHIEF PRIESTS TO BETRAY HIS LORD. (~~400E~~ MATTHEW 26:1-16 ~~421E~~ LUKE 22:1-6 ~~401E~~ JOHN 12:1-11).**

The events of this section appeared to have occurred on the fourth day (*Wednesday*) of the Redeemer's Last Week.

*Conspiracy of the Jewish Authorities to Put Jesus to Death*  
(~~400E~~ Mark 14:1,2).

**1. After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread** — The meaning is, that two days after what is about to be mentioned the passover would arrive; in other words, what follows occurred two days *before* the feast.

**and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death** — From Matthew's fuller account (~~400E~~ Matthew 26:1-75) we learn that our Lord announced this to the Twelve as follows, being the first announcement to them of the precise time: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings" (~~400E~~ Matthew 26:1) — referring to the contents of ~~400E~~ Matthew 24:1-25:46, which He delivered to His disciples; His public ministry being now closed: from His *prophetical* He is now passing into His *priestly* office, although all along He Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses — "He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days is [the feast of] the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." The *first* and the *last* steps of His final sufferings are brought together in this brief announcement of all that was to take place. The *passover* was the first and the chief of the three great annual festivals, commemorative of the redemption of God's people from Egypt, through the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb divinely appointed to be slain for that end; the destroying angel, "when he saw the blood, *passing over*" the Israelitish houses, on which that blood was seen, when he came to destroy all the first-born in the land of Egypt (~~401E~~ Exodus 12:12,13) — bright typical foreshadowing of the great Sacrifice, and the

Redemption effected thereby. Accordingly, “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working,” it was so ordered that precisely at the passover season, “Christ our Passover should be sacrificed for us.” On the day following the passover commenced “the feast of unleavened bread,” so called because for seven days only unleavened bread was to be eaten (~~1228~~ Exodus 12:18-20). See on ~~4181~~ 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. We are further told by Matthew (~~4183~~ Matthew 26:3) that the consultation was held in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest, between the chief priests, [the scribes], and the elders of the people, how “they might take Jesus by subtlety and kill Him.”

**2. But they said, Not on the feast day** — rather, not during the feast; not until the seven days of unleavened bread should be over.

**lest there be an uproar of the people** — In consequence of the vast influx of strangers, embracing all the male population of the land who had reached a certain age, there were within the walls of Jerusalem at this festival some two million people; and in their excited state, the danger of tumult and bloodshed among “the people,” who for the most part took Jesus for a prophet, was extreme. See JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 20.5.3]. What plan, if any, these ecclesiastics fixed upon for seizing our Lord, does not appear. But the proposal of Judas being at once and eagerly gone into, it is probable they were till then at some loss for a plan sufficiently quiet and yet effectual. So, just at the feast time shall it be done; the unexpected offer of Judas relieving them of their fears. Thus, as BENDEL remarks, did the divine counsel take effect.

*The Supper and the Anointing at Bethany Six Days  
before the Passover* (~~4148~~ Mark 14:3-9).

The time of this part of the narrative is *four days before* what has just been related. Had it been part of the regular train of events which our Evangelist designed to record, he would probably have inserted it in its proper place, before the conspiracy of the Jewish authorities. But having come to the treason of Judas, he seems to have gone back upon this scene as what probably gave immediate occasion to the awful deed.

**3. And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman** — It was “Mary,” as we learn from ~~4103~~ John 12:3.

**having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard** — pure *nard*, a celebrated aromatic — (See So 1:12).

**very precious** — “very costly” (~~4103~~ John 12:3).

**and she brake the box, and poured it on his head** — “and anointed,” adds John (<sup><612></sup>John 12:3), “the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” The only use of this was to refresh and exhilarate — a grateful compliment in the East, amid the closeness of a heated atmosphere, with many guests at a feast. Such was the form in which Mary’s love to Christ, at so much cost to herself, poured itself out.

**4. And there were some that had indignation within themselves and said** — Matthew says (<sup><418></sup>Matthew 26:8), “But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying,” etc. The spokesman, however, was none of the true-hearted Eleven — as we learn from John (<sup><612></sup>John 12:4): “Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray Him.” Doubtless the thought stirred first in his breast, and issued from his base lips; and some of the rest, ignorant of his true character and feelings, and carried away by his plausible speech, might for the moment feel some chagrin at the apparent waste.

**Why was this waste of the ointment made?**

**5. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence** — about \$50 in our currency.

**and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her** — “This he said,” remarks John (<sup><616></sup>John 12:6), and the remark is of exceeding importance, “not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and had the bag” — the scrip or treasure chest — “and bare what was put therein” — not “bare it off” by theft, as some understand it. It is true that he did this; but the expression means simply that he had charge of it and its contents, or was treasurer to Jesus and the Twelve. What a remarkable arrangement was this, by which an avaricious and dishonest person was not only taken into the number of the Twelve, but entrusted with the custody of their little property! The purposes which this served are obvious enough; but it is further noticeable, that the remotest hint was never given to the Eleven of his true character, nor did the disciples most favored with the intimacy of Jesus ever suspect him, till a few minutes before he voluntarily separated himself from their company — for ever!

**6. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me** — It was good in itself, and so was acceptable to Christ; it was eminently seasonable, and so more acceptable still; and it was “what she could,” and so most acceptable of all.

**7. For ye have the poor with you always** — referring to <sup><651></sup>Deuteronomy 15:11.

**and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always** — a gentle hint of His approaching departure, by One who knew the worth of His own presence.

**8. She hath done what she could** — a noble testimony, embodying a principle of immense importance.

**she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying** — or, as in John (<sup><B127></sup>John 12:7), “Against the day of my burying hath she kept this.” Not that she, dear heart, thought of His burial, much less reserved any of her nard to anoint her dead Lord. But as the time was so near at hand when that office would have to be performed, *and she was not to have that privilege even after the spices were brought for the purpose* (<sup><B128></sup>Mark 16:1), He lovingly regards it as done now. “In the act of love done to Him,” says OLSHAUSEN beautifully, “she has erected to herself an eternal monument, as lasting as the Gospel, the eternal Word of God. From generation to generation this remarkable prophecy of the Lord has been fulfilled; and even we, in explaining this saying of the Redeemer, of necessity contribute to its accomplishment.” “Who but Himself,” asks STIER, “had the power to ensure to any work of man, even if resounding in His own time through the whole earth, an imperishable remembrance in the stream of history? Behold once more here the majesty of His royal judicial supremacy in the government of the world, in this, ‘Verily I say unto you.’”

**10. And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them** — that is, to make his proposals, and to bargain with them, as appears from. Matthew’s fuller statement (<sup><B129></sup>Matthew 26:14,15) which says, he “went unto the chief priests, and said, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.” The thirty pieces of silver were thirty shekels, the fine paid for man- or maid-servant accidentally killed (<sup><B130></sup>Exodus 21:32), and equal to about \$25 in our currency — “a goodly price that I was prized at of them!” (<sup><B131></sup>Zechariah 11:13).

**11. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money** — Matthew alone records the precise sum, because a remarkable and complicated prophecy, which he was afterwards to refer to, was fulfilled by it.

**And he sought how he might conveniently betray him** — or, as more fully given in Luke (<sup><B132></sup>Luke 22:6), “And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray Him unto them in the absence of the multitude.” That he should avoid an “uproar” or “riot” among the people, which probably was made an essential condition by the Jewish authorities, was thus

assented to by the traitor; into whom, says Luke (<sup><2218></sup>Luke 22:3), “Satan entered,” to put him upon this hellish deed.

## <sup><1142></sup>MARK 14:12-26.

**PREPARATION FOR, AND LAST CELEBRATION OF, THE PASSOVER — ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRAITOR — INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.** (<sup><1117></sup>MATTHEW 26:17-30  
<sup><2217></sup>LUKE 22:7-23,39 <sup><1131></sup>JOHN 13:21-30).

See on <sup><2217></sup>Luke 22:7-23; <sup><2239></sup>Luke 22:39; and see on <sup><1130></sup>John 13:10,11;  
<sup><1138></sup>John 13:18,19; <sup><1131></sup>John 13:21-30.

## <sup><1142></sup>MARK 14:27-31.

**THE DESERTION OF JESUS BY HIS DISCIPLES AND THE FALL OF PETER, FORETOLD.** (<sup><1151></sup>MATTHEW 26:31-35  
<sup><2231></sup>LUKE 22:31-38 <sup><1136></sup>JOHN 13:36-38).

See on <sup><2231></sup>Luke 22:31-46.

## <sup><1142></sup>MARK 14:32-42.

**THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.**  
(<sup><1151></sup>MATTHEW 26:36-46 <sup><2231></sup>LUKE 22:39-46).

See on <sup><2231></sup>Luke 22:39-46.

## <sup><1143></sup>MARK 14:43-52.

**BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS — FLIGHT OF HIS DISCIPLES.** (<sup><1167></sup>MATTHEW 26:47-56  
<sup><2247></sup>LUKE 22:47-53 <sup><1181></sup>JOHN 18:1-12).

See on <sup><1181></sup>John 18:1-12.

## ◀1143 MARK 14:53-72.

### JESUS ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM CONDEMNED TO DIE, AND SHAMEFULLY ENTREATED — THE FALL OF PETER. (◀1157 MATTHEW 26:57-75 ◀1254 LUKE 22:54-71 ◀1813 JOHN 18:13-18,24-27).

Had we only the first three Gospels, we should have concluded that our Lord was led immediately to Caiaphas, and had before the Council. But as the Sanhedrim could hardly have been brought together at the dead hour of night — by which time our Lord was in the hands of the officers sent to take Him — and as it was only “as soon as it was day” that the Council met (◀1266 Luke 22:66), we should have had some difficulty in knowing what was done with Him during those intervening hours. In the Fourth Gospel, however, all this is cleared up, and a very important addition to our information is made (◀1813 John 18:13,14,19-24). Let us endeavor to trace the events in the true order of succession, and in the detail supplied by a comparison of all the four streams of text.

*Jesus Is Brought Privately before Annas, the Father-in-Law of Caiaphas (◀1813 John 18:13,14).*

#### ◀1813 JOHN 18:13:

*And they led Him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year* — This successful Annas, as ELLICOTT remarks, was appointed high priest by Quirinus, A.D. 12, and after holding the office for several years, was deposed by Valerius Gratus, Pilate’s predecessor in the procuratorship of Judea [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 18.2.1, etc.]. He appears, however, to have possessed vast influence, having obtained the high priesthood, not only for his son Eleazar, and his son-in-law Caiaphas, but subsequently for four other sons, under the last of whom James, the brother of our Lord, was put to death [Antiquities, 20.9.1]. It is thus highly probable that, besides having the title of “high priest” merely as one who had filled the office, he to a great degree retained the powers he had formerly exercised, and came to be regarded practically as a kind of rightful high priest.

#### ◀1814 JOHN 18:14:

*Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.* See on ◀1815 John 11:51. What passed between Annas and our Lord during this interval the beloved disciple

reserves till he has related the beginning of Peter's fall. To this, then, as recorded by our own Evangelist, let us meanwhile listen.

*Peter Obtains Access within the Quadrangle of the High Priest's Residence, and Warms Himself at the Fire* (~~all~~<sup>168</sup> Mark 14:53,54).

**53. And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled** — or rather, “there gathered together unto him.”

**all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes** — it was then a full and formal meeting of the Sanhedrim. Now, as the first three Evangelists place all Peter's denials of his Lord after this, we should naturally conclude that they took place *while our Lord stood before the Sanhedrim*. But besides that the natural impression is that the scene around the fire took place *overnight*, the *second crowing of the cock*, if we are to credit ancient writers, would occur about the beginning of the fourth watch, or between three and four in the morning. By that time, however, the Council had probably convened, being warned, perhaps, that they were to prepare for being called at any hour of the morning, should the Prisoner be successfully secured. If this be correct, it is fairly certain that only the *last* of Peter's three denials would take place while our Lord was under trial before the Sanhedrim. One thing more may require explanation. If our Lord had to be transferred from the residence of Annas to that of Caiaphas, one is apt to wonder that there is no mention of His being marched from the one to the other. But the building, in all likelihood, was one and the same; in which case He would merely have to be taken perhaps across the court, from one chamber to another.

**54. And Peter followed him afar off, even into** — or “from afar, even to the interior of.”

**the palace of the high priest** — “An oriental house,” says ROBINSON, “is usually built around a quadrangular interior court; into which there is a passage (sometimes arched) through the front part of the house, closed next the street by a heavy folding gate, with a smaller wicket for single persons, kept by a porter. The interior court, often paved or flagged, and open to the sky, is the *hall*, which our translators have rendered ‘palace,’ where the attendants made a fire; and the passage beneath the front of the house, from the street to this court, is the *porch*.” The place where Jesus stood before the high priest may have been an open room, or place of audience on the ground floor, in the rear or on one side of the court; such rooms, open in front, being customary. It was close upon the court, for Jesus heard all that was going on around the fire, and turned and looked upon Peter (~~22a~~<sup>172a</sup> Luke 22:61).



**and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire** — The graphic details, here omitted, are supplied in the other Gospels.

### ⌄JOHN 18:18:

*And the servants and officers stood there* — that is, in the hall, within the quadrangle, open to the sky.

*who had made a fire of coals* — or charcoal (in a brazier probably).

*for it was cold* — John alone of all the Evangelists mentions the *material*, and the *coldness* of the night, as WEBSTER and WILKINSON remark. The elevated situation of Jerusalem, observes THOLUCK, renders it so cold about Easter as to make a watch fire at night indispensable.

*And Peter stood with them and warmed himself* — “He went in,” says Matthew (⌄<sup>1088</sup>Matthew 26:58), “and sat with the servants *to see the end*.” These two minute statements throw an interesting light on each other. His wishing to “see the end,” or issue of these proceedings, was what led him into the palace, for he evidently feared the worst. But once in, the serpent coil is drawn closer; it is a cold night, and why should not he take advantage of the fire as well as others? Besides, in the talk of the crowd about the all-engrossing topic he may pick up something which he would like to hear. Poor Peter! But now, let us leave him warming himself at the fire, and listening to the hum of talk about this strange case by which the subordinate officials, passing to and fro and crowding around the fire in this open court, would while away the time; and, following what appears the order of the Evangelical Narrative, let us turn to Peter’s Lord.

*Jesus Is Interrogated by Annas — His Dignified Reply — Is Treated with Indignity by One of the Officials — His Meek Rebuke*  
(⌄<sup>889</sup>John 18:19-23).

We have seen that it is only the Fourth Evangelist who tells us that our Lord was sent to Annas first, overnight, until the Sanhedrim could be got together at earliest dawn. We have now, in the same Gospel, the deeply instructive scene that passed during this non-official interview.

### ⌄JOHN 18:19:

*The high priest* — Annas.

*then asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine* — probably to entrap Him into some statements which might be used against Him at the trial. From our Lord’s answer it would seem that “His disciples” were understood to be some secret party.

⌌**JOHN 18:20.**

*Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world* — compare ⌌**Mark 7:4.** He speaks of His public teaching as now a past thing — as now all over.

*I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort* — courting publicity, though with sublime noiselessness.

*and in secret have I said nothing* — rather, “spake I nothing”; that is, nothing different from what He taught in public: all His private communications with the Twelve being but explanations and developments of His public teaching. (Compare ⌌**Isaiah 45:19 48:16.**)

⌌**JOHN 18:21:**

*Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard Me what I have said to them* — rather, “what I said unto them.”

*behold, they know what I said* — From this mode of replying, it is evident that our Lord saw the attempt to draw Him into self-crimination, and resented it by falling back upon the right of every accused party to have some charge laid against Him by competent witnesses.

⌌**JOHN 18:22:**

*And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so?* — (see ⌌**Isaiah 50:6.**) It would seem from ⌌**Acts 23:2** that this summary and undignified way of punishment what was deemed insolence in the accused had the sanction even of the high priests themselves.

⌌**JOHN 18:23:**

*Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil* — rather, “If I spoke evil,” in reply to the high priest.

*bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?* — He does not say “if *not* evil,” as if His reply had been merely unobjectionable; but “if *well*,” which seems to challenge something altogether fitting in the remonstrance. He had addressed to the high priest. From our Lord’s procedure here, by the way, it is evident enough that His own precept in the Sermon on the Mount — that when smitten on the one cheek we are to turn to the smiter the other also (⌌**Matthew 5:39**) — is not to be taken to the letter.

*Annas Sends Jesus to Caiaphas* (⌌**John 18:24.**)

ⲄⲂⲔⲁ JOHN 18:24.

*Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest* — On the meaning of this verse there is much diversity of opinion; and according as we understand it will be the conclusion we come to, whether there was but *one hearing* of our Lord before Annas and Caiaphas together, or whether, according to the view we have given above, there were *two hearings* — a preliminary and informal one before Annas, and a formal and official one before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim. If our translators have given the right sense of the verse, there was but one hearing before Caiaphas; and then ⲄⲂⲔⲁ John 18:24 is to be read as a *parenthesis*, merely supplementing what was said in ⲄⲂⲔⲁ Mark 14:13. This is the view of CALVIN, BEZA, GROTIUS, BENDEL, DE WETTE, MEYER, LUCKE, THOLUCK. But there are decided objections to this view. First: We cannot but think that the *natural* sense of the whole passage, embracing ⲄⲂⲔⲁ Mark 14:13,14,19-24, is that of a preliminary non-official hearing before “Annas first,” the particulars of which are accordingly recorded; and then of a transference of our Lord from Annas to Caiaphas. Second: On the other view, it is not easy to see why the Evangelist should not have inserted ⲄⲂⲔⲁ Mark 14:24 immediately after ⲄⲂⲔⲁ Mark 14:13; or rather, how he could well have done otherwise, As it stands, it is not only quite out of its proper place, but comes in most perplexingly. Whereas, if we take it as a simple statement of fact, that after Annas had finished his interview with Jesus, as recorded in ⲄⲂⲔⲁ Mark 14:19-23, he transferred Him to Caiaphas to be formally tried, all is clear and natural. Third: The pluperfect sense “*had sent*” is in the translation only; the sense of the original word being simply “sent.” And though there are cases where the aorist here used has the sense of an English pluperfect, this sense is not to be put upon it unless it be obvious and indisputable. Here that is so far from being the case, that the pluperfect “*had sent*” is rather an unwarrantable *interpretation* than a simple *translation* of the word: informing the reader that, *according to the view of our translators*, our Lord “*had been*” sent to Caiaphas *before* the interview just recorded by the Evangelist; whereas, if we translate the verse literally — “Annas *sent* Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest” — we get just the information we expect, that Annas, having merely “*precognosed*” the prisoner, hoping to draw something out of Him, “sent Him to Caiaphas” to be formally tried before the proper tribunal. This is the view of CHRYSOSTOM and AUGUSTINE among the Fathers; and of the moderns, of OLSHAUSEN, SCHLEIERMACHER, NEANDER, EBRARD, WIESELER, LANGE, LUTHARDT. This brings us back to the text of our second Gospel, and in it to

*The Judicial Trial and Condemnation of the Lord Jesus by the Sanhedrim* — (ⲄⲂⲔⲁ Mark 14:55-64).

But let the reader observe, that though this is introduced by the Evangelist before any of the denials of Peter are recorded, we have given reasons for concluding that probably the *first two denials* took place while our Lord was with Annas, and the last only during the trial before the Sanhedrim.

**55. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death** — Matthew (<sup><418></sup>Matthew 26:59) says they “sought *false* witness.” They knew they could find nothing valid; but having their Prisoner to bring before Pilate, they behooved to *make a case*.

**and found none** — none that would suit their purpose, or make a decent ground of charge before Pilate.

**56. For many bare false witness against him** — From their debasing themselves to “*seek*” them, we are led to infer that they were *bribed* to bear false witness; though there are never wanting sycophants enough, ready to sell themselves for naught, if they may but get a smile from those above them: see a similar scene in <sup><481></sup>Acts 6:11-14. How is one reminded here of that complaint, “False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not” (<sup><481></sup>Psalm 31:11)!

**but their witness agreed not together** — If even *two* of them had been agreed, it would have been greedily enough laid hold of, as all that the law insisted upon even in capital cases (<sup><576></sup>Deuteronomy 17:6). But even in this they failed. One cannot but admire the providence which secured this result; since, on the one hand, it seems astonishing that those unscrupulous prosecutors and their ready tools should so bungle a business in which they felt their whole interests bound up; and, on the other hand, if they *had* succeeded in making even a plausible case, the effect on the progress of the Gospel might for a time have been injurious. But at the very time when His enemies were saying, “God hath forsaken Him; persecute and take Him; for there is none to deliver Him” (<sup><571></sup>Psalm 71:11). He whose Witness He was and whose work He was doing was keeping Him as the apple of His eye, and while He was making the wrath of man to praise Him, was restraining the remainder of that wrath (<sup><570></sup>Psalm 76:10).

**57. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him** — Matthew (<sup><480></sup>Matthew 26:60) is more precise here: “*At the last* came two false witnesses.” As no two had before agreed in anything, they felt it necessary to secure a duplicate testimony to something, but they were long of succeeding. And what was it, when at length it was brought forward?

**saying** — as follows:

**58. We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands** — On this charge, observe, first, that eager as His enemies were to find criminal matter against our Lord, they had to go back to the outset of His ministry, His first visit to Jerusalem, more than three years before this. In all that He said and did after that, though ever increasing in boldness, they could find nothing. Next, that even then, they fix only on one speech, of two or three words, which they dared to adduce against Him. Further, they most manifestly pervert the speech of our Lord. We say not this because in Mark's form of it, it differs from the report of the words given by the Fourth Evangelist (<sup><4128></sup>John 2:18-22) — the only one of the Evangelists who reports it all, or mentions even any visit paid by our Lord to Jerusalem before His last — but because the one report bears truth, and the other falsehood, on its face. When our Lord said on that occasion, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” they *might*, for a moment, have understood Him to refer to the temple out of whose courts He had swept the buyers and sellers. But *after* they had expressed their astonishment at His words, in that sense of them, and reasoned upon the time it had taken to rear the temple as it then stood, since *no answer* to this appears to have been given by our Lord, it is hardly conceivable that they should continue in the persuasion that this was really His meaning. But finally, even if the more ignorant among them had done so, it is next to certain that *the ecclesiastics*, who were *the prosecutors* in this case, *did not believe that this was His meaning*. For in less than three days after this they went to Pilate, saying, “Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, *after three days I will rise again*” (<sup><4126></sup>Matthew 27:63). Now what utterance of Christ known to His enemies, *could* this refer to, if not to this very saying about destroying and rearing up the temple? And if so, it puts it beyond a doubt that by this time, at least, they were perfectly aware that our Lord's words referred to *His death by their hands and His resurrection by His own*. But this is confirmed by <sup><4149></sup>Mark 14:59.

**59. But neither so did their witness agree together** — that is, not even as to so brief a speech, consisting of but a few words, was there such a concurrence in their mode of reporting it as to make out a decent case. In such a charge *everything depended on the very terms alleged to have been used*. For every one must see that a very slight turn, either way, given to such words, would make them either something like *indictable matter*, or else a *ridiculous ground for a criminal charge* — would either give them a colorable pretext for the charge of impiety which they were bent on making out, or else make the whole saying appear, on the worst view that could be taken of it, as merely some mystical or empty boast.

**60. Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?** — Clearly, they felt that *their case had failed*, and by this artful question the high priest hoped to get *from His own mouth* what they had in vain tried to obtain from their false and contradictory witnesses. But in this, too, they failed.

**61. But he held his peace, and answered nothing** — This must have nonplussed them. But they were not to be easily balked of their object.

**Again the high priest** — arose (<sup><1862></sup>Matthew 26:62), matters having now come to a crisis.

**asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?** — Why our Lord should have answered this question, when He was silent as to the former, we might not have quite seen, but for Matthew, who says (<sup><1863></sup>Matthew 26:63) that the high priest *put Him upon solemn oath*, saying, “I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” Such an adjuration was understood to render an answer legally necessary (<sup><1864></sup>Leviticus 5:1). (Also see on <sup><1865></sup>John 18:28.)

**62. And Jesus said, I am** — or, as in Matthew (<sup><1866></sup>Matthew 26:64), “Thou hast said [it].” In Luke, however (<sup><1867></sup>Luke 22:70), the answer, “Ye say that I am,” should be rendered — as DE WETTE, MEYER, ELLICOTT, and the best critics agree that the preposition requires — “Ye say [it], for I am [so].” Some words, however, were spoken by our Lord before giving His answer to this solemn question. These are recorded by Luke alone (<sup><1868></sup>Luke 22:67,68): “Art Thou the Christ [they asked]? tell us. And He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask [interrogate] “you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go.” This seems to have been uttered before giving His direct answer, as a calm remonstrance and dignified protest against the prejudgment of His case and the unfairness of their mode of procedure. But now let us hear the rest of the answer, in which the conscious majesty of Jesus breaks forth from behind the dark cloud which overhung Him as He stood before the Council. (Also see on <sup><1869></sup>John 18:28.)

**and** — in that character.

**ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven** — In Matthew (<sup><1870></sup>Matthew 26:64) a slightly different but interesting turn is given to it by one word: “Thou hast said [it]: nevertheless” — We prefer this sense of the word to “besides,” which some recent critics decide for — “I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sit on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds

of heaven.” The word rendered “hereafter” means, not “at some future time” (as to-day “hereafter commonly does), but what the English word originally signified, “after here,” “after now,” or “from this time.” Accordingly, in <sup><0249></sup>Luke 22:69, the words used mean “from now.” So that though the reference we have given it to the day of His glorious Second Appearing is too obvious to admit of doubt, He would, by using the expression, “From this time,” convey the important thought which He had before expressed, immediately after the traitor left the supper table to do his dark work, “*Now is the Son of man glorified*” (<sup><0433></sup>John 13:31). At this moment, and by this speech, did He “witness *the* good confession” emphatically and properly, as the apostle says in <sup><5043></sup>1 Timothy 6:13. Our translators render the words there, “Who *before* Pontius Pilate witnessed”; referring it to the admission of His being a *King*, in the presence of Caesar’s own chief representative. But it should be rendered, as LUTHER renders it, and as the best interpreters now understand it, “Who *under* Pontius Pilate witnessed,” etc. In this view of it, the apostle is referring not to what our Lord confessed *before* Pilate — which, though noble, was not of such primary importance — but to that sublime confession which, under Pilate’s administration, He witnessed before the only competent tribunal on such occasions, the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council of God’s chosen nation, that He was THE MESSIAH, and THE SON OF THE BLESSED ONE; in the former word owning His Supreme *Official*, in the latter His Supreme *Personal*, Dignity.

**63. Then the high priest rent his clothes** — On this expression of *horror of blasphemy*, see <sup><1283></sup>2 Kings 18:37.

**and saith, What need we any further witnesses?** (Also see on <sup><0433></sup>John 18:28.)

**64. Ye have heard the blasphemy** — (See <sup><0433></sup>John 10:33). In Luke (<sup><0271></sup>Luke 22:71), “For we ourselves have heard of His own mouth” — an affectation of religious horror. (Also see on <sup><0433></sup>John 18:28.)

**what think ye?** — “Say what the verdict is to be.”

**they all condemned him to be guilty of death** — or of a capital crime, which *blasphemy* against God was according to the Jewish law (<sup><0246></sup>Leviticus 24:16). Yet *not absolutely all*; for *Joseph* of Arimathea, “a good man and a just,” was one of that Council, and “*he was not a consenting party to the counsel and deed of them,*” for that is the strict sense of the words of <sup><0251></sup>Luke 23:50,51. Probably he absented himself, and *Nicodemus* also, from this meeting of the Council, the temper of which they would know too well to expect their voice to be listened to; and in that



case, the words of our Evangelist are to be taken strictly, that, without one dissentient voice, “all [present] condemned him to be guilty of death.”

*The Blessed One Is Now Shamefully Entreated* (<sup>4146</sup>Mark 14:65).

Every word here must be carefully observed, and the several accounts put together, that we may lose none of the awful indignities about to be described.

**65. some began to spit on him** — or, as in <sup>4167</sup>Matthew 26:67, “to spit in [into] His face.” Luke (<sup>4236</sup>Luke 22:63) says in addition, “And the men that held Jesus mocked him” — or cast their jeers at Him. (Also see on <sup>4168</sup>John 18:28.)

**to cover his face** — or “to blindfold him” (as in <sup>4236</sup>Luke 22:64).

**to buffet him** — Luke’s word, which is rendered “smote Him” (<sup>4236</sup>Luke 22:63), is a stronger one, conveying an idea for which we have an exact equivalent in English, but one too colloquial to be inserted here.

**began to say unto him, Prophecy** — In Matthew (<sup>4168</sup>Matthew 26:68) this is given more fully: “Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?” The sarcastic fling at Him as “*the Christ*,” and the demand of Him in this character to name the unseen perpetrator of the blows inflicted on Him, was in them as infamous as to Him it must have been, and was intended to be, stinging.

**and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands** — or “struck Him on the face” (<sup>4236</sup>Luke 22:64). Ah! Well did He say prophetically, in that Messianic prediction which we have often referred to, “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting!” (<sup>4286</sup>Isaiah 50:6). “And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him” (<sup>4236</sup>Luke 22:65). This general statement is important, as showing that virulent and varied as were the *recorded* affronts put upon Him, they are but a *small specimen* of what He endured on that dark occasion.

*Peter’s FIRST DENIAL of His Lord* (<sup>4146</sup>Mark 14:66-68).

**66. And as Peter was beneath in the palace** — This little word “*beneath*” — one of our Evangelist’s graphic touches — is most important for the right understanding of what we may call the topography of the scene. We must take it in connection with Matthew’s word (<sup>4169</sup>Matthew 26:69): “Now Peter sat *without* in the palace” — or quadrangular court, in the center of which the fire would be burning; and crowding around and buzzing about it would be the menials and others who had been admitted



within the court. At the upper end of this court, probably, would be the memorable chamber in which the trial was held — *open to the court*, likely, and *not far from the fire* (as we gather from <sup><4273></sup>Luke 22:61), but *on a higher level*; for (as our verse says) the court, with Peter in it, was “beneath” it. The ascent to the Council chamber was perhaps by a short flight of steps. If the reader will bear this explanation in mind, he will find the intensely interesting details which follow more intelligible.

**there cometh one of the maids of the high priest** — “the damsel that kept the door” (<sup><4187></sup>John 18:17). The Jews seem to have employed women as porters of their doors (<sup><4123></sup>Acts 12:13).

**67. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him** — Luke (<sup><4275></sup>Luke 22:56) is here more graphic; “But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire” — literally, “by the *light*,” which, shining full upon him, revealed him to the girl — “and earnestly looked upon him” — or, “fixed her gaze upon him.” His demeanor and timidity, which must have attracted notice, as so generally happens, leading,” says OLSHAUSEN, “to the recognition of him.”

**and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth** — “with Jesus the Nazarene,” or, “with Jesus of Galilee” (<sup><4169></sup>Matthew 26:69). The sense of this is given in John’s report of it (<sup><4187></sup>John 18:17), “Art not thou also one of this man’s disciples?” that is, thou as well as “that other disciple,” whom she knew to be one, but did not challenge, perceiving that he was a privileged person. In Luke (<sup><4275></sup>Luke 22:56) it is given as a remark made by the maid to one of the by-standers — this man was also with Him.” If so expressed in Peter’s hearing — drawing upon him the eyes of every one that heard it (as we know it did, <sup><4150></sup>Matthew 26:70), and compelling him to answer to it — that would explain the different forms of the report naturally enough. But in such a case this is of no real importance.

**68. But he denied** — “before all” (<sup><4150></sup>Matthew 26:70).

**saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest** — in Luke (<sup><4257></sup>Luke 22:57), “I know Him not.”

**And he went out into the porch** — the vestibule leading to the street — no doubt finding the fire-place too *hot* for him; possibly also with the hope of escaping — but that was not to be, and perhaps he dreaded that, too. Doubtless by this time his mind would be getting into a sea of commotion, and would fluctuate every moment in its resolves.

**AND THE COCK CREW** — (See on <sup><4234></sup>Luke 22:34). This, then, was the First Denial.

*Peter's SECOND DENIAL of His Lord* (<sup><1149></sup>Mark 14:69,70).

There is here a verbal difference among the Evangelists, which without some information which has been withheld, cannot be quite extricated.

**69. And a maid saw him again** — or, “a girl.” It might be rendered “the girl”; but this would not necessarily mean the same one as before, but might, and probably does, mean just the female who had charge of the door or gate near which Peter now was. Accordingly, in <sup><1157></sup>Matthew 26:71, she is expressly called “another [maid].” But in Luke (<sup><1228></sup>Luke 22:58) it is a *male* servant: “And after a little while [from the time of the first denial] another” — that is, as the word signifies, “another male” servant. But there is no real difficulty, as the challenge, probably, after being made by one was reiterated by another. Accordingly, in John (<sup><1805></sup>John 18:25), it is, “*They* said therefore unto him, etc. — “as if more than one challenged him at once.

**and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them** — or, as in <sup><1157></sup>Matthew 26:71 — “This [fellow] was also with Jesus the Nazarene.”

**70. And he denied it again** — In Luke (<sup><1228></sup>Luke 22:58), “Man, I am not.” But worst of all in Matthew — “And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man” (<sup><1152></sup>Matthew 26:72). This was the Second Denial, more vehement, alas! than the first.

*Peter's THIRD DENIAL of His Lord* (<sup><1140></sup>Mark 14:70-72).

**70. And a little after** — “about the space of one hour after” (<sup><1229></sup>Luke 22:59).

**they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto** — “bewrayeth [or ‘discovereth’] thee” (<sup><1153></sup>Matthew 26:73). In Luke (<sup><1229></sup>Luke 22:59) it is, “Another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this [fellow] also was with him: for he is a Galilean.” The Galilean dialect had a more *Syrian* cast than that of Judea. *If Peter had held his peace*, this peculiarity had not been observed; but hoping, probably, to put them off the scent by joining in the *fireside talk*, he was thus discovered. The Fourth Gospel is particularly interesting here: “One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman [or kinsman to him] whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?” (<sup><1806></sup>John 18:26). No doubt his relationship to Malchus drew his attention to the man who had smitten him, and this enabled him to identify Peter. “Sad reprisals!” exclaims BENGEL. Poor Peter! Thou art caught in thine own toils; but like a wild bull in a net, thou wilt toss and rage, filling up the measure of thy terrible declension by one more denial of thy Lord, and that the foulest of all.

**71. But he began to curse** — “anathematize,” or wish himself accursed if what he was now to say was not true.

**and to swear** — or to take a solemn oath.

**saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.**

**72. And the second time the cock crew** — The other three Evangelists, who mention but one crowing of the cock — and that not the first, but the second and last one of Mark — all say the cock crew “immediately,” but Luke (<sup><423></sup>Luke 22:60) says, “Immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.” Alas! — But now comes the wonderful sequel.

*The Redeemer’s Look upon Peter, and Peter’s Bitter Tears*  
(<sup><414></sup>Mark 14:72 <sup><423></sup>Luke 22:61,62).

It has been observed that while the beloved disciple is the only one of the four Evangelists who does not record the repentance of Peter, he is the only one of the four who records the affecting and most beautiful scene of his complete restoration (<sup><621></sup>John 21:15-17).

### <sup><423></sup>LUKE 22:61:

*And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter* — How? it will be asked. We answer, From the chamber in which the trial was going on, in the direction of the court where Peter then stood — in the way already explained. See on <sup><414></sup>Mark 14:66. Our Second Evangelist makes no mention of this look, but dwells on the warning of his Lord about the double crowing of the cock, which would announce his triple fall, as what rushed stinging to his recollection and made him dissolve in tears.

**And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept** — To the same effect is the statement of the First Evangelist (<sup><485></sup>Matthew 26:75), save that like “the beloved physician,” he notices the “bitterness” of the weeping (<sup><423></sup>Luke 22:62). The most precious link, however, in the whole chain of circumstances in this scene is beyond doubt that “look” of deepest, tenderest import reported by Luke alone (<sup><423></sup>Luke 22:61). Who can tell what lightning flashes of wounded love and piercing reproach shot from that “look” through the eye of Peter into his heart!

*And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*

ⲁⲓⲃⲉ ⲠⲞⲖⲈ 22:62:

*And Peter went out and wept bitterly* — How different from the sequel of Judas' act! Doubtless the hearts of the two men towards the Savior were perfectly different from the first; and the treason of Judas was but the consummation of the wretched man's resistance of the blaze of light in the midst of which he had lived for three years, while Peter's denial was but a momentary obscuration of the heavenly light and love to his Master which ruled his life. But the immediate cause of the blessed revulsion which made Peter "weep bitterly" (ⲁⲓⲃⲉ Matthew 26:75) was, beyond all doubt, this heart-piercing "look" which his Lord gave him. And remembering the Savior's own words at the table, "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; *but I prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*" (ⲁⲓⲃⲉ Luke 22:31,32), may we not say that *this prayer fetched down all that there was in that look* to pierce and break the heart of Peter, to keep it from despair, to work in it "repentance unto salvation not to be repented of," and at length, under other healing touches, to "restore his soul?" (See on ⲁⲓⲃⲉ Mark 16:7).

# CHAPTER 15

## MARK 15:1-20.

**JESUS IS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE — AT A SECOND HEARING, PILATE, AFTER SEEKING TO RELEASE HIM, DELIVERS HIM UP — AFTER BEING CRUELLY ENTREATED, HE IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.**

(~~4181~~ MATTHEW 26:1,11-31 ~~4231~~ LUKE 23:1-6,13-25 ~~6188~~ JOHN 18:28-19:16).

See on ~~6188~~ John 18:28-19:16.

## MARK 15:21-37.

**CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS.**

(~~4173~~ MATTHEW 27:32-50 ~~4236~~ LUKE 23:26-46 ~~6197~~ JOHN 19:17-30).

See on ~~6197~~ John 19:17-30.

## MARK 15:38-47.

**SIGNS AND CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS. — HE IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND BURIED — THE SEPULCHRE IS GUARDED.**

(~~4175~~ MATTHEW 27:51-66 ~~4236~~ LUKE 23:45,47-56 ~~6198~~ JOHN 19:31-42).

See on ~~4175~~ Matthew 27:51-56; and ~~6198~~ John 19:31-42.

# CHAPTER 16

## MARK 16:1-20.

ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE WOMEN ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, THAT CHRIST IS RISEN — HIS APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION — HIS ASCENSION — TRIUMPHANT PROCLAMATION OF HIS GOSPEL. (MARK MATTHEW 28:1-10,16-20 LUKE 24:1-51 JOHN 20:1,2,11-29).

*The Resurrection Announced to the Women (MARK Mark 16:1-8).*

**1. when the sabbath was past** — that is, at sunset of our Saturday.

**Mary Magdalene** — (See on MARK Luke 8:2).

**Mary the mother of James** — James the Less (see MARK Mark 15:40).

**and Salome** — the mother of Zebedee's sons (compare MARK Mark 15:40 with MARK Matthew 27:56).

**had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him** — The word is simply "bought." But our translators are perhaps right in rendering it here "had bought," since it would appear, from MARK Luke 23:56, that they had purchased them immediately after the Crucifixion, on the *Friday* evening, during the short interval that remained to them before sunset, when the sabbath rest began; and that they had only deferred using them to anoint the body till the sabbath rest should be over. On this "anointing," see on MARK John 19:40.

**2. very early in the morning** — (See on MARK Matthew 28:1).

**the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun** — not quite literally, but "at earliest dawn"; according to a way of speaking not uncommon, and occurring sometimes in the Old Testament. Thus our Lord rose on the third day; having lain in the grave part of Friday, the whole of Saturday, and part of the following First day.

**3. they said among themselves** — as they were approaching the sacred spot.

**Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher? ... for it was very great** — On reaching it they find their difficulty gone — the stone already rolled away by an unseen hand. *And are there no others who, when advancing to duty in the face of appalling difficulties, find their stone also rolled away?*

**5. entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man** — In <sup><1815></sup>Matthew 28:2 he is called “the angel of the Lord”; but here he is described as he appeared to the eye, in the bloom of a life that knows no decay. In Matthew he is represented as sitting on the stone *outside* the sepulcher; but since even there he says, “*Come*, see the place where the Lord lay” (<sup><1815></sup>Matthew 28:6), he seems, as ALFORD says, to have gone in with them from without; only awaiting their arrival to accompany them into the hallowed spot, and instruct them about it.

**sitting on the right side** — having respect to the position in which His Lord had lain there. This trait is peculiar to Mark; but compare <sup><1815></sup>Luke 1:11.

**clothed in a long white garment** — On its *length*, see <sup><2011></sup>Isaiah 6:1; and on its *whiteness*, see on <sup><1815></sup>Matthew 28:3.

**and they were affrighted.**

**6. he saith unto them, Be not affrighted** — a stronger word than “Fear not” in Matthew (<sup><1815></sup>Matthew 28:5).

**Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified!** — “the Nazarene, the Crucified,”

**he is risen; he is not here** — (See on <sup><1215></sup>Luke 24:5,6).

**behold the place where they laid him** — (See on <sup><1815></sup>Matthew 28:6).

**7. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter** — This Second Gospel, being drawn up — as all the earliest tradition states — *under the eye of Peter*, or from materials chiefly furnished by him, there is something deeply affecting in the preservation of this little phrase by Mark alone.

**that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you** — (See on <sup><1815></sup>Matthew 28:7).

**8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher: for they trembled and were amazed** — “for tremor and amazement seized them.”

**neither said they anything to any man; for they were afraid** — How intensely natural and simple is this!

*Appearances of Jesus after His Resurrection* (<sup><4169></sup>Mark 16:9-18).

**9. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils** — There is some difficulty here, and different ways of removing it have been adopted. She had gone with the other women to the sepulcher (<sup><4169></sup>Mark 16:1), parting from them, perhaps, before their interview with the angel, and on finding Peter and John she had come with them back to the spot; and it was at this second visit, it would seem, that Jesus appeared to this Mary, as detailed in <sup><611></sup>John 20:11-18. *To a woman was this honor given to be the first that saw the risen Redeemer, and that woman was NOT his virgin-mother.*

**11. they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not** — This, which is once and again repeated of them all, is most important in its bearing on their subsequent testimony to His resurrection at the risk of life itself.

**12. After that he appeared in another form** — (compare <sup><246></sup>Luke 24:16). **unto two of them as they walked, and went into the country** — The reference here, of course, is to His manifestation to the two disciples going to Emmaus, so exquisitely told by the Third Evangelist (see on <sup><2413></sup>Luke 24:13, etc.).

**13. they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them,** etc.

**15. he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature** — See on <sup><619></sup>John 20:19-23 and <sup><246></sup>Luke 24:36-49.

**16. He that believeth and is baptized** — Baptism is here put for the external signature of the inner faith of the heart, just as “confessing with the mouth” is in <sup><600></sup>Romans 10:10; and there also as here this *outward* manifestation, once mentioned as the proper fruit of faith, is not repeated in what follows (<sup><6011></sup>Romans 10:11).

**shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned** — These awful issues of the reception or rejection of the Gospel, though often recorded in other connections, are given in this connection only by Mark.

**17, 18. these signs shall follow them that believe ... They shall take up serpents** — These two verses also are peculiar to Mark.

*The Ascension and Triumphant Proclamation of the Gospel  
Thereafter* (<sup><4169></sup>Mark 16:19,20).



**19. So then after the Lord** — an epithet applied to Jesus by this Evangelist only in <sup><4169></sup>Mark 16:19,20, when He comes to His glorious Ascension and its subsequent fruits. It is most frequent in Luke.

**had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven** — See on <sup><4280></sup>Luke 24:50,51.

**and sat on the right hand of God** — This great truth is here only related as a fact in the Gospel history. In that exalted attitude He appeared to Stephen (<sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:55,56); and it is thereafter perpetually referred to as His proper condition in glory.

**20. they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen** — We have in this closing verse a most important link of connection with the Acts of the Apostles, where He who directed all the movements of the infant Church is perpetually styled “THE LORD”; thus illustrating His own promise for the rounding and building up of the Church, “LO, I AM WITH YOU alway!”

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

## LUKE

*Commentary by* **DAVID BROWN**

### INTRODUCTION

THE writer of this Gospel is universally allowed to have been Lucas (an abbreviated form of Lucanus, as Silas of Silvanus), though he is not expressly named either in the Gospel or in the Acts. From <sup><S144></sup>Colossians 4:14 we learn that he was a “physician”; and by comparing that verse with <sup><S140></sup>Colossians 4:10,11 — in which the apostle enumerates all those of the circumcision who were then with him, but does not mention Luke, though he immediately afterwards sends a salutation from him — we gather that Luke was not a born Jew. Some have thought he was a freed-man (*libertinus*), as the Romans devolved the healing art on persons of this class and on their slaves, as an occupation beneath themselves. His intimate acquaintance with Jewish customs, and his facility in *Hebraic Greek*, seem to show that he was an early convert to the Jewish faith; and this is curiously confirmed by <sup><A127></sup>Acts 21:27-29, where we find the Jews enraged at Paul’s supposed introduction of Greeks into the temple, because they had seen “Trophimus the Ephesian” with him; and as we know that Luke was with Paul on that occasion, it would seem that they had taken him for a Jew, as they made no mention of him. On the other hand, his fluency in classical *Greek* confirms his Gentile origin. The time when he joined Paul’s company is clearly indicated in the Acts by his changing (at <sup><A160></sup>Acts 16:10) from the third person singular (“he”) to the first person plural (“we”). From that time he hardly ever left the apostle till near the period of his martyrdom (<sup><S141></sup>2 Timothy 4:11). EUSEBIUS makes him a native of Antioch. If so, he would have every advantage for cultivating the literature of Greece and such medical knowledge as was then possessed. That he died a natural death is generally agreed among the ancients; GREGORY NAZIANZEN alone affirming that he died a martyr.

The *time* and *place* of the publication of his Gospel are alike uncertain. But we can approximate to it. It must at any rate have been issued before the Acts, for there the ‘Gospel’ is expressly referred to as the same author’s

“former treatise” (~~4000~~ Acts 1:1). Now the Book of the Acts was not published for two whole years after Paul’s arrival as a prisoner at Rome, for it concludes with a reference to this period; but probably it was published soon after that, which would appear to have been early in the year 63. Before that time, then, we have reason to believe that the Gospel of Luke was in circulation, though the majority of critics make it later. If we date it somewhere between A.D. 50 and 60, we shall probably be near the truth; but nearer it we cannot with any certainty come. Conjectures as to the place of publication are too uncertain to be mentioned here.

That it was addressed, in the first instance, to Gentile *readers*, is beyond doubt. This is no more, as DAVIDSON remarks [*Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 186], than was to have been expected from the companion of an “apostle of the Gentiles,” who had witnessed marvellous changes in the condition of many heathens by the reception of the Gospel. But the explanations in his Gospel of things known to every Jew, and which could only be intended for Gentile readers, make this quite plain — see ~~4003~~ Luke 1:26 4:31 8:26 21:37 22:1 24:13. A number of other minute particulars, both of things inserted and of things omitted, confirm the conclusion that it was Gentiles whom this Evangelist had in the first instance in view.

We have already adverted to the classical *style* of *Greek* which this Evangelist writes — just what might have been expected from an educated Greek and traveled physician. But we have also observed that along with this he shows a wonderful flexibility of style, so much so, that when he comes to relate transactions wholly Jewish, where the speakers and actors and incidents are all Jewish, he writes in such *Jewish Greek* as one would do who had never been out of Palestine or mixed with any but Jews. In DA COSTA’S *Four Witnesses* will be found some traces of “the beloved *physician*” in this Gospel. But far more striking and important are the traces in it of his intimate connection with the apostle of the Gentiles. That one who was so long and so constantly in the society of that master mind has in such a work as this shown no traces of that connection, no stamp of that mind, is hardly to be believed. Writers of Introductions seem not to see it, and take no notice of it. But those who look into the interior of it will soon discover evidences enough in it of a *Pauline* cast of mind. Referring for a number of details to DA COSTA, we notice here only two examples: In ~~4123~~ 1 Corinthians 11:23, Paul ascribes to an express revelation from Christ Himself the account of the Institution of the Lord’s Supper which he there gives. Now, if we find this account differing in small yet striking particulars from the accounts given by Matthew and Mark, but agreeing to the letter with Luke’s account, it can hardly admit of a doubt that the one had it from the other; and in that case, of course, it was Luke that had it from Paul.

Now Matthew and Mark both say of the Cup, “This is my blood of the New Testament”; while Paul and Luke say, in identical terms, “This cup is the New Testament in My blood” (<sup><4125></sup>1 Corinthians 11:25 <sup><4220></sup>Luke 22:20). Further, Luke says, “Likewise also the cup *after supper*, saying,” etc.; while Paul says, “After the same manner He took the cup *when He had supped*, saying,” etc.; whereas neither Matthew nor Mark mention that this was after supper. But still more striking is another point of coincidence in this case. Matthew and Mark both say of the Bread merely this: “Take, eat; this is My body” (<sup><4135></sup>Matthew 26:26 <sup><4142></sup>Mark 14:22); whereas Paul says, “Take, eat, this is My body, *which is broken for you*” (<sup><4124></sup>1 Corinthians 11:24), and Luke, “This is My body, *which is given for you*” (<sup><4229></sup>Luke 22:19). And while Paul adds the precious clause, “*This do in remembrance of Me*,” Luke does the same, in identical terms. How can one who reflects on this resist the conviction of a Pauline stamp in this Gospel? The other proof of this to which we ask the reader’s attention is in the fact that Paul, in enumerating the parties by whom Christ was seen after His resurrection, begins, singularly enough, with Peter — “And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve” (<sup><4150></sup>1 Corinthians 15:4,5) — coupled with the remarkable fact, that Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who mentions that Christ appeared to Peter at all. When the disciples had returned from Emmaus to tell their brethren how the Lord had appeared to them in the way, and how He had made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread, they were met, as Luke relates, ere they had time to utter a word, with this wonderful piece of news, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon” (<sup><4234></sup>Luke 24:34).

Other points connected with this Gospel will be adverted to in the Commentary.

# CHAPTER 1

## LUKE 1:1-4.

It appears from the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apostolic Epistles, that the earliest preaching of the Gospel consisted of a brief summary of the facts of our Lord's earthly history, with a few words of pointed application to the parties addressed. Of these astonishing facts, notes would naturally be taken and *digests* put into circulation. It is to such that Luke here refers; and in terms of studied respect, as narratives of what was "believed surely," or "on sure grounds" among Christians, and drawn up from the testimony of "eye-witnesses and ministering servants of the word." But when he adds that "it seemed good to him also to write in order, having traced down all things with exactness from their first rise," it is a virtual claim for his own Gospel to supersede these "many" narratives.

Accordingly, while not one of them has survived the wreck of time, this and the other canonical Gospels live, and shall live, the only fitting vehicles of those life-bringing facts which have made all things new. Apocryphal or spurious gospels, upheld by parties unfriendly to the truths exhibited in the canonical Gospels, have *not* perished; but those well-meant and substantially correct narratives here referred to, used only while better were not to be had, were by tacit consent allowed to merge in the four peerless documents which from age to age, and with astonishing unanimity, have been accepted as the written charter of all Christianity.

1. **set forth in order** — more simply, to draw up a narrative.
2. **from the beginning** — that is, of His public ministry, as is plain from what follows.
3. **from the very first** — that is, from the very earliest events; referring to those precious details of the birth and early life, not only of our Lord, but of His forerunner, which we owe to Luke alone.

**in order** — or "consecutively" — in contrast, probably, with the disjointed productions to which he had referred. But this must not be pressed too far; for, on comparing it with the other Gospels, we see that in some particulars the strict chronological order is not observed in this Gospel.

**most excellent** — or “most noble” — a title of rank applied by this same writer twice to Felix and once to Festus (<sup><4026></sup>Acts 22:26 24:3 26:25). It is likely, therefore, that “Theophilus” was chief magistrate of some city in Greece or Asia Minor [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**4. that thou mightest know** — “know thoroughly.”

**hast been instructed** — orally instructed — literally, “catechized” or “catechetically taught,” at first as a catechumen or candidate for Christian baptism.

## <sup><4006></sup>LUKE 1:5-25.

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORERUNNER.

**5. Herod** — (See on <sup><4006></sup>Matthew 2:1).

**course of Abia** — or Abijah; the eighth of the twenty-four orders of courses into which David divided the priests (see <sup><3401></sup>1 Chronicles 24:1,4,10). Of these courses only four returned after the captivity (<sup><4026></sup>Ezra 2:34-39), which were again subdivided into twenty-four — retaining the ancient name and order of each. They took the whole temple service for a week each.

**his wife was of the daughters of Aaron** — The priests might marry into any tribe, but “it was most commendable of all to marry one of the priests’ line” [LIGHTFOOT].

**6. commandments and ordinances** — The one expressing their *moral* — the other their *ceremonial* — obedience [CALVIN and BENGEL], (Compare <sup><3412></sup>Ezekiel 11:20 <sup><3006></sup>Hebrews 9:1). It has been denied that any such distinction was known to the Jews and New Testament writers. But <sup><4023></sup>Mark 12:33, and other passages, put this beyond all reasonable doubt.

**7.** So with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Elkanah and Hannah, Manoah and his wife.

**9. his lot was to burn incense** — The part assigned to each priest in his week of service was decided by lot. Three were employed at the offering of incense — to remove the ashes of the former service; to bring in and place on the golden altar the pan filled with hot burning coals taken from the altar of burnt offering; and to sprinkle the incense on the hot coals; and, while the smoke of it ascended, to make intercession for the people. This was the

most distinguished part of the service (<sup><008></sup>Revelation 8:3), and this was what fell to the lot of Zacharias at this time [LIGHTFOOT].

**10. praying without** — outside the court in front of the temple, where stood the altar of burnt offering; the men and women in separate courts, but the altar visible to all.

**the time of incense** — which was offered along with the morning and evening sacrifice of every day; a beautiful symbol of the acceptableness of the *sacrifice* offered on the altar of burnt offering, with coals from whose altar the incense was burnt (<sup><062></sup>Leviticus 16:12,13). This again was a symbol of the “living sacrifice” of themselves and their services offered daily to God by the worshippers. Hence the language of <sup><007></sup>Psalms 141:2 <sup><008></sup>Revelation 8:3. But that the acceptance of this daily offering depended on the *expiatory virtue* presupposed in the burnt offering, and pointing to the one “sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor” (<sup><005></sup>Ephesians 5:2), is evident from <sup><006></sup>Isaiah 6:6,7.

**11. right side** — the south side, between the altar and the candlestick, Zacharias being on the north side, in front of the altar, while offering incense [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. But why there? The right was the favorable side (<sup><033></sup>Matthew 25:33) [SCHOTTGEN and WESTEIN in MEYER]; compare <sup><005></sup>Mark 16:5.

**13. thy prayer is heard** — doubtless for *offspring*, which by some presentiment he even yet had not despaired of.

**John** — the same as “Johanan,” so frequent in the Old Testament, meaning “Jehovah’s gracious gift.”

**14. shall rejoice** — so they did (<sup><058></sup>Luke 1:58,66); but the meaning rather is, “shall have cause to rejoice” — it would prove to many a joyful event.

**15. great in the sight of the Lord** — nearer to Him in official standing than all the prophets. (See <sup><010></sup>Matthew 11:10,11.)

**drink neither wine nor strong drink** — that is, shall be a *Nazarite*, or “a separated one” (<sup><002></sup>Numbers 6:2, etc.). As the leper was the living symbol of *sin*, so was the Nazarite of *holiness*; nothing inflaming was to cross his lips; no razor to come on his head; no ceremonial defilement to be contracted. Thus was he to be “holy to the Lord [ceremonially] all the days of his separation.” This separation was in ordinary cases temporary and voluntary: only *Samson* (<sup><013></sup>Judges 13:7), *Samuel* (<sup><001></sup>1 Samuel 1:11), and *John Baptist* were Nazarites from the womb. It was fitting that the utmost severity of legal consecration should be seen in Christ’s forerunner. HE was the REALITY and PERFECTION of the Nazarite without the symbol,

which perished in that living realization of it: “Such an High Priest became us, who was SEPARATE FROM SINNERS” (<sup><3026></sup>Hebrews 7:26).

**filled with the Holy Ghost, from ... womb** — a holy vessel for future service.

**16, 17.** A religious and moral *reformer*, Elijah-like, he should be (<sup><3006></sup>Malachi 4:6, where the “turning of the people’s heart to the Lord” is borrowed from <sup><11852></sup>1 Kings 18:37). In both cases their success, though *great*, was *partial* — the *nation* was not gained.

**17. before him** — before “the Lord their God” (<sup><4016></sup>Luke 1:16). By comparing this with <sup><3006></sup>Malachi 3:1 and <sup><3008></sup>Isaiah 40:3, it is plainly “Jehovah” in the flesh of Messiah [CALVIN and OLSHAUSEN] before whom John was to go as a *herald* to announce His approach, and a *pioneer* to prepare His way.

**in the spirit** — after the model.

**and power of Elias** — not his miraculous power, for John did no miracle” (<sup><3001></sup>John 10:41), but his power “turning the heart,” or with like success in his ministry. Both fell on degenerate times; both witnessed fearlessly for God; neither appeared much save in the direct exercise of their ministry; both were at the head of schools of disciples; the success of both was similar.

**fathers to the children** — taken *literally*, this denotes the *restoration of parental fidelity* [MEYER and others], the decay of which is the beginning of religious and social corruption — one prominent feature of the coming revival being put for the whole. But what follows, explanatory of this, rather suggests a *figurative* sense. If “the disobedient” be “the children,” and to “the fathers” belongs “the wisdom of the just” [BENGEL], the meaning will be, “he shall bring back the ancient spirit of the nation into their degenerate children” [CALVIN, etc.]. So Elijah invoked “*the God Abraham, Isaac, and Israel*,” when seeking to “turn their heart back again” (<sup><11853></sup>1 Kings 18:36,37).

**to make ready**, etc. — more clearly, “to make ready for the Lord a prepared people,” to have in readiness a people prepared to welcome Him. Such preparation requires, in every age *and every soul*, an operation corresponding to the Baptist’s ministry.

**18. Whereby**, etc. — Mary believed what was far harder without a sign. Abraham, though older, and doubtless Sarah, too, when the same promise was made to him, “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief,



but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” This was that in which Zacharias failed.

**19. Gabriel** — signifying “man of God,” the same who appeared to Daniel at the time of incense (<sup><2029></sup>Daniel 9:21) and to Mary (<sup><0125></sup>Luke 1:26).

**stand**, etc. — as his attendant (compare <sup><0170></sup>1 Kings 17:1).

**20. dumb** — speechless.

**not able** — deprived of the power of speech (<sup><0164></sup>Luke 1:64). He asked a *sign*, and now he got it.

**until the day that these things shall be performed** — See on <sup><0164></sup>Luke 1:64.

**21. waited** — to receive from him the usual benediction (<sup><0023></sup>Numbers 6:23-27).

**tarried so long** — It was not usual to tarry long, lest it should be thought vengeance had stricken the people’s representative for something wrong [LIGHTFOOT].

**22. speechless** — dumb, and deaf also (see <sup><0162></sup>Luke 1:62).

**24. hid five months** — till the event was put beyond doubt and became apparent.

## <sup><0125></sup>LUKE 1:26-38.

### ANNUNCIATION OF CHRIST.

(See on <sup><0018></sup>Matthew 1:18-21).

**26. sixth month** — of Elisabeth’s time.

**Joseph, of the house of David** — (See on <sup><0016></sup>Matthew 1:16).

**28. highly favored** — a word only once used elsewhere (<sup><0005></sup>Ephesians 1:6, “made accepted”): compare <sup><0131></sup>Luke 1:30, “Thou hast found favor with God.” The mistake of the *Vulgate*’s rendering, “full of grace,” has been taken abundant advantage of by the Romish Church. As the mother of our Lord, she was the most “blessed among women” in external distinction; but let them listen to the Lord’s own words. “Nay, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” (See on <sup><0127></sup>Luke 11:27).

**31.** The angel purposely conforms his language to Isaiah's famous prophecy (<sup><2374></sup>Isaiah 7:14) [CALVIN].

**32, 33.** This is but an echo of the sublime prediction in <sup><2396></sup>Isaiah 9:6,7.

**34. How**, etc. — not the unbelief of Zacharias, "Whereby shall I know this?" but, taking the fact for granted, "*How is it to be*, so contrary to the unbroken law of human birth?" Instead of reproof, therefore, her question is answered in mysterious detail.

**35. Holy Ghost** — (See on <sup><4118></sup>Matthew 1:18).

**power of the highest** — the immediate energy of the Godhead conveyed by the Holy Ghost.

**overshadow** — a word suggesting how gentle, while yet efficacious, would be this Power [BENGEL]; and its mysterious secrecy, withdrawn, as if by a cloud, from human scrutiny [CALVIN].

**that holy thing born of thee** — that holy Offspring of thine.

**therefore ... Son of God** — That Christ is the Son of God in His divine and eternal nature is clear from all the New Testament; yet here we see that Sonship efflorescing into human and palpable manifestation by His being born, through "the power of the Highest," an Infant of days. We must neither think of a *double* Sonship, as some do, harshly and without all ground, nor deny what is here plainly expressed, the connection between His human birth and His proper personal Sonship.

**36. thy cousin** — "relative," but how near the word says not.

**conceived**, etc. — This was to Mary an *unsought* sign, in reward of her faith.

**37. For**, etc. — referring to what was said by the angel to Abraham in like case (<sup><4184></sup>Genesis 18:14), to strengthen her faith.

**38.** Marvellous faith in *such* circumstances!

## <sup><413></sup>LUKE 1:39-56.

### VISIT OF MARY TO ELISABETH.

**39. hill country** — the mountainous tract running along the middle of Judea, from north to south [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**with haste** — transported with the announcement to herself and with the tidings, now first made known to her, of Elisabeth's condition.

**a city of Juda** — probably Hebron (see <sup><1017></sup>Joshua 20:7 21:11).

**40. saluted Elisabeth** — now returned from her seclusion (<sup><1024></sup>Luke 1:24).

**41. babe leaped** — From <sup><1044></sup>Luke 1:44 it is plain that this maternal sensation was something extraordinary — a sympathetic emotion of the unconscious babe, at the presence of the mother of his Lord.

**42-44.** What beautiful superiority to *envy* have we here! High as was the distinction conferred upon herself, Elisabeth loses sight of it altogether, in presence of one more honored still; upon whom, with her unborn Babe, in an ecstasy of inspiration, she pronounces a benediction, feeling it to be a wonder unaccountable that “the mother of her Lord should come to *her*.” “Turn this as we will, we shall never be able to see the propriety of calling an unborn child “Lord,” but by supposing Elisabeth, like the prophets of old, enlightened to perceive the Messiah's *Divine nature*” [OLSHAUSEN].

**43. “The mother of my Lord”** — but not “*My Lady*” (compare <sup><1020></sup>Luke 20:42 <sup><1015></sup>John 20:28)” [BENGEL].

**45.** An additional benediction on the Virgin for her implicit faith, in tacit and delicate contrast with her own husband.

**for** — rather, as in the *Margin*, “that.”

**46-55.** A magnificent canticle, in which the strain of Hannah's ancient song, in like circumstances, is caught up, and just slightly modified and sublimed. Is it unnatural to suppose that the spirit of the blessed Virgin had been drawn beforehand into mysterious sympathy with the ideas and the tone of this hymn, so that when the life and fire of inspiration penetrated her whole soul it spontaneously swept the chorus of this song, enriching the Hymnal of the Church with that spirit-stirring canticle which has resounded ever since from its temple walls? In both songs, those holy women, filled with wonder to behold “the proud, the mighty, the rich,” passed by, and, in their persons the lowliest chosen to usher in the greatest events, sing of this as no capricious movement, but *a great law of the kingdom of God*, by which He delights to “*put down the mighty from their seats and exalt them of low degree*.” In both songs the strain dies away on CHRIST; in Hannah's under the name of “Jehovah's King” — to whom, through all His line, from David onwards to Himself, He will “give strength”; His “Anointed,” whose horn He will exalt (<sup><1020></sup>1 Samuel 2:10); in the Virgin's song, it is as the “Help” promised to Israel by all the prophets.

**My soul ... my spirit** — “all that is within me” (<sup><19A318></sup>Psalm 103:1).

**47. my Savior** — Mary, poor heart, never dreamt, we see, of her own “immaculate conception” — in the offensive language of the Romanists — any more than of her own immaculate life.

**54. holpen** — Compare <sup><19919></sup>Psalm 89:19, “I have laid *help* on One that is mighty.”

**55. As he spake to our fathers** — *The sense requires this clause to be read as a parenthesis.* (Compare <sup><31021></sup>Micah 7:20 <sup><19818></sup>Psalm 98:3).

**for ever** — the perpetuity of Messiah’s kingdom, as expressly promised by the angel (<sup><1013></sup>Luke 1:33).

**56. abode with her about three months** — What an honored roof was that which, for such a period, overarched these cousins! and yet not a trace of it is now to be seen, while the progeny of those two women — the one but the honored pioneer of the other — have made the world new.

**returned to her own house** — at Nazareth, *after which took place what is recorded in* <sup><1018></sup>Matthew 1:18-25.

## <sup><1015></sup>LUKE 1:57-80.

### BIRTH AND CIRCUMCISION OF JOHN — SONG OF ZACHARIAS AND PROGRESS OF THE CHILD.

**59. eighth day** — The law (<sup><10172></sup>Genesis 17:12) was observed, even though the eighth day after birth should be a sabbath (<sup><1023></sup>John 7:23; and see <sup><1018></sup>Philippians 3:5).

**called him** — literally, “were calling” — that is, (as we should say) “were for calling.” The *naming* of children at baptism has its origin in the Jewish custom at circumcision (<sup><10208></sup>Genesis 21:3,4); and the names of Abram and Sarai were changed at its first performance (<sup><10176></sup>Genesis 17:5,15).

**62. made signs** — showing he was deaf, as well as dumb.

**63. marvelled all** — at his giving the same name, not knowing of any communication between them on the subject.

**64. mouth opened immediately** — on thus palpably showing his full faith in the vision, for disbelieving which he had been struck dumb (<sup><1013></sup>Luke 1:13,20).

**65. fear** — religious awe; under the impression that God's hand was specially in these events (compare <sup><1886></sup>Luke 5:26 7:16 8:37).

**66. hand of the Lord was with him** — by special tokens marking him out as one destined to some great work (<sup><1886></sup>1 Kings 18:46 <sup><1886></sup>2 Kings 3:15 <sup><412></sup>Acts 11:21).

**68-79.** There is not a word in this noble burst of divine song about his own child; like Elisabeth losing sight entirely of self, in the glory of a Greater than both.

**Lord God of Israel** — the ancient covenant God of the peculiar people.

**visited and redeemed** — that is, in order to redeem: returned after long absence, and broken His long silence (see <sup><1886></sup>Matthew 15:31). In the Old Testament, God is said to “visit” chiefly for *judgment*, in the New Testament for *mercy*. Zacharias would, as yet, have but imperfect views of such “visiting and redeeming,” “saving from and delivering out of the hand of enemies” (<sup><1886></sup>Luke 1:71,74). But this Old Testament phraseology, used at first with a *lower* reference, is, when viewed in the light of a loftier and more comprehensive kingdom of God, equally adapted to express the most spiritual conceptions of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**69. horn of salvation** — that is “strength of salvation,” or “mighty Salvation,” meaning the Savior Himself, whom Simeon calls “Thy Salvation” (<sup><1886></sup>Luke 2:30). The metaphor is taken from those animals whose *strength* is in their horns (<sup><1886></sup>Psalms 18:2 75:10 132:17).

**house of ... David** — *This shows that Mary must have been known to be of the royal line*, independent of Joseph; of whom Zacharias, if he knew anything, could not know that after this he would recognize Mary.

**70. since the world began** — or, “from the earliest period.”

**72. the mercy promised ... his holy covenant ...**

**73. the oath ... to ... Abraham** — The whole work and kingdom of Messiah is represented as a mercy pledged on oath to Abraham and his seed, to be realized at an appointed period; and at length, in “the fullness of the time,” gloriously made good. Hence, not only “*grace*,” or the *thing* promised; but “*truth*,” or *fidelity* to the promise, are said to “come by Jesus Christ” (<sup><1886></sup>John 1:17).

**74, 75. That he would grant us**, etc. — How comprehensive is the view here given!

(1) The *purpose* of all redemption — “that we should *serve* Him” — that is, “the Lord God of Israel” (<sup><1068></sup>Luke 1:68). The word signifies *religious* service distinctively — “the *priesthood* of the New Testament” [BENGEL].

(2) The *nature* of this service — “in holiness and righteousness before Him” (<sup><1075></sup>Luke 1:75) — or, as in His presence (compare <sup><1063></sup>Psalms 56:13).

(3) Its *freedom* — “being delivered out of the hand of our enemies.”

(4) Its *fearlessness* — “might serve Him without fear.”

(5) Its *duration* — “all the days of our life.”

**76-79.** Here are the dying echoes of this song; and very beautiful are these closing notes — like the setting sun, shorn indeed of its noontide radiance, but skirting the horizon with a wavy and quivering light — as of molten gold — on which the eye delights to gaze, till it disappears from the view. The song passes not here from Christ to John, but only from Christ direct to Christ as heralded by His forerunner.

**thou child** — not “my son” — this child’s relation to himself being lost in his relation to a Greater than either.

**prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before him** — that is, “the Highest.” As “the Most High” is an epithet in Scripture only. of *the supreme God*, it is inconceivable that inspiration should apply this term, as here undeniably, to Christ, unless He were “God over all blessed for ever” (<sup><1088></sup>Romans 9:5).

**77. to give knowledge of salvation** — To sound the note of a *needed* and *provided* “salvation” was the noble office of John, above all that preceded him; as it is that of all subsequent ministers of Christ; but infinitely loftier was it to be the “Salvation” itself (<sup><1069></sup>Luke 1:69 and <sup><1070></sup>Luke 2:30).

**by the remission of ... sins** — This stamps at once the *spiritual* nature of the salvation here intended, and explains <sup><1071></sup>Luke 1:71,74.

**78. Through the tender mercy of our God** — the sole spring, necessarily, of all salvation *for sinners*.

**dayspring from on high** — either *Christ Himself*, as the “Sun of righteousness” (<sup><1002></sup>Malachi 4:2), arising on a dark world [BEZA, GROTIUS, CALVIN, DE WETTE, OLSHAUSEN, etc.], or the light which He sheds. The sense, of course, is one.

**79.** (Compare ~~2002~~ Isaiah 9:2 ~~4043~~ Matthew 4:13-17). “That St. Luke, of all the Evangelists, should have obtained and recorded these inspired utterances of Zacharias and Mary — is in accordance with his character and habits, as indicated in ~~4002~~ Luke 1:1-4” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**80. And the child**, etc. — “a concluding paragraph, indicating, in strokes full of grandeur, the bodily and mental development of the Baptist; and bringing his life up to the period of his public appearance” [OLSHAUSEN].

**in the deserts** — probably “the wilderness of Judea” (~~4002~~ Matthew 3:1), whither he had retired early in life, in the *Nazarite* spirit, and where, free from rabbinical influences and alone with God, his spirit would be educated, like Moses in the desert, for his future high vocation.

**his showing unto Israel** — the presentation of himself before his nation, as Messiah’s forerunner.

## CHAPTER 2

### LUKE 2:1-7.

#### BIRTH OF CHRIST.

**1. Caesar Augustus** — the first of the Roman emperors.

**all the world** — so the vast Roman Empire was termed.

**taxed** — enrolled, or register themselves.

**2. first ... when Cyrenius**, etc. — a very perplexing verse, inasmuch as Cyrenius, or Quirinus, appears not to have been governor of Syria for about ten years after the birth of Christ, and the “taxing” under his administration was what led to the insurrection mentioned in ~~415~~ Acts 5:37. That there was a taxing, however, of the whole Roman Empire under Augustus, is now admitted by all; and candid critics, even of skeptical tendency, are ready to allow that there is not likely to be any real inaccuracy in the statement of our Evangelist. Many superior scholars would render the words thus, “This registration was *previous* to Cyrenius being governor of Syria” — as the word “first” is rendered in ~~415~~ John 1:15 15:18. In this case, of course, the difficulty vanishes. But it is perhaps better to suppose, with others, that the registration may have been ordered with a view to the taxation, about the time of our Lord’s birth, though the taxing itself — an obnoxious measure in Palestine — was not carried out till the time of Quirinus.

**3. went ... to his own city** — the city of his *extraction*, according to the Jewish custom, not of his *abode*, which was the usual Roman method.

**4, 5.** Not only does Joseph, who was of the royal line, go to Bethlehem (~~416~~ 1 Samuel 16:1), but Mary too — not from choice surely in her condition, but, probably, for personal enrollment, as herself an heiress.

**5. espoused wife** — now, without doubt, taken home to him, as related in ~~418~~ Matthew 1:18 25:6.

**6. while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered** — Mary had up to this time been living at the wrong place for Messiah’s birth. A little longer stay at Nazareth, and the prophecy would have failed. But lo! with no intention certainly on her part, much less of Caesar Augustus, to fulfill the prophecy, she is brought from Nazareth to



Bethlehem, and at that nick of time her period arrives, and her Babe is born (~~ⲡⲥ~~Psalm 118:23). “Every creature walks blindfold; only He that dwells in light knows whether they go” [BISHOP HALL].

**7. first-born** — So ~~ⲙⲁ~~Matthew 1:25,26; yet the law, in speaking of the first-born, regardeth not whether any were born *after* or no, but only that none were born *before* [LIGHTFOOT].

**wrapt him ... laid him** — The mother herself did so. Had she then none to help her? It would seem so (~~ⲙⲁ~~2 Corinthians 8:9).

**a manger** — the manger, the bench to which the horses’ heads were tied, on which their food could rest [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**no room in the inn** — a square erection, open inside, where travelers put up, and whose rear parts were used as stables. The ancient tradition, that our Lord was born in a grotto or cave, is quite consistent with this, the country being rocky. In Mary’s condition the journey would be a slow one, and ere they arrived, the inn would be fully occupied — affecting anticipation of the reception He was throughout to meet with (~~ⲙⲁ~~John 1:11).

**Wrapt in His swaddling** — bands, And in His manger laid, The hope and glory of all lands Is come to the world’s aid. No peaceful home upon His cradle smiled, Guests rudely went and came where slept the royal Child.

KEBLE

But some “guests went and came” *not* “rudely,” but reverently. God sent visitors of His own to pay court to the new-born King.

## ~~ⲙⲁ~~LUKE 2:8-20.

### ANGELIC ANNUNCIATION TO THE SHEPHERDS — THEIR VISIT TO THE NEWBORN BABE.

**8. abiding in the fields** — staying there, probably in huts or tents.

**watch ... by night** — or, night watches, taking their turn of watching. From about passover time in April until autumn, the flocks pastured constantly in the open fields, the shepherds lodging there all that time. (From this it seems plain that the period of the year usually assigned to our Lord’s birth is too late). Were these shepherds chosen to have the first sight of the blessed Babe without any respect of their own state of mind? That, at least, is not God’s way. “No doubt, like Simeon (~~ⲙⲁ~~Luke 2:25), they were among the waiters for the Consolation of Israel” [OLSHAUSEN]; and, if the

simplicity of their rustic minds, their quiet occupation, the stillness of the midnight hours, and the amplitude of the deep blue vault above them for the heavenly music which was to fill their ear, pointed them out as fit recipients for the first tidings of an Infant Savior, the congenial meditations and conversations by which, we may suppose, they would beguile the tedious hours would perfect their preparation for the unexpected visit. Thus was Nathanael engaged, all alone but not unseen, under the fig tree, in unconscious preparation for his first interview with Jesus. (See on <sup><B148></sup>John 1:48). So was the rapt seer on his lonely rock “in the spirit on the Lord’s Day,” little thinking that this was his preparation for hearing behind him the trumpet voice of the Son of man (<sup><B110></sup>Revelation 1:10, etc.). But if the shepherds in His immediate neighborhood had the *first*, the sages from afar had the *next* sight of the new-born King. Even so still, simplicity first, science next, finds its way to Christ, whom

In quiet ever and in shade Shepherds and Sage may find — They, who have bowed untaught to Nature’s sway, And they, who follow Truth along her star-pav’d way. KEBLE

**9. glory of the Lord** — “the brightness or glory which is represented as encompassing all heavenly visions” [OLSHAUSEN].

**sore afraid** — So it ever was (<sup><B107></sup>Daniel 10:7,8 <sup><B112></sup>Luke 1:12 <sup><B117></sup>Revelation 1:17). Men have never felt easy with the invisible world laid suddenly open to their gaze. It was never meant to be permanent; a momentary purpose was all it was intended to serve.

**10. to all people** — “to the whole people,” that is, of Israel; to be by them afterwards opened up to the whole world. (See on <sup><B114></sup>Luke 2:14).

**11. unto you is born** — you shepherds, Israel, mankind [BENGEL]. Compare <sup><B106></sup>Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a Child is born.” It is a *birth* — “The Word is *made flesh*” (<sup><B114></sup>John 1:14). When? “*This day*.” Where? “*In the city of David*” — in the right *line* and at the right “spot”; where prophecy bade us look for Him, and faith accordingly expected Him. How dear to us should be these *historic moorings* of our faith! With the loss of them, all substantial Christianity is lost. By means of them how many have been kept from making shipwreck, and attained to a certain external admiration of Him, ere yet they have fully “beheld His glory.”

**a Savior** — not One who *shall* be a Savior, but “*born a Savior*.”

**Christ the Lord** — “magnificent appellation!” [BENGEL]. “This is the only place where these words come together; and I see no way of understanding this “Lord” but as corresponding to the *Hebrew* JEHOVAH” [ALFORD].

**12. a sign** — “the sign.”

**the babe** — “a Babe.”

**a manger** — “the manger.” The sign was to consist, it seems, solely in the overpowering *contrast* between the things just said of Him and the lowly condition in which they would find Him — Him whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, “ye shall find a Babe”; whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, “wrapt in swaddling bands”; the “Savior, Christ the Lord,” lying in a manger! Thus early were these amazing contrasts, which are His chosen style, held forth. (See <sup>4182</sup> Corinthians 8:9.)

**13. suddenly** — as if only waiting till their fellow had done.

**with the angel** — who retires not, but is joined by others, come to seal and to celebrate the tidings he has brought.

**heavenly host** — or “army,” an *army* celebrating *peace*! [BENGEL] “transferring the occupation of their exalted station to this poor earth, which so seldom resounds with the pure praise of God” [OLSHAUSEN]; to let it be known how this event is regarded in *heaven* and should be regarded on *earth*.

**14. Glory**, etc. — brief but transporting hymn — not only in articulate human speech, for our benefit, but in tunable measure, in the form of a *Hebrew* parallelism of two complete clauses, and a third one only amplifying the second, and so without a connecting “and.” The “*glory to God*,” which the new-born “Savior” was to bring, is the first note of this sublime hymn: to this answers, in the second clause, the “*peace on earth*,” of which He was to be “the Prince” (<sup>2306</sup> Isaiah 9:6) — probably sung responsively by the celestial choir; while quickly follows the glad echo of this note, probably by a third detachment of the angelic choristers — “*good will to men*.” “They say not, glory to God in *heaven*, where angels are, but, using a rare expression, “*in the highest* [heavens],” whither angels aspire not,” (<sup>3005</sup> Hebrews 1:3,4) [BENGEL]. “Peace” with God is the grand necessity of a fallen world. To bring in this, and all other peace in its train, was the prime errand of the Savior to this earth, and, along with it, Heaven’s whole “good will to men” — the divine complacency on a new footing — descends to rest upon men, as upon the Son Himself, in whom God is “well-pleased.” (<sup>4087</sup> Matthew 3:17, the same word as here.)

**15. Let us go**, etc. — lovely simplicity of devoutness and faith this! They are not taken up with the angels, the glory that invested them, and the lofty strains with which they filled the air. Nor do they say, Let us go and see *if*

*this be true* — they have no misgivings. But “Let us go and see this thing *which is come to pass*, which the Lord hath made known unto us.” Does not this confirm the view given on <sup><1008></sup>Luke 2:8 of the spirit of these humble men?

**16. with haste** — Compare <sup><1019></sup>Luke 1:39 <sup><1008></sup>Matthew 28:8 (“did run”); <sup><1008></sup>John 4:28 (“left her water-pot,” as they do their flocks, in a transport).

**found Mary**, etc. — “mysteriously guided by the Spirit to the right place through the obscurity of the night” [OLSHAUSEN].

**a manger** — “*the manger*,” as before.

**17. made known abroad** — before their return (<sup><1020></sup>Luke 2:20), and thus were the first evangelists [BENGEL].

**20. glorifying and praising God**, etc. — The latter word, used of the song of the angels (<sup><1013></sup>Luke 2:13), and in <sup><1037></sup>Luke 19:37, and <sup><1025></sup>Luke 24:53, leads us to suppose that theirs was a song too, probably some canticle from the Psalter — meet vehicle for the swelling emotions of their simple hearts at what “they had *heard and seen*.”

## <sup><1021></sup>LUKE 2:21.

### CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST.

Here only recorded, and even here merely alluded to, for the sake of the name then given to the holy Babe, “JESUS,” or SAVIOR (<sup><1022></sup>Matthew 1:21 <sup><1033></sup>Acts 13:23). Yet in this naming of Him “Savior,” in the act of circumcising Him, which was a symbolical and bloody removal of the body of sin, we have a tacit intimation that they “had need” — as John said of His Baptism — rather to be circumcised by Him “with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body [of the sins] of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ” (<sup><1021></sup>Colossians 2:11), and that He only “suffered it to be so, because thus it became Him to fulfill all righteousness” (<sup><1015></sup>Matthew 3:15). Still the circumcision of Christ had a profound bearing on His own work — by few rightly apprehended. For since “he that is circumcised is a *debtor to do the whole law*” (<sup><1008></sup>Galatians 5:3), Jesus thus bore about with Him in His very flesh the seal of a voluntary obligation to do the whole law — by Him only possible in the flesh since the fall. And as He was “made under the law” for no ends of His own, but only “*to redeem them that were under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (<sup><1004></sup>Galatians 4:4,5), the obedience to which

His circumcision pledged Him was a *redeeming obedience* — that of a “Savior.” And, finally, as “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” by “being made *a curse for us*” (◀<sup>1813</sup>Galatians 3:13), we must regard Him, in His circumcision, as brought under a palpable pledge to be “*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (◀<sup>1818</sup>Philippians 2:8).

## ◀<sup>1822</sup>LUKE 2:22-40.

### PURIFICATION OF THE VIRGIN — PRESENTATION OF THE BABE IN THE TEMPLE-SCENE THERE WITH SIMEON AND ANNA.

**22, 24. her purification** — Though the most and best copies read “their,” it was the mother only who needed purifying from the legal uncleanness of childbearing. “The days” of this purification for a male child were forty in all (◀<sup>1812</sup>Leviticus 12:2,4), on the expiry of which the mother was required to offer a lamb for a burnt offering, and a turtle dove or a young pigeon for a sin offering. If she could not afford a lamb, the mother had to bring another turtle dove or young pigeon; and, if even this was beyond her means, then a portion of fine flour, but without the usual fragrant accompaniments of oil and frankincense, as it represented a sin offering (◀<sup>1816</sup>Leviticus 12:6-8 5:7-11). From the intermediate offering of “a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons,” we gather that Joseph and the Virgin were in poor circumstances (◀<sup>1820</sup>2 Corinthians 8:9), though not in abject poverty. Being a first-born male, they “bring him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.” All such had been claimed as “holy to the Lord,” or set apart to sacred uses, in memory of the deliverance of the first-born of Israel from destruction in Egypt, through the sprinkling of blood (◀<sup>1814</sup>Exodus 13:2). In lieu of these, however, one whole tribe, that of Levi, was accepted, and set apart to occupations exclusively sacred (◀<sup>1811</sup>Numbers 3:11-38); and whereas there were two hundred seventy-three fewer Levites than first-born of all Israel on the first reckoning, each of these first-born was to be redeemed by the payment of five shekels, yet not without being “*presented* (or brought) *unto the Lord*,” in token of His rightful claim to them and their service (◀<sup>1814</sup>Numbers 3:44-47 18:15,16). It was in obedience to this “law of Moses,” that the Virgin presented her babe unto the Lord, “in the east gate of the court called Nicanor’s Gate, where she herself would be sprinkled by the priest with the blood of her sacrifice” [LIGHTFOOT]. By that Babe, in due time, we were to be redeemed, “not with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (◀<sup>1815</sup>1 Peter 1:18,19), and the consuming of the mother’s burnt offering, and the sprinkling of her with

the blood of her sin offering, were to find their abiding realization in the “living sacrifice” of the Christian mother herself, in the fullness of a “heart sprinkled from an evil conscience,” by “the blood which cleanseth from all sin.”

**25. just** — upright in his moral character.

**devout** — of a religious frame of spirit.

**waiting for the consolation of Israel** — a beautiful title of the coming Messiah, here intended.

**the Holy Ghost was** — supernaturally.

**upon him** — Thus was the Spirit, after a dreary absence of nearly four hundred years, returning to the Church, to quicken expectation, and prepare for coming events.

**26. revealed by the Holy Ghost** — implying, beyond all doubt, the personality of the Spirit.

**should see not death till he had seen** — “sweet antithesis!” [BENGEL]. How would the one sight gild the gloom of the other! He was, probably, by this time, advanced in years.

**27, 28.** The Spirit guided him to the temple at the very moment when the Virgin was about to present Him to the Lord.

**28. took him up in his arms** — immediately recognizing in the child, with unhesitating certainty, the promised Messiah, without needing Mary to inform him of what had happened to her. [OLSHAUSEN]. The remarkable act of taking the babe in his arms must not be overlooked. It was as if he said, “This is all my salvation and all my desire” (~~1~~<sup>2</sup> Samuel 23:5).

**29. Lord** — “Master,” a word rarely used in the New Testament, and selected here with peculiar propriety, when the aged saint, feeling that his last object in wishing to live had now been attained, only awaited his Master’s word of command to “depart.”

**now lettest**, etc. — more clearly, “now Thou art releasing Thy servant”; a patient yet reverential mode of expressing a desire to depart.

**30. seen thy salvation** — Many saw this child, nay, the full-grown “man, Christ Jesus,” who never saw in Him “God’s Salvation.” This estimate of an object of sight, an unconscious, helpless babe, was pure faith. He “beheld His glory” (~~1~~<sup>2</sup> John 1:14). In another view it was *prior faith* rewarded by *present sight*.

**31, 32. all people** — all the peoples, mankind at large.

**a light to the Gentiles** — then in thick darkness.

**glory of thy people Israel** — already Thine, and now, in the believing portion of it, to be so more gloriously than ever. It will be observed that this “swan-like song, bidding an eternal farewell to this terrestrial life” [OLSHAUSEN], takes a more comprehensive view of the kingdom of Christ than that of Zacharias, though the kingdom they sing of is one.

**34, 35. set** — appointed.

**fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against** — Perhaps the former of these phrases expresses the two stages of temporary “fall of many in Israel” through unbelief, during our Lord’s earthly career, and the subsequent “rising again” of *the same persons* after the effusion of the Spirit at pentecost threw a new light to them on the whole subject; while the latter clause describes the determined enemies of the Lord Jesus. Such opposite views of Christ are taken from age to age.

**35. Yea**, etc. — “Blessed as thou art among women, thou shalt have thine own deep share of the struggles and sufferings which this Babe is to occasion” — pointing not only to the continued obloquy and rejection of this Child of hers, those agonies of His which she was to witness at the cross, and her desolate condition thereafter, but to dreadful alternations of faith and unbelief, of hope and fear regarding Him, which she would have to pass through.

**that the thoughts**, etc. — Men’s views and decisions regarding Christ are a mirror in which the very “thoughts of their hearts” are seen.

**36. Anna** — or, Hannah.

**a prophetess** — another evidence that “the last times” in which God was to “pour out His Spirit upon all flesh” were at hand.

**of the tribe of Aser** — one of the ten tribes, of whom many were not carried captive, and not a few reunited themselves to Judah after the return from Babylon. The distinction of tribes, though practically destroyed by the captivity, was well enough known up to their final dispersion (<sup><611></sup>Romans 11:1 <sup><3074></sup>Hebrews 7:14); nor is it now entirely lost.

**lived**, etc. — she had lived seven years with her husband (<sup><4126></sup>Luke 2:36), and been a widow eighty-four years; so that if she married at the earliest marriageable age, twelve years, she could not at this time be less than a hundred three years old.



**37. departed not from the temple** — was found there at all stated hours of the day, and even during the night services of the temple watchmen (~~<1040>~~ Psalm 134:1,2), “serving God with fastings and prayer.” (See ~~<1045>~~1 Timothy 5:5, suggested by this.)

**38. coming in** — “presenting herself.” She had been there already but now is found “standing by,” as Simeon’s testimony to the blessed Babe died away, ready to take it up “in turn” (as the word rendered “likewise” here means).

**to all them**, etc. — the sense is, “to all them in Jerusalem that were looking for redemption” — saying in effect, In that Babe are wrapt up all your expectations. If this was at the hour of prayer, when numbers flocked to the temple, it would account for her having such an audience as the words imply [ALFORD].

**39.** Nothing is more difficult than to fix the precise order in which the visit of the Magi, with the flight into and return from Egypt (~~<1023>~~ Matthew 2:13-23), are to be taken, in relation to the circumcision and presentation of Christ in the temple, here recorded. It is perhaps best to leave this in the obscurity in which we find it, as the result of two independent, though if we knew all, easily reconcilable narratives.

**40.** His mental development kept pace with His bodily, and “the grace of God,” the divine favor, rested manifestly and increasingly upon Him. See ~~<1020>~~ Luke 2:52.

## ~~<1011>~~ LUKE 2:41-52.

### FIRST CONSCIOUS VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

“Solitary flowered out of the wonderful enclosed garden of the thirty years, plucked precisely there where the swollen bud, at a *distinctive crisis* (at twelve years of age), bursts into flower. To mark that is assuredly the design and the meaning of this record” [STIER].

**42. went up** — “were wont to go.” Though males only were required to go up to Jerusalem at the three annual festivals (~~<10234>~~ Exodus 23:14-17), devout women, when family duties permitted, went also, as did Hannah (~~<10007>~~1 Samuel 1:7), and, as we here see, the mother of Jesus.

**when twelve years old** — At this age every Jewish boy was styled “a son of the law,” being put under a course of instruction and trained to fasting and attendance on public worship, besides being set to learn a trade. At this



age accordingly our Lord is taken up for the first time to Jerusalem, at the passover season, the chief of the three annual festivals. But oh, with what thoughts and feelings must this Youth have gone up! Long ere He beheld it, He had doubtless “loved the habitation of God’s house and the place where His honor dwelt” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 26:8), a love nourished, we may be sure, by that “word hid in His heart,” with which in afterlife He showed so perfect a familiarity. As the time for His first visit approached, could one’s ear have caught the breathings of His young soul, he might have heard Him whispering, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem!” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 42:1 87:2 122:1,2). On catching the first view of “the city of their solemnities,” and high above all in it, “the place of God’s rest,” we hear Him saying to Himself, “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King: Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God doth shine” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 48:2 50:2). Of His feelings or actions during all the eight days of the feast not a word is said. As a devout child, in company with its parents, He would go through the services, keeping His thoughts to Himself. But methinks I hear Him, after the sublime services of that feast, saying to Himself, “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” (~~Song of Solomon~~ Song of Solomon 2:3,4).

**43. as they returned** — If the duties of life must give place to worship, worship, in its turn, must give place to them. *Jerusalem* is good, but *Nazareth* is good, too; let him who neglects the one, on pretext of attending to the other, ponder this scene.

**tarried behind ... Joseph and his mother knew not** — Accustomed to the discretion and obedience of the lad [OLSHAUSEN], they might be thrown off their guard.

**44. sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances** — On these sacred journeys, whole villages and districts traveled in groups together, partly for protection, partly for company; and as the well-disposed would beguile the tediousness of the way by good discourse, to which the child Jesus would be no silent listener, they expect to find Him in such a group.

**45, 46.** After three sorrowing days, they find Him still in Jerusalem, not gazing on its architecture, or surveying its forms of busy life, but in the temple — not the “sanctuary” (as in ~~Luke~~ Luke 1:9), to which only the priests

had access, but in some one of the enclosures around it, where the rabbins, or “doctors,” taught their scholars.

**46. hearing ... asking** — The method of question and answer was the customary form of rabbinical teaching; teacher and learner becoming by turns questioner and answerer, as may be seen from their extant works. This would give full scope for all that “astonished them in His understanding and answers.” Not that He assumed the office of *teaching* — “His hour” for that “was not yet come,” and His equipment for that was not complete; for He had yet to “increase in wisdom” as well as “stature” (~~4015~~ Luke 2:52). In fact, the beauty of Christ’s example lies very much in His never at one stage of His life anticipating the duties of another. All would be in the style and manner of a learner, “opening His mouth and panting.” “His soul breaking for the longing that it had unto God’s judgments at all times” (~~4930~~ Psalm 119:20), and now more than ever before, when finding Himself for the first time in His Father’s house. Still there would be in *His questions* far more than in *their answers*; and if we may take the frivolous interrogatories with which they afterwards plied Him, about the woman that had seven husbands and such like, as a specimen of their present drivelling questions, perhaps we shall not greatly err, if we suppose that “the questions” which He now “asked them” in return were just the germs of those pregnant questions with which He astonished and silenced them in after years:

“What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? If David call Him Lord, how is He then his Son?” “Which is the first and great commandment?” “Who is my neighbor?”

**49. about my Father’s business** — literally, “in” or “at My Fathers,” that is, either “about My Father’s *affairs*,” or “in My Father’s *courts*” — where He dwells and is to be found — *about His hand*, so to speak. This latter shade of meaning, which includes the former, is perhaps the true one, Here He felt Himself *at home*, breathing His own proper air. His words convey a gentle rebuke of their obtuseness in requiring Him to *explain this*. “Once here, thought ye I should so readily hasten away? Let ordinary worshippers be content to keep the feast and be gone; but is this all ye have learnt of Me?” Methinks we are here let into the holy privacies of Nazareth; for what He says they *should* have known, He must have given them *ground* to know. She tells Him of the sorrow with which *His father* and she had sought Him. He speaks of *no Father but one*, saying, in effect, My Father has *not* been seeking Me; I have been with Him all this time; “the King hath brought me into His chambers ... His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me” (~~2700~~ Song of Solomon 1:4 2:6). How is it that ye do not understand? (~~4020~~ Mark 8:21).

**50, 51. understood not** — probably He had never expressly *said* as much, and so confounded them, though it was but the true interpretation of many things which they had seen and heard from Him at home. (See on ~~434~~ John 14:4.) But lest it should be thought that now He threw off the filial yoke, and became His own Master henceforth, and theirs too, it is purposely added, “And He went down *with them*, and was *subject unto them*.” The marvel of this condescension lies in its coming after such a scene, and such an assertion of His higher Sonship; and the words are evidently meant to convey this. “From this time we have *no more mention of Joseph*. The next we hear is of his “mother and brethren” (~~412~~ John 2:12); whence it is inferred, that between this time and the commencement of our Lord’s public life, *Joseph died*” [ALFORD], having now served the double end of being the protector of our Lord’s Virgin — mother, and affording Himself the opportunity of presenting a matchless pattern of subjection to both parents.

**52.** See on ~~414~~ Luke 2:40.

**stature** — or better, perhaps, as in the *Margin*, “age,” which implies the other. This is all the record we have of the next eighteen years of that wondrous life. What seasons of tranquil meditation over the lively oracles, and holy fellowship with His Father; what inlettings, on the one hand, of light, and love, and power from on high, and outgoings of filial supplication, freedom, love, and joy on the other, would these eighteen years contain! And would they not seem “but a few days” if they were so passed, however ardently He might long to be more directly “about His Father’s business?”

# CHAPTER 3

## LUKE 3:1-20.

### PREACHING, BAPTISM, AND IMPRISONMENT OF JOHN.

(See on <sup><40RE></sup>Matthew 3:1-12; <sup><40E7></sup>Mark 6:17, etc.).

**1, 2.** Here the curtain of the New Testament is, as it were, drawn up, and the greatest of all epochs of the Church commences. Even our Lord's own age (<sup><40E3></sup>Luke 3:23) is determined by it [BENGEL]. No such elaborate chronological precision is to be found elsewhere in the New Testament, and it comes fitly from him who claims it as the peculiar recommendation of his Gospel, that he had "accurately traced down all things from the first" (<sup><40E1></sup>Luke 1:3). Here, evidently, commences his proper narrative. Also see on <sup><40RE></sup>Matthew 3:1.

**the fifteenth year of Tiberius** — reckoning from the period when he was admitted, three years before Augustus' death, to a share of the empire [WEBSTER and WILKINSON], about the end of the year of Rome 779, or about four years before the usual reckoning.

**Pilate ... governor of Judea** — His proper title was *Procurator*, but with more than the usual powers of that office. After holding it about ten years he was ordered to Rome, to answer to charges brought against him, but ere he arrived Tiberius died (A.D. 35), and soon after Pilate committed suicide.

**Herod** — (See on <sup><40E4></sup>Mark 6:14).

**Philip** — a different and very superior Philip to the one whose wife Herodias went to live with Herod Antipas. (See <sup><40E7></sup>Mark 6:17).

**Iturea** — to the northeast of Palestine; so called from Ishmael's son *Itur* or *Jetur* (<sup><40E1></sup>1 Chronicles 1:31), and anciently belonging to the half tribe of Manasseh.

**Trachonitis** — farther to the northeast, between Iturea and Damascus; a rocky district, infested by robbers, and committed by Augustus to Herod the Great to keep in order.

**Abilene** — still more to the northeast, so called from *Abila*, eighteen miles from Damascus [ROBINSON].

**2. Annas and Caiaphas ... high priests** — the former, though deposed, retained much of his influence, and, probably, as *sagan* or deputy, exercised much of the power of the high priesthood along with Caiaphas (<sup><4083></sup>John 18:13 <sup><4006></sup>Acts 4:6). Both Zadok and Abiathar acted as high priests in David's time (<sup><1055></sup>2 Samuel 15:35), and it seems to have become the fixed practice to have two (<sup><1258></sup>2 Kings 25:18). (Also see on <sup><4081></sup>Matthew 3:1.)

**word of God came unto John** — *Such formulas, of course, are never used when speaking of Jesus, because the divine nature manifested itself in Him not at certain isolated moments of His life. He was the one everlasting manifestation of the Godhead* — THE WORD [OLSHAUSEN].

**5. Every valley**, etc. — *levelling and smoothing*, obvious figures, the sense of which is in the first words of the proclamation, "*Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*"

**6. all flesh**, etc. — (quoted literally from the *Septuagint* of <sup><3015></sup>Isaiah 40:5). The idea is that every obstruction shall be so removed as to reveal to the whole world the Salvation of God in Him whose name is the "Savior" (compare <sup><1908></sup>Psalms 98:3 <sup><2110></sup>Isaiah 11:10 <sup><49></sup>6 <sup><52></sup>10 <sup><4023></sup>Luke 2:31,32 <sup><4135></sup>Acts 13:47).

**10-14. What shall we do then?** — to show the sincerity of our repentance. (Also see on <sup><4080></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

**11. two coats** — directed against the reigning *avarice*. (Also see on <sup><4080></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

**12. publicans**, etc. (Also see on <sup><4080></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

**13. Exact no more**, etc. — directed against that *extortion* which made the publicans a byword. (See on <sup><2912></sup>Luke 19:2; <sup><2918></sup>Luke 19:8). (Also see on <sup><4080></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

**14. soldiers ... Do violence to none** — The word signifies to "shake thoroughly," and so to "intimidate," probably in order to extort money or other property. (Also see on <sup><4080></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

**accuse ... falsely** — acting as informers vexatiously, on frivolous or false grounds.

**content with your wages** — "rations." We may take this as a warning against mutiny, which the officers attempted to suppress by largesses and donations [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. And thus the "fruits" which would evidence their repentance were just resistance to the reigning sins,

particularly of the *class* to which the penitent belonged, and the manifestation of an opposite spirit.

**15-17. whether he were the Christ** — showing both how successful he had been in awakening the expectation of Messiah's immediate appearing, and the high estimation, and even reverence, which his own character commanded. (Also see on <sup><4180></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

**16. John answered** — either to the deputation from Jerusalem (see <sup><4181></sup>John 1:19, etc.), or on some other occasion, simply to remove impressions derogatory to his blessed Master which he knew to be taking hold of the popular mind. (Also see on <sup><4180></sup>Matthew 3:10.)

saying unto *them* all — in solemn protestation. So far from entertaining such a thought as laying claim to the honors of Messiahship, the meanest services I can render to that "Mightier than I that is coming after me," are too high an honor for me. Beautiful spirit, distinguishing this servant of Christ throughout!

**one mightier than I** — "the Mightier than I."

**18. many other things**, etc. — such as we read in <sup><4181></sup>John 1:29,33,34 3:27-36. (Also see on <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12.)

**19, 20. But Herod**, etc. — See on <sup><4184></sup>Mark 6:14, etc. (Also see on <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12.)

**and for all the evils which Herod had done** — important fact here only mentioned, showing how *thoroughgoing* was the fidelity of the Baptist to his royal hearer, and how strong must have been the workings of conscience in that slave of passion when, notwithstanding such plainness, he "did many things and heard John gladly" (<sup><4183></sup>Mark 6:20,26).

**20. Added yet**, etc. — (Also see on <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 3:12).

## <sup><4181></sup>LUKE 3:21, 22.

### BAPTISM OF AND DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT UPON JESUS.

(See on <sup><4183></sup>Matthew 3:13-17.)

**21. when all the people were baptized** — that He might not seem to be merely one of the crowd. Thus, as He rode into Jerusalem upon an ass, "*whereon yet never man sat*" (<sup><4183></sup>Luke 19:30), and lay in a sepulcher

“wherein was never man yet laid” (ⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓ John 19:41), so in His baptism He would be “*separate from sinners.*”

## ⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓ LUKE 3:23-38.

### GENEALOGY OF JESUS.

**23. he began to be about thirty** — that is, “was about entering on His thirtieth year.” So our translators have taken the word (and so CALVIN, BEZA, BLOOMFIELD, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, etc.): but “was about thirty years of age when He began [His ministry],” makes better *Greek*, and is probably the true sense [BENGEL, OLSHAUSEN, DE WETTE, MEYER, ALFORD, etc.]. At this age the priests entered on their office (ⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓ Numbers 4:3).

**being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph**, etc. — Have we in this genealogy, as well as in Matthew’s, the line of *Joseph*? or is this the line of *Mary*? — a point on which there has been great difference of opinion and much acute discussion. Those who take the *former* opinion contend that it is the natural sense of this verse, and that no other would have been thought of but for its supposed improbability and the uncertainty which it seems to throw over our Lord’s real descent. But it is liable to another difficulty; namely, that in this case Matthew makes *Jacob*, while Luke makes “*Heli*,” to be Joseph’s father; and though the same man had often more than one name, we ought not to resort to that supposition, in such a case as this, without necessity. And then, though the descent of Mary from David would be liable to no real doubt, even though we had no table of her line preserved to us (see, for example, ⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓ Luke 1:2-32, and see on ⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓ Luke 2:5), still it does seem unlikely — we say not incredible — that two genealogies of our Lord should be preserved to us, neither of which gives his *real* descent. Those who take the *latter* opinion, that we have here the line of *Mary*, as in Matthew that of *Joseph* — here His *real*, there His *reputed* line — explain the statement about Joseph, that he

was “*the son of Heli*,” to mean that he was his *son-in-law*, as the husband of his daughter Mary (as in ⲉⲃⲣⲁⲓ Ruth 1:11,12), and believe that Joseph’s name is only introduced instead of Mary’s, in conformity with the Jewish custom in such tables. Perhaps this view is attended with fewest difficulties, as it certainly is the best supported. However we decide, it is a satisfaction to know that not a doubt was thrown out by the bitterest of the early enemies of Christianity as to *our Lord’s real descent from David*. On comparing the two genealogies, it will be found that Matthew, writing more

immediately for *Jews*, deemed it enough to show that the Savior was sprung from Abraham and David; whereas Luke, writing more immediately for *Gentiles*, traces the descent back to Adam, the parent stock of the whole human family, thus showing Him to be the promised “Seed of the woman.” “The possibility of constructing such a table, comprising a period of thousands of years, in an uninterrupted line from father to son, of a family that dwelt for a long time in the utmost retirement, would be inexplicable, had not the members of this line been endowed with *a thread* by which they could extricate themselves from the many families into which every tribe and branch was again subdivided, and thus hold fast and know *the* member that was destined to continue the lineage. This thread was the hope that Messiah would be born of the race of Abraham and David. The ardent desire to behold Him and be partakers of His mercy and glory suffered not the attention to be exhausted through a period embracing thousands of years. Thus the member destined to continue the lineage, whenever doubtful, became easily distinguishable, awakening the hope of a final fulfillment, and keeping it alive until it was consummated” [OLSHAUSEN].

**24-30. son of Matthat**, etc. — (See on <sup><40113></sup>Matthew 1:13-15). In <sup><4187></sup>Luke 3:27, Salathiel is called the *son*, while in <sup><40112></sup>Matthew 1:12, he is called the *father* of Zerubbabel. But they are probably different persons.

**38. son of God** — Compare <sup><41728></sup>Acts 17:28.



# CHAPTER 4

◀400◀ LUKE 4:1-13.

## TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

(See on ▶400◀ Matthew 4:1-11.)

◀404◀ LUKE 4:14-32.

## JESUS ENTERING ON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY, MAKES A CIRCUIT OF GALILEE — REJECTION AT NAZARETH.

*Note.* — A large gap here occurs, embracing the important transactions in Galilee and Jerusalem which are recorded in ▶402◀ John 1:29-4:54, and which occurred *before* John's imprisonment (▶403◀ John 3:24); whereas the transactions here recorded occurred (as appears from ▶402◀ Matthew 4:12,13) *after* that event. The visit to Nazareth recorded in ▶405◀ Matthew 13:54-58 (and ▶406◀ Mark 6:1-6) we take to be not a later visit, but the same with this first one; because we cannot think that the Nazarenes, after being so enraged at His *first* display of wisdom as to attempt His destruction, should, on a *second* display of the same, wonder at it and ask how He came by it, as if they had never witnessed it before.

**16. as his custom was** — Compare ▶417◀ Acts 17:2.

**stood up for to read** — Others besides rabbins were allowed to address the congregation. (See ▶415◀ Acts 13:15.)

**18, 19.** To have fixed on any passage announcing His *sufferings* (as ▶280◀ Isaiah 53:1-12), would have been unsuitable at that early stage of His ministry. But He selects a passage announcing the sublime object of His whole mission, its divine character, and His special endowments for it; expressed in the first person, and so singularly adapted to *the first opening of the mouth* in His prophetic capacity, that it seems as if made expressly for this occasion. It is from the well-known section of Isaiah's prophecies whose burden is that mysterious "SERVANT OF THE LORD," despised of man, abhorred of the nation, but before whom kings on seeing Him are to arise, and princes to worship; in visage more marred than any man and His

form than the sons of men, yet sprinkling many nations; laboring seemingly in vain, and spending His strength for naught and in vain, yet Jehovah's Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and be His Salvation to the ends of the earth (<sup><301</sup>Isaiah 49:1-26, etc.). The quotation is chiefly from the *Septuagint* version, used in the synagogues.

**19. acceptable year** — an allusion to the jubilee year (<sup><251</sup>Leviticus 25:10), a year of universal *release* for person and property. (See also <sup><301</sup>Isaiah 49:8 <sup><402</sup>2 Corinthians 6:2.) As the maladies under which humanity groans are here set forth under the names of *poverty, broken-heartedness, bondage, blindness, bruisedness* (or *crushedness*), so, as the glorious HEALER of all these maladies, Christ announces Himself in the act of reading it, stopping the quotation just before it comes to “the day of vengeance,” which was only to come on the rejecters of His message (<sup><307</sup>John 3:17). The first words, “THE SPIRIT of the LORD is upon ME,” have been noted since the days of the Church Fathers, as an illustrious example of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* being exhibited as in distinct yet harmonious action in the scheme of salvation.

**20. the minister** — the *chazan*, or synagogue-officer.

**all eyes ... fastened on Him** — astounded at His putting in such claims.

**21. began to say**, etc. — His whole address was just a detailed application to Himself of this and perhaps other like prophecies.

**22. gracious words** — “the words of grace,” referring both to the richness of His matter and the sweetness of His manner (<sup><302</sup>Psalms 45:2).

**Is not this**, etc. — (See on <sup><455</sup>Matthew 13:54-56). They knew He had received no rabbinical education, and anything *supernatural* they seemed incapable of conceiving.

**23. this proverb** — like our “Charity begins at home.”

**whatsoever**, etc. — “Strange rumors have reached our ears of Thy doings at Capernaum; but if such power resides in Thee to cure the ills of humanity, why has none of it yet come nearer home, and why is all this alleged power reserved for strangers?” His choice of Capernaum as a place of residence since entering on public life was, it seems, already well known at Nazareth; and when He did come thither, to give no displays of His power when distant places were ringing with His fame, wounded their pride. He had indeed “laid his hands on a few sick folk and healed them” (<sup><405</sup>Mark 6:5); but this seems to have been done quite privately the general unbelief precluding anything more open.

**24. And he said**, etc. — He replies to the one proverb by another, equally familiar, which we express in a rougher form — “Too much familiarity breeds contempt.” Our Lord’s long residence in Nazareth merely as a townsman had made Him *too common*, incapacitating them for appreciating Him as others did who were *less familiar with His everyday demeanor in private life*. A most important principle, to which the wise will pay due regard. (See also <sup><4076></sup>Matthew 7:6, on which our Lord Himself ever acted.)

**25-27. But I tell you**, etc. — falling back for support on the well-known examples of Elijah and Elisha (Eliseus), whose miraculous power, passing by those who were *near*, expended itself on those *at a distance*, yea on *heathens*, “the two great prophets who stand at the commencement of prophetic antiquity, and whose miracles strikingly prefigured those of our Lord. As He intended like them to feed the poor and cleanse the lepers, He *points to these miracles of mercy*, and not to the *fire* from heaven and the *bears* that tore the mockers” [STIER].

**three years and six months** — So <sup><3167></sup>James 5:17, including perhaps the six months *after the last fall of rain*, when there would be little or none at any rate; whereas in <sup><1181></sup>1 Kings 18:1, which says the rain returned “in the third year,” that period is probably not reckoned.

**26, 27. save ... saving** — “but only.” (Compare <sup><4133></sup>Mark 13:32, *Greek*.)

**Sarepta** — “Zarephath” (<sup><1179></sup>1 Kings 17:9), a heathen village between Tyre and Sidon. (See <sup><4174></sup>Mark 7:24.)

**28, 29. when they heard these things** — these allusions to the *heathen*, just as afterwards with Paul (<sup><4221></sup>Acts 22:21,22).

**29. rose up** — broke up the service irreverently and rushed forth.

**thrust him** — with violence, as a prisoner in their hands.

**brow**, etc. — Nazareth, though not built on the ridge of a hill, is in part surrounded by one to the west, having several such precipices. (See <sup><4252></sup>2 Chronicles 25:12 <sup><1183></sup>2 Kings 9:33.) It was a mode of capital punishment not unusual among the Romans and others. This was the first insult which the Son of God received, and it came from “them of His own household!” (<sup><4089></sup>Matthew 10:36).

**30. passing through the midst**, etc. — evidently in a miraculous way, though perhaps quite noiselessly, leading them to wonder afterwards what spell could have come over them, that they allowed Him to escape. (Similar escapes, however, in times of persecution, are not unexampled.)

**31. down to Capernaum** — It lay on the Sea of Galilee (<sup><4143></sup>Matthew 4:13), whereas Nazareth lay high.

## <sup><4063></sup>LUKE 4:33-37.

### DEMONIAC HEALED.

**33. unclean** — The frequency with which this character of *impurity* is applied to evil spirits is worthy of notice.

**cried out**, etc. — (See <sup><4182></sup>Matthew 8:29 <sup><4181></sup>Mark 3:11).

**35. rebuked them**, etc. — (See on <sup><4041></sup>Luke 4:41).

**thrown him**, etc. — See on <sup><4101></sup>Mark 9:20.

**36. What a word** — a word from the *Lord of spirits*.

## <sup><4063></sup>LUKE 4:38-41.

### PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW AND MANY OTHERS, HEALED.

(See on <sup><4084></sup>Matthew 8:14-17.)

**41. suffered them not to speak** — The marginal reading ("to say that they knew him to be Christ") here is wrong. Our Lord ever refused testimony from devils, *for the very reason why they were eager to give it*, because He and they would thus seem to be one interest, as His enemies actually alleged. (See on <sup><4124></sup>Matthew 12:24, etc.; see also <sup><4166></sup>Acts 16:16-18.)

## <sup><4142></sup>LUKE 4:42-44.

### JESUS SOUGHT OUT AT MORNING PRAYER, AND ENTREATED TO STAY, DECLINES FROM THE URGENCY OF HIS WORK.

See on <sup><4035></sup>Mark 1:35-39, where we learn how early He retired, and how He was engaged in solitude when they came seeking Him.

**42. stayed him** — “were staying Him,” or sought to do it. What a contrast to the Gadarenes! The nature of His mission required Him to keep moving, that all might hear the glad tidings (~~4089~~ Matthew 8:34).

**43. I must**, etc. — but duty only could move Him to deny entreaties so grateful to His spirit.

# CHAPTER 5

## LUKE 5:1-11.

### MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES — CALL OF PETER, JAMES, AND JOHN.

Not their *first* call, however, recorded in <sup><B></sup>John 1:35-42; nor their *second*, recorded in <sup><B></sup>Matthew 4:18-22; but their *third* and last before their appointment to the apostleship. That these calls were all distinct and *progressive*, seems quite plain. (Similar stages are observable in other eminent servants of Christ.)

**3. taught ... out of the ship** — (See on <sup><B></sup>Matthew 13:2).

**4. for a draught** — munificent recompense for the use of his boat.

**5. Master** — betokening not surely a first acquaintance, but a relationship already formed.

**all night** — the usual time of fishing then (<sup><B></sup>John 21:3), and even now Peter, as a fisherman, knew how hopeless it was to “let down his net” again, save as a mere act of faith, “at His word” of command, which carried in it, as it ever does, assurance of success. (This shows he must have been already and for some time a follower of Christ.)

**6. net brake** — rather “was breaking,” or “beginning to break,” as in <sup><B></sup>Luke 5:7, “beginning to sink.”

**8. Depart**, etc. — Did Peter then wish Christ to leave him? Verily no. His all was wrapt up in Him (<sup><B></sup>John 6:68). “It was rather, Woe is me, Lord! How shall I abide this blaze of glory? A sinner such as I am is not fit company for Thee.” (Compare <sup><B></sup>Isaiah 6:5.)

**10. Simon, fear not** — This shows how the Lord read Peter’s speech. *The more highly they deemed Him, ever the more grateful it was to the Redeemer’s spirit. Never did they pain Him by manifesting too lofty conceptions of Him.*

**from henceforth** — marking a new stage of their connection with Christ. The last was simply, “I will make you fishers.”

**fishers of men** — “What wilt thou think, Simon, overwhelmed by this draught of fishes, when I shall bring to thy net what will beggar all this glory?” (See on ~~4048~~ Matthew 4:18.)

**11. forsook all** — They did this before (~~4049~~ Matthew 4:20); now they do it again; and yet after the Crucifixion they are at their boats once more (~~4050~~ John 21:3). In such a business this is easily conceivable. After pentecost, however, they appear to have finally abandoned their secular calling.

## ~~4052~~ LUKE 5:12-16.

### LEPER HEALED.

(See on ~~4053~~ Matthew 8:2-4.)

**15. But so**, etc. — (See ~~4054~~ Mark 1:45).

## ~~4057~~ LUKE 5:17-26.

### PARALYTIC HEALED.

(See on ~~4058~~ Matthew 9:1-8).

**17. Pharisees and doctors ... sitting by** — the highest testimony yet borne to our Lord's growing influence, and the necessity increasingly felt by the ecclesiastics throughout the country of coming to some definite judgment regarding Him.

**power of the Lord ... present** — with Jesus.

**to heal them** — the sick people.

**19. housetop** — the flat roof.

**through the tiling ... before Jesus** — (See on ~~4059~~ Mark 2:2).

**24. take up thy couch** — “sweet saying! The bed had borne the man; now the man shall bear the bed!” [BENGEL].

## LUKE 5:27-32.

### LEVI'S CALL AND FEAST.

(See on <sup><199></sup>Matthew 9:9-13; and <sup><194></sup>Mark 2:14.)

**30. their scribes** — a mode of expression showing that Luke was writing for *Gentiles*.

## LUKE 5:33-39.

### FASTING.

(See on <sup><194></sup>Matthew 9:14-17.)

The *incongruities* mentioned in <sup><196></sup>Luke 5:36-38 were intended to illustrate the difference between the *genius* of the old and new economies, and the danger of *mixing up* the one with the other. As in the one case supposed, “the rent is made worse,” and in the other, “the new wine is spilled,” *so by a mongrel mixture of the ascetic ritualism of the old with the spiritual freedom of the new economy, both are disfigured and destroyed*. The additional parable in <sup><199></sup>Luke 5:39, which is peculiar to Luke, has been variously interpreted. But the “new wine” seems plainly to be the evangelical freedom which Christ was introducing; and the old, the opposite spirit of Judaism: men long accustomed to the latter could not be expected “straightway” — all at once — to take a liking for the former; that is, “These inquiries about the difference between My disciples and the Pharisees,” and even John’s, are not surprising; they are the effect of *a natural revulsion against sudden change*, which time will cure; *the new wine will itself in time become old, and so acquire all the added charms of antiquity*. What lessons does this teach, on the one hand, to those who unreasonably cling to what is getting antiquated; and, on the other, to hasty reformers who have no patience with the timidity of their weaker brethren!



# CHAPTER 6

## LUKE 6:1-5.

### PLUCKING CORN-EARS ON THE SABBATH.

(See on <sup><011></sup>Matthew 12:1-8 and <sup><023></sup>Mark 2:23-28.)

**1. second sabbath after the first** — an obscure expression, occurring here only, generally understood to mean, the first sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread. The reasons cannot be stated here, nor is the opinion itself quite free from difficulty.

**5. Lord also** — rather “even” (as in <sup><028></sup>Matthew 12:8).

**of the sabbath** — as naked a claim to

*all the authority of Him who gave the law at Mount Sinai* as could possibly be made; that is, “I have said enough to vindicate the men ye carp at on My account: *but in this place is the Lord of the law, and they have His sanction.*” (See <sup><028></sup>Mark 2:28.)

## LUKE 6:6-11.

### WITHERED HAND HEALED.

(See on <sup><029></sup>Matthew 12:9-15 and <sup><006></sup>Mark 3:1-7.)

**7. watched whether**, etc. — In Matthew (<sup><029></sup>Matthew 12:9) this is put as an ensnaring question of theirs to our Lord, who accordingly speaks to *the state of their hearts* (<sup><009></sup>Luke 6:9), just as if they had spoken it out.

**9. good, or ... evil, save ... or destroy** — By this novel way of putting His case, our Lord teaches the great ethical principle, that *to neglect any opportunity of doing good is to incur the guilt of doing evil*; and by this law He bound His own spirit. (See <sup><004></sup>Mark 3:4.)

**11. filled with madness** — The word denotes senseless rage at the confusion to which our Lord had put them, both by word and deed.

**what ... do to Jesus** — not so much *whether* to get rid of Him, but *how* to compass it. (See on ~~4086~~ Matthew 3:6.)

## ~~4082~~ LUKE 6:12-49.

### THE TWELVE APOSTLES CHOSEN — GATHERING MULTITUDES — GLORIOUS HEALING.

**12, 13. went out** — probably from Capernaum.

**all night in prayer ... and when ... day, he called**, etc. — The work with which the next *day* began shows what had been the burden of this *night's* devotions. As He directed His disciples to pray for “laborers” just before sending themselves forth (see on ~~4087~~ Matthew 9:37; ~~4088~~ Matthew 10:1), so here we find the Lord Himself in prolonged communion with His Father in preparation for the solemn appointment of those men who were to give birth to His Church, and from whom the world in all time was to take a new mould. How instructive is this!

**13-16.** (See on ~~4089~~ Matthew 10:2-4.)

**17. in the plain** — by some rendered “on a level place,” that is, a piece of high tableland, by which they understand the same thing, as “on the mountain,” where our Lord delivered the sermon recorded by Matthew (~~4090~~ Matthew 5:1), of which they take this following discourse of Luke to be but an abridged form. But as the sense given in our version is the more accurate, so there are weighty reasons for considering the discourses different. This one contains little more than a fourth of the other; it has woes of its own, as well as the beatitudes common to both; but above all, that of Matthew was plainly delivered a good while *before*, while this was spoken *after* the choice of the twelve; and as we know that our Lord delivered some of His weightiest sayings more than once, there is no difficulty in supposing this to be one of His more extended repetitions; nor could anything be more worthy of it.

**19. healed** — kept healing, denoting successive acts of mercy till it went over “*all*” that needed. There is something unusually grand and pictorial in this touch of description.

**20, 21.** In the Sermon on the Mount the benediction is pronounced upon the “poor *in spirit*” and those who “hunger and thirst *after righteousness*” (~~4091~~ Matthew 5:3,6). Here it is simply on the “poor” and the “hungry now.” In this form of the discourse, then, our Lord seems to have had in view

“*the poor of this world*, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him,” as these very beatitudes are paraphrased by James (<sup><1015></sup>James 2:5).

**21. laugh** — How charming is the liveliness of this word, to express what in Matthew is called being “comforted!”

**22. separate you** — whether from their *Church*, by excommunication, or from their society; both hard to flesh and blood.

**for the Son of man’s sake** — Compare <sup><1051></sup>Matthew 5:11, “for MY SAKE”; and immediately before, “for *righteousness*’ sake” (<sup><1010></sup>Luke 6:10). Christ thus *binds up the cause of righteousness in the world with the reception of Himself*.

**23. leap for joy** — a livelier word than “be exceeding glad” of “exult” (<sup><1052></sup>Matthew 5:12).

**24, 25. rich ... full ... laugh** — who have all their good things and joyous feelings *here and now*, in perishable objects.

**received your consolation** — (see on <sup><1065></sup>Luke 16:25).

**shall hunger** — their inward craving strong as ever, but the materials of satisfaction forever gone.

**26. all ... speak well of you** — alluding to the court paid to the false prophets of old (<sup><1021></sup>Micah 2:11). For the principle of this woe, and its proper limits, see <sup><1059></sup>John 15:19.

**27-36.** (See on <sup><1054></sup>Matthew 5:44-48; <sup><1072></sup>Matthew 7:12; and <sup><1042></sup>Matthew 14:12-14.)

**37, 38.** See on <sup><1008></sup>Matthew 7:1,2; but this is much fuller and more graphic.

**39. Can the blind**, etc. — not in the Sermon on the Mount, but recorded by Matthew in another and very striking connection (<sup><1054></sup>Matthew 15:14).

**40. The disciple**, etc. — that is, “The disciple aims to come up to his master, and he thinks himself complete when he does so: if you then be blind leaders of the blind, the perfection of one’s training under you will only land him the more certainly in one common ruin with yourselves.”

**41-49.** (See on <sup><1008></sup>Matthew 7:3-5, <sup><1076></sup>Matthew 7:16-27.)

# CHAPTER 7

## LUKE 7:1-10.

### CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED.

(See on ~~4185~~ Matthew 8:5-13.)

**4. he was worthy** — a testimony most precious, coming from those who probably were strangers to the principle from which he acted (~~2000~~ Ecclesiastes 7:1).

**5. loved our nation** — Having found that “salvation was of the Jews,” he loved them for it.

**built**, etc. — His love took this practical and appropriate form.

## LUKE 7:11-17.

### WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON RAISED TO LIFE. (IN LUKE ONLY).

**11. Nain** — a small village not elsewhere mentioned in Scripture, and only this once probably visited by our Lord; it lay a little to the south of Mount Tabor, about twelve miles from Capernaum.

**12. carried out** — “was being carried out.” Dead bodies, being ceremonially unclean, were not allowed to be buried within the cities (though the kings of David's house were buried in the city of David), and the funeral was usually on the same day as the death.

**only son**, etc. — affecting particulars, told with delightful simplicity.

**13. the Lord** — “This sublime appellation is more usual with Luke and John than Matthew; Mark holds the mean” [BENGEL].

**saw her, he had compassion**, etc. — What consolation to thousands of the bereaved has this single verse carried from age to age!

**14, 15.** What mingled majesty and grace shines in this scene! The Resurrection and the Life in human flesh, with a word of command,

bringing back life to the dead body; Incarnate Compassion summoning its absolute power to dry a widow's tears!

**16. visited his people** — more than bringing back the days of Elijah and Elisha (<sup><1177></sup>1 Kings 17:17-24 <sup><1183></sup>2 Kings 4:32-37; and see <sup><1153></sup>Matthew 15:31).

## <sup><1178></sup>LUKE 7:18-35.

### THE BAPTIST'S MESSAGE THE REPLY, AND CONSEQUENT DISCOURSE.

(See on <sup><1112></sup>Matthew 11:2-14.)

**29, 30. And all the people that heard** — “on hearing (this).” These are the observations of *the Evangelist*, not of our Lord.

**and the publicans** — a striking clause.

**justified God, being baptized**, etc. — rather, “having been baptized.” The meaning is, They acknowledged the divine wisdom of such a preparatory ministry as John's, in leading them to Him who now spake to them (see <sup><1116></sup>Luke 1:16,17); whereas the Pharisees and lawyers, true to themselves in refusing the baptism of John, set at naught also the merciful design of God in the Savior Himself, to their own destruction.

**31-35. the Lord said**, etc. — As cross, capricious children, invited by their playmates to join them in their amusements, will play with them neither at weddings nor funerals (juvenile imitations of the joyous and mournful scenes of life), so that generation rejected both John and his Master: the one because he was too unsocial — more like a demoniac than a rational man; the other, because He was too much the reverse, given to animal indulgences, and consorting with the lowest classes of society. But the children of Wisdom recognize and honor her, whether in the austere garb of the Baptist or in the more attractive style of his Master, whether in the Law or in the Gospel, whether in rags or in royalty, for “*the full soul loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet*” (<sup><1170></sup>Proverbs 27:7).

◀QT36 LUK 7:36-50.

### CHRIST'S FEET WASHED WITH TEARS.

**37, 38. a sinner** — one who had led a profligate life.

*Note.* — *There is no ground whatever for the popular notion that this woman was Mary Magdalene, nor do we know what her name was.* (See on ▶QT36 Luke 8:2.)

**an alabaster box of ointment** — a perfume vessel, in some cases very costly (▶QT36 John 12:5). “The ointment has here a peculiar interest, as the offering by a penitent of what had been an accessory in her unhallowed work of sin” [ALFORD].

**38. at his feet behind him** — the posture at meals being a reclining one, with the feet out behind.

**began to wash**, etc. — to “water with a shower.” The tears, which were quite *involuntary*, poured down in a flood upon His naked feet, as she bent down to kiss them; and deeming them rather fouled than washed by this, she hastened to wipe them off with the only towel she had, the long tresses of her own hair, “with which slaves were wont to wash their masters’ feet” [STIER].

**kissed** — The word signifies “to kiss fondly, to caress,” or to “kiss again and again,” which ▶QT36 Luke 7:45 shows is meant here. What prompted this? *Much love, springing from a sense of much forgiveness.* So says He who knew her heart (▶QT36 Luke 7:47). Where she had met with Christ before, or what words of His had brought life to her dead heart and a sense of divine pardon to her guilty soul, we know not. But probably she was of the crowd of “publicans and sinners” whom Incarnate Compassion drew so often around Him, and heard from His lips some of those words such as never man spake, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor,” etc. No personal interview had up to this time taken place between them; but she could keep her feelings no longer to herself, and having found her way to Him (and entered along with him, ▶QT36 Luke 7:45), they burst forth in this surpassing yet most artless style, as if her whole soul would go out to Him.

**39. the Pharisee** — who had formed no definite opinion of our Lord, and invited Him apparently to obtain materials for a judgment.

**spake within himself**, etc. — “Ha! I have Him now; He plainly knows nothing of the person He allows to touch Him; and so, He can be no

prophet.” Not so fast, Simon; thou hast not seen through thy Guest yet, but He hath seen through thee.

**40-43.** Like Nathan with David, our Lord conceals His home thrust under the veil of a parable, and makes His host himself pronounce upon the case. The two debtors are the woman and Simon; the criminality of the one was *ten times* that of the other (in the proportion of “five hundred” to “fifty”); but both being equally insolvent, both are with equal frankness forgiven; and Simon is made to own that the greatest debtor to forgiving mercy will cling to her Divine Benefactor with the deepest gratitude. Does our Lord then admit that Simon was a forgiving man? Let us see.

**44-47. I entered ... no water** — a compliment to guests. Was this “much love?” Was it *any*?

**45. no kiss** — of salutation. How much love was here? *Any at all*?

**46. with oil ... not anoint** — even common *olive oil* in contrast with the woman’s “ointment” or *aromatic balsam*. What evidence was thus afforded of any feeling which forgiveness prompts? Our Lord speaks this with delicate politeness, as if *hurt* at these inattentions of His host, which though not *invariably* shown to guests, were the customary marks of studied respect and regard. The inference is plain — *only one of the debtors was really forgiven*, though in the first instance, to give room for the play of withheld feelings, the forgiveness of both is supposed in the parable.

**47. Her sins which are many** — “Those many sins of hers,” our Lord, who admitted how much more she owed than the Pharisee, now proclaims in naked terms the forgiveness of her guilt.

**for** — not *because*, as if love were the cause of forgiveness, but “inasmuch as,” or “in proof of which.” The latter clause of the verse, and the whole structure of the parable, plainly show this to be the meaning.

**little forgiven ... loveth little** — delicately ironical intimation of *no love* and *no forgiveness* in the present case.

**48. said unto her**, etc. — an unsought assurance, usually springing up unexpected in the midst of active duty and warm affections, while often it flies from those who mope and are paralyzed for want of it.

**49, 50. they that sat ... Who is this**, etc. — No wonder they were startled to hear One who was reclining at the same couch, and partaking of the same hospitalities with themselves, assume the awful prerogative of “even forgiving sins.” But so far from receding from this claim, or softening it down, our Lord only repeats it, with two precious additions: one,

announcing what was the one secret of the “forgiveness” she had experienced, and which carried “salvation” in its bosom; the other, a glorious dismissal of her in that “peace” which she had already felt, but is now assured she has His full warrant to enjoy! This wonderful scene teaches two very weighty truths:

- (1) *Though there be degrees of guilt, insolvency, or inability to wipe out the dishonor done to God, is common to all sinners.*
- (2) *As Christ is the Great Creditor to whom all debt, whether great or small, contracted by sinners is owing, so to Him belongs the prerogative of forgiving it.*

This latter truth is brought out in the structure and application of the present parable as it is nowhere else. Either then Jesus was a blaspheming deceiver, or He is God manifest in the flesh.



# CHAPTER 8

## LUKE 8:1-3.

### A GALILEAN CIRCUIT, WITH THE TWELVE AND CERTAIN MINISTERING WOMEN. (IN LUKE ONLY).

**1. went** — traveled, made a progress.

**throughout every city and village** — through town and village.

**preaching**, etc. — the Prince of itinerant preachers scattering far and wide the seed of the Kingdom.

**2. certain women ... healed**, etc. — on whom He had the double claim of having brought healing to their bodies and new life to their souls. Drawn to Him by an attraction more than magnetic, they accompany Him on this tour as His *almoners* — ministering unto Him of their substance. Blessed Savior! It melts us to see Thee living upon the love of Thy ransomed people. That they bring Thee their poor offerings we wonder not. Thou hast sown unto them spiritual things, and they think it, as well they might, a small thing that Thou shouldst reap their material things (~~4911~~ 1 Corinthians 9:11). But dost Thou take it at their hand, and subsist upon it? “Oh, the depth of the riches” (~~6133~~ Romans 11:33) — of this poverty of His!

**Mary Magdalene** — that is, probably, of *Magdala* (on which see ~~4159~~ Matthew 15:39; see on ~~4180~~ Mark 8:10).

**went** — rather, “had gone.”

**seven devils** — (~~4169~~ Mark 16:9). It is a great wrong to this honored woman to identify her with the once profligate woman of ~~4156~~ Luke 7:37, and to call all such penitents *Magdalenes*. The mistake has arisen from confounding unhappy demoniacal possession with the conscious entertainment of diabolic impurity, or supposing the one to have been afflicted as a punishment for the other — for which there is not the least scriptural ground.

**3. Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward** — If the steward of such a godless, cruel, and licentious wretch as Herod Antipas (see on ~~4064~~ Mark 6:14, etc.). differed greatly from himself, his post would be no easy or enviable one. That he was a disciple of Christ is very improbable, though he

might be favorably disposed towards Him. But what we know not of him, and may fear he lacked, we are sure his wife possessed. Healed either of “evil spirits” or of some one of the “infirmities” here referred to — the ordinary diseases of humanity — she joins in the Savior’s train of grateful, clinging followers. Of “Susanna,” next mentioned, we know nothing but the name, and that here only. But her services on this memorable occasion have immortalized her name. “Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done,” in ministering to the Lord of her substance on His Galilean tour, “shall be spoken of as a memorial of her” (◀1419 Mark 14:9).

**many others** — that is, many other *healed women*. What a train! and all ministering unto Him of their substance, and He allowing them to do it and subsisting upon it! “He who was the support of the spiritual life of His people disdained not to be supported by them in the body. He was not ashamed to penetrate so far into the depths of poverty as to live upon the alms of love. He only fed others miraculously; for Himself, He lived upon the love of His people. He gave all things to men, His brethren, and received all things from them, enjoying thereby the pure blessing of love: which is then only perfect when it is at the same time both giving and receiving. Who could invent such things as these? *It was necessary to live in this manner that it might be so recorded*” [OLSHAUSEN].

## ◀1006 LUKE 8:4-18.

### PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

(See on ▶1008 Mark 4:3-9, ▶1014 Mark 4:14-20.)

**16. No man**, etc. — (see on ▶1015 Matthew 5:15, of which this is nearly a repetition).

**17. For nothing**, etc. — (See on ▶0710 Luke 12:2).

**18. how ye** — in ▶1008 Mark 4:24, “*what ye hear.*” The one implies the other. The precept is very weighty.

**seemeth to have** — or, “thinketh that he hath” (*Margin*). The “having” of ▶1032 Matthew 13:12 (on which see), and this “thinking he hath,” are not different. Hanging loosely on him, and not appropriated, it *is* and *is not* his.

◀126▶ **LUKE 8:19-21.**

**HIS MOTHER AND BRETHREN DESIRE  
TO SPEAK WITH HIM.**

(See on ▶126 Matthew 12:46-50).

◀122▶ **LUKE 8:22-25.**

**JESUS CROSSING THE LAKE, STILLS THE STORM.**

(See on ▶123 Matthew 8:23-27, and ▶125 Mark 4:35-41).

**23. filled** — literally, “were getting filled,” that is, those who sailed; meaning that their ship was so.

◀126▶ **LUKE 8:26-39.**

**DEMONIAC OF GADARA HEALED.**

(See on ▶123 Matthew 8:28-34; and ▶121 Mark 5:1-20).

◀120▶ **LUKE 8:40-56.**

**JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER RAISED  
AND ISSUE OF BLOOD HEALED.**

(See on ▶125 Matthew 9:18-26; and ▶121 Mark 5:21-43).

**40. gladly received him, for ... all waiting for him** — The abundant teaching of that day (in ▶123 Matthew 13:1-58; and see ▶125 Mark 4:36), had only whetted the people’s appetite; and disappointed, as would seem, that He had left them in the evening to cross the lake, they remain hanging about the beach, having got a hint, probably through some of His disciples, that He would be back the same evening. Perhaps they witnessed at a distance the sudden calming of the tempest. Here at least they are, watching for His return, and welcoming Him to the shore. The tide of His popularity was now fast rising.

**45. Who touched me?** — “Askest Thou, Lord, who touched Thee? Rather ask who touched Thee *not* in such a throng.”

**46. Somebody hath touched** — yes, the multitude “*thronged*” and *pressed* Him — “they *jostled against* Him,” but all *involuntarily*; they were merely *carried along*; but one, one only — “Somebody TOUCHED” HIM, with the conscious, voluntary, dependent touch of faith, reaching forth its hands expressly to have contact with Him. This and this only Jesus acknowledges and seeks out. Even so, as the Church Father AUGUSTINE long ago said, *multitudes still come similarly close to Christ in the means of grace, but all to no purpose, being only sucked into the crowd*. The voluntary, living contact of faith is that electric conductor which alone draws virtue out of Him.

**47. declared ... before all** — This, though a great trial to the shrinking modesty of the believing woman, was just what Christ wanted in dragging her forth, her public testimony to the facts of her case — both her disease, with her abortive efforts at a cure, and the instantaneous and perfect relief which her touch of the Great Healer had brought her.

**55. give her meat** — (See on ~~4154~~ Mark 5:43).

# CHAPTER 9

## LUKE 9:1-6.

### MISSION OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

(See on <sup><401></sup>Matthew 10:1-15).

**1. power and authority** — He both *qualified* and *authorized* them.

## LUKE 9:7-9.

### HEROD TROUBLED AT WHAT HE HEARS OF CHRIST DESIRES TO SEE HIM.

(See on <sup><4064></sup>Mark 6:14-30).

**7. perplexed** — at a loss, embarrassed.

**said of some, that John was risen** — Among many opinions, this was the one which Herod himself adopted, for the reason, no doubt, mentioned on <sup><4064></sup>Mark 6:14.

**9. desired to see him** — but did not, till as a prisoner He was sent to him by Pilate just before His death, as we learn from <sup><4238></sup>Luke 23:8.

## LUKE 9:10-17.

### ON THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE JESUS RETIRES WITH THEM TO BETHSAIDA, AND THERE MIRACULOUSLY FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND.

(See on <sup><4068></sup>Mark 6:31-44).

LUKE 9:18-27.

**PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST — OUR LORD'S FIRST  
EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING  
DEATH, AND WARNINGS ARISING OUT OF IT.**

(See on <sup><4063></sup>Matthew 16:13-28; and <sup><4084></sup>Mark 8:34).

**24. will save** — “Is minded to save,” bent on saving. The pith of this maxim depends — as often in such weighty sayings (for example, “Let the *dead* bury the *dead*,” <sup><4082></sup>Matthew 8:22) — on the double sense attached to the word “life,” a lower and a higher, the natural and the spiritual, temporal and eternal. An entire sacrifice of the lower, or a willingness to make it, is indispensable to the preservation of the higher life; and he who cannot bring himself to surrender the one for the sake of the other shall eventually lose both.

**26. ashamed of me, and of my words** — The sense of *shame* is one of the strongest in our nature, one of the social affections founded on our love of *reputation*, which causes instinctive aversion to what is fitted to lower it, and was given us as a preservative from all that is properly *shameful*. When one is, in this sense of it, *lost to shame*, he is nearly past hope (<sup><3086></sup>Zechariah 3:5 <sup><4065></sup>Jeremiah 6:15 3:3). But when Christ and “His words” — Christianity, especially in its more spiritual and uncompromising features — are unpopular, the same instinctive desire to *stand well with others* begets the temptation to be ashamed of Him, which only the ‘expulsive power’ of a higher affection can effectually counteract.

**Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh**, etc. — He will render to that man his own treatment; He will disown him before the most august of all assemblies, and put him to “*shame* and everlasting *contempt*” (<sup><3086></sup>Daniel 12:2). “Oh shame, to be put to shame before God, Christ, and angels!” [BENGEL].

**27. not taste of death fill they see the kingdom of God** — “see it come with power” (<sup><4008></sup>Mark 9:1); or see “the Son of man coming in His kingdom” (<sup><4068></sup>Matthew 16:28). The reference, beyond doubt, is to the firm establishment and victorious progress, in the lifetime of some then present, of that new Kingdom of Christ, which was destined to work the greatest of all changes on this earth, and be the grand pledge of His final coming in glory.

## LUKE 9:28-36.

### JESUS TRANSFIGURED.

**28. an eight days after these sayings** — including the day on which this was spoken and that of the Transfiguration. Matthew and Mark say (<sup>407E</sup>Matthew 17:1 <sup>409E</sup>Mark 9:2) “after six days,” *excluding* these two days. As the “sayings” so definitely connected with the transfiguration scene are those announcing His *death* — at which Peter and all the Twelve were so startled and scandalized — so this scene was designed to show to the eyes as well as the heart how *glorious* that death was in the view of Heaven.

**Peter, James, and John** — partners before in secular business; now sole witnesses of the resurrection of Jairus’ daughter (<sup>405E</sup>Mark 5:37), the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden (<sup>414E</sup>Mark 14:33).

**a mountain** — not *Tabor*, according to long tradition, with which the facts ill comport, but some one near the lake.

**to pray** — for the period He had now reached was a critical and anxious one. (See on <sup>406E</sup>Matthew 16:13). But who can adequately translate those “strong cryings and tears?” Methinks, as I steal by His side, I hear from Him these plaintive sounds, “Lord, who hath believed Our report? I am come unto Mine own and Mine own receive Me not; I am become a stranger unto My brethren, an alien to My mother’s children: Consider Mine enemies, for they are many, and they hate Me with cruel hatred. Arise, O Lord, let not man prevail. Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth: Show Me a token for good: Father, glorify Thy name.”

**29. as he prayed, the fashion**, etc. — Before He cried He was answered, and while He was yet speaking He was heard. Blessed interruption to prayer this! Thanks to God, transfiguring manifestations are not quite strangers here. Ofttimes in the deepest depths, out of groanings which cannot be uttered, God’s dear children are suddenly transported to a kind of heaven upon earth, and their soul is made as the chariots of Amminadab. Their prayers fetch down such light, strength, holy gladness, as make their face to shine, putting a kind of celestial radiance upon it (<sup>408E</sup>2 Corinthians 3:18, with <sup>409E</sup>Exodus 34:29-35).

**raiment white**, etc. — Matthew says, “His face did shine as the sun” (<sup>407E</sup>Matthew 17:2), and Mark says (<sup>409E</sup>Mark 9:3), “His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them” (<sup>409E</sup>Mark 9:3). The light, then, it would seem, shone not *upon* Him *from*

*without*, but *out of Him from within*; He was all irradiated, was in one blaze of celestial glory. What a contrast to that “visage more marred than men, and His form than the sons of men!” (<sup>25214</sup>Isaiah 52:14).

**30, 31. there talked with him two men ... Moses and Elias ... appeared in glory** — “Who would have believed these were not *angels* had not their *human* names been subjoined?” [BENGEL].

(Compare <sup>4011</sup>Acts 1:10 <sup>41115</sup>Mark 16:5). Moses represented “the law,” Elijah “the prophets,” and both together the whole testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Old Testament saints, to Christ; now not borne in a *book*, but by *living men*, not to a *coming*, but a *come* Messiah, *visibly*, for they “appeared,” and *audibly*, for they “spake.”

**31. spake** — “were speaking.”

**of his decease** — “departure”; beautiful euphemism (softened term) for *death*, which Peter, who witnessed the scene, uses to express his own expected death, and the use of which single term seems to have recalled the whole by a sudden rush of recollection, and occasioned that delightful allusion to this scene which we find in <sup>40115</sup>2 Peter 1:15-18.

**which he should accomplish** — “was to fulfill.”

**at Jerusalem** — Mark the *historical character* and *local features* which Christ’s death assumed to these glorified men — as important as it is charming — and see on <sup>40111</sup>Luke 2:11. What now may be gathered from this statement?

(1) *That a dying Messiah is the great article of the true Jewish theology.* For a long time the Church had fallen clean away from the faith of this article, and even from a preparedness to receive it. But here we have that jewel raked out of the dunghill of Jewish traditions, and by the true representatives of the Church of old made the one subject of talk with Christ Himself.

(2) *The adoring gratitude of glorified men for His undertaking to accomplish such a decease; their felt dependence upon it for the glory in which they appeared; their profound interest in the progress of it, their humble solaces and encouragements to go through with it; and their sense of its peerless and overwhelming glory.*

“Go, matchless, adored One, a Lamb to the slaughter! rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious; dishonored, abhorred, and soon to be slain by men, but worshipped by cherubim, ready to be greeted by all heaven. In virtue of that decease we are here; our all is suspended on it and wrapped up



in it. Thine every step is watched by us with ineffable interest; and though it were too high an honor to us to be permitted to drop a word of cheer into that precious but now clouded spirit, yet, as the first-fruits of harvest; the very joy set before Him, we cannot choose but tell Him that what is the depth of shame to Him is covered with glory in the eyes of Heaven, that the Cross to Him is the Crown to us, that that ‘decease’ is all our salvation and all our desire.” And who can doubt that such a scene *did* minister deep cheer to that spirit? It is said they “talked” not *to Him*, but “*with Him*”; and if they told *Him* how glorious His decease was, might He not fitly reply, “I know it, but your voice, as messengers from heaven come down to tell it Me, is music in Mine ears.”

**32. and when they were awake** — so, certainly, the most commentators: but if we translate literally, it should be “*but having kept awake*” [MEYER, ALFORD]. Perhaps “*having roused themselves up*” [OLSHAUSEN] may come near enough to the literal sense; but from the word used we can gather no more than that they *shook off their drowsiness*. It was night, and the Lord seems to have spent the whole night on the mountain (ⲁⲟⲩⲩⲉ Luke 9:37).

**saw his glory**, etc. — The emphasis lies on “*saw*,” qualifying them to become “*eye-witnesses* of His majesty” (ⲁⲟⲩⲩⲉ 2 Peter 1:16).

**33. they departed** — Ah! bright manifestations in this vale of tears are always “departing” manifestations.

**34, 35. a cloud** — not one of our watery clouds, but the Shekinah-cloud (see on ⲁⲟⲩⲩⲉ Matthew 23:39), the pavilion of the manifested presence of God with His people, what Peter calls “the excellent” of “magnificent glory” (ⲁⲟⲩⲩⲉ 2 Peter 1:17).

**a voice** — “*such* a voice,” says Peter emphatically; “and this voice [he adds] we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount” (ⲁⲟⲩⲩⲉ 2 Peter 1:17,18).

**35. my beloved Son ... hear him** — *reverentially, implicitly, alone*.

**36. Jesus was found alone** — Moses and Elias are gone. Their work is done, and they have disappeared from the scene, feeling no doubt with their fellow servant the Baptist, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” The cloud too is gone, and the naked majestic Christ, braced in spirit, and enshrined in the reverent affection of His disciples, is left — to suffer!

**kept it close** — feeling, for once at least, that such things were unmeet as yet for the general gaze.

## ◀LUK 9:37-45.

### DEMONIAC AND LUNATIC BOY HEALED — CHRIST'S SECOND EXPLICIT ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

(See on ▶MARK 9:14-32.)

**43-45. the mighty power of God** — “the majesty” or “mightiness” of God in this last miracle, the transfiguration, etc.: the *divine grandeur* of Christ rising upon them daily. By comparing ▶MAT 17:22, and ▶MARK 9:30, we gather that this had been the subject of conversation between the Twelve and their Master as they journeyed along.

**44. these sayings** — not what was passing between them about His grandeur [MEYER, etc.], but what He was now to repeat for the second time about His sufferings [DE WETTE, STIER, ALFORD, etc.]; that is, “Be not carried off your feet by all this grandeur of Mine, but bear in mind what I have already told you, and now distinctly repeat, that that Sun in whose beams ye now rejoice is soon to set in midnight gloom.” “The Son of *man*,” says Christ, “into the hands of *men*” — a remarkable antithesis (also in ▶MAT 17:22, and ▶MARK 9:31).

**45. and they feared** — “insomuch that they feared.” Their most cherished ideas were so completely dashed by such announcements, that they were afraid of laying themselves open to rebuke by asking Him any questions.

## ◀LUK 9:46-48.

### STRIFE AMONG THE TWELVE WHO SHOULD BE GREATEST — JOHN REBUKED FOR EXCLUSIVENESS.

**46-48.** (See on ▶MAT 18:1-5).

**49, 50. John answered**, etc. — The link of connection here with the foregoing context lies in the words “in My name” (▶LUK 9:48). “Oh, as to that,” said John, young, warm, but not sufficiently apprehending Christ’s teaching in these things, “we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbade him: Were we wrong?” “Ye were wrong.” “But we did because he followeth not us,” “No matter. For

(1) There is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly [soon] speak evil of Me' [~~4039~~Mark 9:39]. And

(2) If such a person cannot be supposed to be 'against us,' you are to consider him 'for us.'"

Two principles of immense importance. Christ does not say this man should *not* have followed "with them," but simply teaches how he was to be regarded *though he did not* — as a reverer of His name and a promoter of His cause. Surely this condemns not only those horrible attempts *by force* to shut up all within one visible pale of discipleship, which have deluged Christendom with blood in Christ's name, but the same spirit in its milder form of proud ecclesiastic scowl upon all who "after the form which they call *a sect* (as the word signifies, ~~4044~~Acts 24:14), do so worship the God of their fathers." Visible unity in Christ's Church is devoutly to be sought, but this is not the way to it. *See the noble spirit of Moses* (~~4012~~Numbers 11:24-29).

## ~~4051~~LUKE 9:51-56.

### THE PERIOD OF HIS ASSUMPTION APPROACHING CHRIST TAKES HIS LAST LEAVE OF GALILEE — THE SAMARITANS REFUSE TO RECEIVE HIM.

**51. the time was come** — rather, "the days were being fulfilled," or approaching their fulfillment.

**that he should be received up** — "of His assumption," meaning His exaltation to the Father; a sublime expression, taking the sweep of His whole career, as if at one bound He was about to vault into glory. The work of Christ in the flesh is here divided into *two great stages*; all that preceded this belonging to the one, and all that follows it to the other. During the one, He formally "*came to His own*," and "*would have gathered them*"; during the other, the awful consequences of "*His own receiving Him not*" rapidly revealed themselves.

**he steadfastly set his face** — the "He" here is emphatic — "He Himself then." See His own prophetic language, "I have set my face like a flint" (~~2800~~Isaiah 50:7).

**go to Jerusalem** — as His *goal*, but including His preparatory visits to it at the feasts of tabernacles and of dedication (~~4046~~John 7:2,10 10:22,23), and all the intermediate movements and events.

**52. messengers before his face ... to make ready for him** — He had not done this before; but now, instead of avoiding, He seems to court publicity — all now hastening to maturity.

**53. did not receive him, because,** etc. — The Galileans, in going to the festivals at Jerusalem, usually took the Samaritan route [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.6.1], and yet seem to have met with no such inhospitality. But if they were asked to prepare quarters *for the Messiah*, in the person of one whose “face was as though He would go *to Jerusalem*,” their national prejudices would be raised at so marked a slight upon their claims. (See on <sup><404></sup>John 4:20).

**54. James and John** — not *Peter*, as we should have expected, but those “*sons of thunder*” (<sup><407></sup>Mark 3:17), who afterwards wanted to have all the highest honors of the Kingdom to themselves, and the younger of whom had been rebuked already for his exclusiveness (<sup><409></sup>Luke 9:49,50). Yet this was “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” while the other willingly drank of His Lord’s bitter cup. (See on <sup><408></sup>Mark 10:38-40; and <sup><412></sup>Acts 12:2). That same fiery zeal, in a mellowed and hallowed form, in the beloved disciple, we find in <sup><406></sup>2 John 1:5:10 <sup><410></sup>3 John 1:10.

**fire ... as Elias** — a plausible case, occurring also in *Samaria* (<sup><411></sup>2 Kings 1:10-12).

**55, 56. know not what ... spirit** — The thing ye demand, though in keeping with the *legal*, is unsuited to the genius of the *evangelical* dispensation. The sparks of *unholy* indignation would seize readily enough on this example of Elias, though our Lord’s rebuke (as is plain from <sup><415></sup>Luke 9:56) is directed to the *principle* involved rather than the animal heat which doubtless prompted the reference. “It is a golden sentence of Tillotson, Let us never do anything for religion which is contrary to religion” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**56. For the Son of man,** etc. — a saying truly divine, of which all His miracles — for salvation, never destruction — were one continued illustration.

**went to another** — illustrating His own precept (<sup><403></sup>Matthew 10:23).

## <sup><415></sup>LUKE 9:57-62.

### INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATIVE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

*The Precipitate Disciple* (<sup><415></sup>Luke 9:57,58).

(See on <sup><408></sup>Matthew 8:19,20.)

*The Procrastinating Disciple* (<sup><498></sup>Luke 9:59,60).

(See on <sup><402></sup>Matthew 8:21).

*The Irresolute Disciple* (<sup><498></sup>Luke 9:61,62).

**61. I will follow ... but** — The second disciple had a “but” too — a difficulty in the way just then. Yet the different *treatment* of the two cases shows how different was the *spirit* of the two, and to that our Lord addressed Himself. The case of Elisha (<sup><419></sup>1 Kings 19:19-21), though *apparently* similar to this, will be found quite different from the “looking back” of this case, the best illustration of which is that of *those Hindu converts of our day who, when once persuaded to leave their spiritual fathers in order to “bid them farewell which are at home at their house,” very rarely return to them.* (Also see on <sup><402></sup>Matthew 8:21.)

**62. No man**, etc. — As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression “looking back” has a manifest reference to “Lot’s wife” (<sup><418></sup>Genesis 19:26; and see on <sup><273></sup>Luke 17:32). It is not *actual return* to the world, but a *reluctance to break with it.* (Also see on <sup><402></sup>Matthew 8:21.)

# CHAPTER 10

## LUKE 10:1-24.

### MISSION OF THE SEVENTY DISCIPLES, AND THEIR RETURN.

As our Lord's end approaches, the preparations for the establishment of the coming Kingdom are quickened and extended.

**1. the Lord** — a becoming title here, as this appointment was an act truly *lordly* [BENGEL].

**other seventy also** — rather, “others (also in number), seventy”; probably with allusion to the seventy elders of Israel on whom the Spirit descended in the wilderness (<sup>40125</sup>Numbers 11:24,25). The mission, unlike that of the Twelve, was evidently quite *temporary*. All the instructions are in keeping with a brief and hasty *pioneering* mission, intended to supply what of general preparation for coming events the Lord's own visit afterwards to the same “cities and places” (<sup>40101</sup>Luke 10:1) would not, from want of time, now suffice to accomplish; whereas the instructions to the Twelve, besides embracing all those to the Seventy, contemplate *world-wide* and *permanent* effects. Accordingly, after their return from this single missionary tour, we never again read of the Seventy.

**2. The harvest**, etc. — (See on <sup>40357</sup>Matthew 9:37).

**pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest** — (See on <sup>40383</sup>Matthew 9:38).

**3-12.** (See on <sup>40107</sup>Matthew 10:7-16).

**10. son of peace** — inwardly prepared to embrace your message of peace. See note on “worthy,” (see on <sup>40003</sup>Matthew 10:13).

**12-15.** (See on <sup>40113</sup>Matthew 11:20-24).

**for Sodom** — Tyre and Sidon were ruined by commercial prosperity; Sodom sank through its vile pollutions: but the doom of otherwise correct persons who, amidst a blaze of light, reject the Savior, shall be *less endurable* than that of any of these.

**16. He that**, etc. — (See on <sup>40009</sup>Matthew 10:40).

**17. returned** — evidently not long away.

**Lord**, etc. — “Thou hast exceeded Thy promise, for ‘*even the devils*,’” etc. The possession of such power, not being expressly in their commission, as in that to the Twelve (<sup><408></sup>Luke 9:1), filled them with more astonishment and joy than all else.

**through thy name** — taking no credit to themselves, but feeling lifted into a region of unimagined superiority to the powers of evil simply through their connection with Christ.

**18. I beheld** — As much of the force of this glorious statement depends on the nice shade of sense indicated by the *imperfect tense* in the original, it should be brought out in the translation: “I was beholding Satan as lightning falling from heaven”; that is, “I followed you on your mission, and watched its triumphs; while you were wondering at the subjection to you of devils in My name, a grander spectacle *was opening* to My view; sudden as the darting of lightning from heaven to earth, lo! Satan was beheld falling from heaven!” How remarkable is this, that by that law of association which connects a part with the whole, those feeble triumphs of the Seventy seem to have not only brought vividly before the Redeemer the whole ultimate result of His mission, but compressed it into a moment and quickened it into the rapidity of lightning! *Note*. — The word rendered “*devils*,” is always used for those spiritual agents employed in *demoniacal possessions* — never for the ordinary agency of Satan in rational men. When therefore the Seventy say, “the *devils* [demons] are subject to us,” and Jesus replies, “Mine eye was beholding *Satan falling*,” it is plain that He meant to raise their minds not only from the *particular* to the *general*, but from a very *temporary* form of satanic operation to *the entire kingdom of evil*. (See <sup><402></sup>John 12:31; and compare <sup><2442></sup>Isaiah 14:12).

**19. Behold, I give you**, etc. — not for any renewal of their mission, though probably many of them afterwards became ministers of Christ; but simply as disciples.

**serpents and scorpions** — the latter more venomous than the former: literally, in the first instance (<sup><4167></sup>Mark 16:17,18 <sup><405></sup>Acts 28:5); but the next words, “*and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you*,” show that the glorious power of faith to “overcome the world” and “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one,” by the communication and maintenance of which to His people He makes them *innocuous*, is what is meant (<sup><405></sup>1 John 5:4 <sup><406></sup>Ephesians 6:16).

**20. rejoice not**, etc. — that is, not so much. So far from forbidding it, He takes occasion from it to tell them what had been passing in His own mind.

But as power over demons was after all intoxicating, He gives them a higher joy to *balance* it, the joy of having their names in Heaven's register (<sup><008</sup>Philippians 4:3).

**21, 22. Jesus ... said**, etc. — The very same sublime words were uttered by our Lord on a former similar occasion (see on <sup><015</sup>Matthew 11:25-27); but

(1) There we are merely told that He “answered and said” thus; here, He “*rejoiced in spirit* and said,” etc.

(2) There it was merely “at that time” (or season) that He spoke thus, meaning with a general reference to the rejection of His gospel by the self-sufficient; here, “*In that hour* Jesus said,” with express reference probably to the humble class from which He had to draw the Seventy, and the similar class that had chiefly welcomed their message.

“Rejoice” is too weak a word. It is “exulted in spirit” — evidently giving visible expression to His unusual emotions; while, at the same time, the words “in spirit” are meant to convey to the reader the *depth* of them. This is one of those rare cases in which the veil is lifted from off the Redeemer's inner man, that, angel-like, we may “look into it” for a moment (<sup><012</sup>1 Peter 1:12). Let us gaze on it with reverential wonder, and as we perceive what it was that produced that mysterious ecstasy, we shall find rising in our hearts a still rapture — “Oh, the depths!”

**23, 24.** (See on <sup><036</sup>Matthew 13:16,17).

## <sup><015</sup>LUKE 10:25-37.

### QUESTION OF A LAWYER AND PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

**25. tempted him** — “tested him”; in no hostile spirit, yet with no tender anxiety for light on that question of questions, but just to see what insight this great Galilean teacher had.

**26. What is written in the law** — apposite question to a doctor of the *law*, and putting him in turn to the test [BENGEL].

**27. Thou shalt**, etc. — the answer Christ Himself gave to another lawyer. (See on <sup><023</sup>Mark 12:29-33).



**28. he said**, etc. — “Right; THIS do, and life is thine” — laying such emphasis on “this” as to indicate, without expressing it, *where the real difficulty to a sinner lay*, and thus nonplussing the questioner himself.

**29. willing** — “wishing,” to get himself out of the difficulty, by throwing on Jesus the definition of “neighbor,” which the Jews interpreted very narrowly and technically, as excluding Samaritans and Gentiles [ALFORD].

**30. A certain man** — a Jew.

**from Jerusalem to Jericho** — a distance of nineteen miles northeast, a deep and very fertile hollow — “the *Temple* of Judea” [TRENCH].

**thieves** — “robbers.” The road, being rocky and desolate, was a notorious haunt of robbers, then and for ages after, and even to this day.

**31, 32. came down a ... priest ... and a Levite** — Jericho, the second city of Judea, was a city of the priests and Levites, and thousands of them lived there. The two here mentioned are supposed, apparently, to be returning from *temple duties*, but they had not learnt what that meaneth, ‘I will have mercy and not sacrifice’ [TRENCH].

**saw him** — It was not *inadvertently* that he acted.

**came and looked** — a further aggravation.

**passed by** — although the law expressly required the opposite treatment even of the *beast* not only of their *brethren*, but of their *enemy* (<sup><6204></sup>Deuteronomy 22:4 <sup><62304></sup>Exodus 23:4,5; compare <sup><28807></sup>Isaiah 58:7).

**33. Samaritan** — one excommunicated by the Jews, a byword among them, synonymous with heretic and devil (<sup><4888></sup>John 8:48; see on <sup><2178></sup>Luke 17:18).

**had compassion** — His best is mentioned first; for “He who gives outward things gives something *external to himself*, but he who imparts compassion and tears gives him something *from his very self*” [GREGORY THE GREAT, IN TRENCH]. No doubt the priest and Levite had their excuses — It is not safe to be lingering here; besides, he’s past recovery; and then, may not suspicion rest upon ourselves? So might the Samaritan have reasoned, *but did not* [TRENCH]. Nor did he say, He’s a Jew, who would have had no dealings with me (<sup><4009></sup>John 4:9), and why should I with him?

**34. oil and wine** — the remedies used in such cases all over the East (<sup><21009></sup>Isaiah 1:6), and elsewhere; the *wine* to cleanse the wounds, the *oil* to assuage their smartings.

**on his own beast** — himself going on foot.

**35. two pence** — equal to two day's wages of a laborer, and enough for several days' support.

**36. Which ... was neighbor?** — a most dexterous way of putting the question:

(1) Turning the question from, "Whom am I to love as my neighbor?" to "Who is the man that shows that love?"

(2) Compelling the lawyer to give a reply very different from what he would like — not only condemning his own nation, but those of them who should be the most exemplary.

(3) Making him commend one of a deeply hated race. And he does it, but it is almost extorted. For he does not answer, "The Samaritan" — that would have sounded heterodox, heretical — but "He that showed mercy on him." It comes to the same thing, no doubt, but the circumlocution is significant.

**37. Go**, etc. — O exquisite, matchless teaching! What new fountains of charity has not this opened up in the human spirit — rivers in the wilderness, streams in the desert! What noble Christian institutions have not such words founded, all undreamed of till that wondrous One came to bless this heartless world of ours with His incomparable love — first in words, and then in deeds which have translated His words into flesh and blood, and poured the life of them through that humanity which He made His own! Was this parable, now, designed to magnify the law of love, and to show who fulfils it and who not? And who did this as never man did it, as our Brother Man, "our Neighbor?" The priests and Levites had not strengthened the diseased, nor bound up the broken (<sup>2508</sup>Ezekiel 34:4), while He bound up the brokenhearted (<sup>2509</sup>Isaiah 61:1), and poured into all wounded spirits the balm of sweetest consolation. All the Fathers saw through the thin veil of this noblest of stories, *the Story of love*, and never wearied of tracing the analogy (though sometimes fancifully enough) [TRENCH]. Exclaims GREGORY NAZIANZEN (in the fourth century), "He hungered, but He fed thousands; He was weary, but He is the Rest of the weary; He is saluted 'Samaritan' and 'Demoniac,' but He *saves him that went down from Jerusalem and fell among thieves*," etc.

## ✠ LUKE 10:38-42.

### MARTHA AND MARY.

**38. certain village** — Bethany (~~✠~~ John 11:1), which Luke so speaks of, having no farther occasion to notice it.

**received him ... her house** — The house belonged to her, and she appears throughout to be the older sister.

**39. which also** — “who for her part,” in contrast with Martha.

**sat** — “seated herself.” From the custom of sitting *beneath* an instructor, the phrase “sitting at one’s feet” came to mean being a disciple of any one (~~✠~~ Acts 22:3).

**heard** — rather, “kept listening” to His word.

**40. cumbered** — “distracted.”

**came to him** — “presented herself before Him,” as from another apartment, in which her sister had “*left* her to serve (or make preparation) *alone*.”

**carest thou not ... my sister**, etc. — “Lord, here am I with everything to do, and this sister of mine will not lay a hand to anything; thus I miss something from Thy lips, and Thou from our hands.”

**bid her**, etc. — She presumes not to stop Christ’s teaching by calling her sister away, and thus leaving Him without His one auditor, nor did she hope perhaps to succeed if she had tried.

**41. Martha, Martha** — emphatically redoubling upon the name.

**careful and cumbered** — the one word expressing the inward *worrying anxiety* that her preparations should be worthy of her Lord; the other, the outward *bustle* of those preparations.

**many things** — “much service” (~~✠~~ Luke 10:40); too elaborate preparation, which so engrossed her attention that she missed her Lord’s teaching.

**42. one thing**, etc. — The idea of “Short work and little of it suffices for Me” is not so much the *lower sense* of these weighty words, as *supposed* in them, as the basis of something far loftier than any precept on economy.

Underneath that idea is couched another, as to the littleness both of elaborate preparation for the present life and of *that life itself*, compared with another.

**chosen the good part** — not in the general sense of Moses' choice (<sup><8125</sup>Hebrews 11:25), and Joshua's (<sup><6215</sup>Joshua 24:15), and David's (<sup><4330</sup>Psalms 119:30); that is, of good in opposition to *bad*; but, of two good ways of serving and pleasing the Lord, choosing *the better*. Wherein, then, was Mary's better than Martha's? Hear what follows.

**not be taken away** — Martha's choice would be taken from her, for *her services would die with her*; Mary's *never*, being spiritual and eternal. Both were true-hearted disciples, but the one was absorbed in the higher, the other in the lower of two ways of honoring their common Lord. Yet neither despised, or would willingly neglect, the other's occupation. The one represents the *contemplative*, the other the *active* style of the Christian character. A Church full of Marys would perhaps be as great an evil as a Church full of Marthas. Both are needed, each to be the complement of the other.

# CHAPTER 11

## ◀LUKE 11:1-13.

### THE DISCIPLES TAUGHT TO PRAY.

1. **one**, etc. — struck with either the matter or the manner of our Lord's prayers.

**as John**, etc. — From this reference to John, it is possible that disciple had not heard the Sermon on the Mount. Nothing of John's *inner* teaching (to his own disciples) has been preserved to us, but we may be sure he never taught his disciples to say, "Our Father."

2-4. (See on ~~408~~ Matthew 6:9-13).

3. **day by day**, etc. — an extension of the petition in Matthew for "*this day's*" supply, to every successive day's necessities. The closing doxology, wanting here, is wanting also in all the best and most ancient copies of Matthew's Gospel. Perhaps our Lord purposely left that part *open*: and as the grand Jewish doxologies were ever resounding, and passed immediately and naturally, in all their hallowed familiarity into the Christian Church, probably this prayer was never used in the Christian assemblies but in its present form, as we find it in Matthew, while in Luke it has been allowed to stand as originally uttered.

5-8. **at midnight ... for a friend is come** — The heat in warm countries makes evening preferable to-day for travelling; but "midnight" is everywhere a most *unseasonable* hour of call, and for that very reason it is here selected.

7. **Trouble me not** — the *trouble* making him insensible both to the urgency of the case and the claims of friendship.

**I cannot** — without exertion which he would not make.

8. **importunity** — The word is a strong one — "shamelessness"; persisting in the face of all that seemed reasonable, and refusing to take a denial.

**as many**, etc. — His reluctance once overcome, all the claims of friendship and necessity are felt to the full. The sense is obvious: If the churlish and

self-indulgent — deaf both to friendship and necessity — can after a positive refusal, be won over, by sheer persistency, to do all that is needed, *how much more* may the same determined perseverance in prayer be expected to prevail with Him whose very nature is “rich unto all that call upon Him” (◀502 Romans 10:12).

**9-13.** (See on ▶407 Matthew 7:7-11.)

**13. the Holy Spirit** — in Matthew (▶407 Matthew 7:11), “good gifts”; the former, the Gift of gifts descending on the Church through Christ, and comprehending the latter.

## ◀2114 LUKE 11:14-36.

### BLIND AND DUMB DEMONIAK HEALED — CHARGE OF BEING IN LEAGUE WITH HELL, AND REPLY — DEMAND OF A SIGN, AND REPLY.

(See on ▶402 Matthew 12:22-45.)

**14. dumb** — blind also (▶402 Matthew 12:22).

**20. the finger of God** — “the Spirit of God” (▶402 Matthew 12:28); the former figuratively denoting the *power* of God, the latter the *living Personal Agent* in every exercise of it.

**21, 22. strong man** — meaning *Satan*.

**armed** — pointing to all the subtle and varied methods by which he wields his dark power over men.

**keepeth** — “guardeth.”

**his palace** — *man* whether viewed more largely or in individual souls — how significant of what men are to Satan!

**in peace** — undisturbed, secure in his possession.

**22. a stronger than he** — *Christ*: Glorious title, in relation to Satan!

**come upon him and overcome him** — sublimely expressing the Redeemer’s approach, as the Seed of the woman, to bruise the Serpent’s head.

**taketh from him all his armor** — “his panoply,” “his complete armor.” Vain would be the victory, were not the *means of regaining* his lost power

wrested from him. It is this that completes the triumph and ensures the final overthrow of his kingdom. The parable that immediately follows (<sup><0134></sup>Luke 11:24-26) is just the *reverse of this*. (See on <sup><0128></sup>Matthew 12:43-45.) In the one case, Satan is *dislodged by Christ*, and so finds, in all future assaults, the house *preoccupied*; in the other, he merely goes out and comes in again, finding the house “EMPTY” (<sup><0124></sup>Matthew 12:44) of any rival, and all ready to welcome him back. This explains the important saying that comes in *between the two parables* (<sup><0123></sup>Luke 11:23). *Neutrality in religion there is none*. The absence of positive attachment to Christ involves hostility to Him.

**23. gathereth ... scattereth** — referring probably to gleaners. The meaning seems to be, Whatever in religion is disconnected from Christ comes to nothing.

**27, 28. as he spake these things, a ... woman of the company** — of the multitude, the crowd. A charming little incident and profoundly instructive. With true womanly feeling, she envies the mother of such a wonderful Teacher. Well, and higher and better than she had said as much before her (<sup><0128></sup>Luke 1:28,42); and our Lord is far from condemning it. He only holds up — as “*blessed rather*” — the hearers and keepers of God’s word; in other words, *the humblest real saint of God*. (See on <sup><0128></sup>Matthew 12:49,50.) How utterly alien is this sentiment from the teaching of the Church of Rome, which would excommunicate any one of its members who dared to talk in the spirit of this glorious saying! (Also see on <sup><0128></sup>Matthew 12:43.)

**29-32.** (See on <sup><0129></sup>Matthew 12:39-42.)

**33-36.** (See on <sup><0154></sup>Matthew 5:14-16; <sup><0152></sup>Matthew 6:22,23.) But <sup><0136></sup>Luke 11:36 here is peculiarly vivid, expressing what pure, beautiful, broad perceptions *the clarity of the inward eye* imparts.

## <sup><0137></sup>LUKE 11:37-54.

### DENUNCIATION OF THE PHARISEES.

**38. marvelled**, etc. — (See <sup><0102></sup>Mark 7:2-4).

**39-41. cup and platter** — remarkable example of our Lord’s way of drawing the most striking illustrations of great truths from the most familiar objects and incidents of life.

**ravening** — rapacity.

**40. that which is without**, etc. — that is, He to whom belongs the outer life, and right to demand its subjection to Himself — is the inner man less His?

**41. give alms ... and ... all ... clean** — a principle of immense value. As the greed of these hypocrites was one of the most prominent features of their character (<sup><264></sup>Luke 16:14 <sup><1234></sup>Matthew 23:14), our Lord bids them exemplify the opposite character, and then their *outside*, ruled by this, would be beautiful in the eye of God, and their meals would be eaten with clean hands, though never so fouled with the business of this worky world. (See <sup><300></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:7).

**42. mint ... rue**, etc. — rounding on <sup><873></sup>Leviticus 27:30, which they interpreted rigidly. Our Lord purposely names the most trifling products of the earth, as examples of what they punctiliously exacted the tenth of.

**judgment and the love of God** — in <sup><1235></sup>Matthew 23:25, “judgment, mercy, and *faith*.” The reference is to <sup><3006></sup>Micah 6:6-8, whose third element of all acceptable religion, “walking humbly with God,” comprehends both “love” and “faith.” (See on <sup><1129></sup>Mark 12:29; <sup><1123></sup>Mark 12:32,33). The same tendency to merge greater duties in less besets us still, *but it is the characteristic of hypocrites*.

**these ought ye**, etc. — There is no need for one set of duties to jostle out another; but of the *greater*, our Lord says, “Ye *ought to have done*” them; of the *lesser*, only “ye *ought not to leave them undone*.”

**43. uppermost seats** — (See on <sup><2407></sup>Luke 14:7-11).

**greetings** — (See on <sup><1236></sup>Matthew 23:7-10).

**44. appear not**, etc. — As one might unconsciously walk over a grave concealed from view, and thus contract ceremonial defilement, so the plausible exterior of the Pharisees kept people from perceiving the pollution they contracted from coming in contact with such corrupt characters. (See <sup><4899></sup>Psalms 5:9 <sup><6183></sup>Romans 3:13; a different illustration from <sup><1237></sup>Matthew 23:27).

**46. burdens grievous**, etc. — referring not so much to the irksomeness of the legal rites (though they were irksome, <sup><4150></sup>Acts 15:10), as to the heartless rigor with which they were enforced, and by men of shameless inconsistency.

**47, 48. ye build**, etc. — Out of pretended respect and honor, they repaired and beautified the sepulchres of the prophets, and with whining hypocrisy said, “If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been



partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,” while all the time they “were witnesses to themselves that they were the children of them that killed the prophets” (<sup>4123</sup>Matthew 23:29,30); convicting themselves daily of as exact a resemblance in spirit and character to the very classes over whose deeds they pretended to mourn, as child to parent.

**49-51. said the wisdom**, etc. — a remarkable variation of the words in <sup>4124</sup>Matthew 23:34, “Behold *I* SEND.” As there seems plainly an allusion to ancient warnings of what God would do with so incorrigible a people, so here Christ, stepping majestically into the place of God, so to speak, says, “Now I am going to carry all that out.” *Could this be other than the Lord of Israel in the flesh?*

**50. all ... required of this generation** — As it was only in the last generation of them that “the iniquity of the Amorites was full” (<sup>4156</sup>Genesis 15:16), and then the abominations of ages were at once completely and awfully avenged, so the iniquity of Israel was allowed to accumulate from age to age till in that generation it came to the full, and the whole collected vengeance of Heaven broke at once over its devoted head. In the first French Revolution the same awful principle was exemplified, and *Christendom has not done with it yet.*

**prophets** — in the New Testament sense (<sup>4124</sup>Matthew 23:34; see <sup>4128</sup>1 Corinthians 12:28).

**51. blood of Zacharias** — Probably the allusion is not to any recent murder, but to <sup>4122</sup>2 Chronicles 24:20-22, as the *last recorded* and most suitable case for illustration. And as Zacharias’ last words were, “The Lord *require it*,” so they are warned that “of that generation it should be *required*.”

**52. key of knowledge** — not the key to open knowledge, but knowledge, the only key to open heaven. In <sup>4123</sup>Matthew 23:13, they are accused of *shutting heaven*; here of *taking away the key*, which was worse. A right knowledge of God’s Word is eternal life (<sup>4178</sup>John 17:3); but this they took away from the people, substituting for it their wretched traditions.

**53, 54.** Exceedingly vivid and affecting. They were stung to the quick — and can we wonder? — yet had not materials for the charge they were preparing against Him.

**provoke him**, etc. — “to harass Him with questions.”

# CHAPTER 12

## LUKE 12:1-12.

### WARNING AGAINST HYPOCRISY.

**1-3. meantime** — in close connection, probably, with the foregoing scene. Our Lord had been *speaking out* more plainly than ever before, as matters were coming to a head between Him and His enemies, and this seems to have suggested to His own mind the warning here. He had just Himself illustriously exemplified His own precepts.

**his disciples first of all** — afterwards to “the multitudes” (<sup><1254></sup> Luke 12:54).  
**covered** — from the view.

**2. hid** — from knowledge. “Tis no use concealing anything, for all will one day come out. Give free and fearless utterance then to all the truth.”  
 (Compare <sup><4108></sup> 1 Corinthians 4:3,5).

**4, 5. I say**, etc. — You will say, That may cost us our life. Be it so; but, “My friends, there their power ends.” He calls them “my friends” here, not in any loose sense, but, as we think, from the feeling He then had that in this “killing of the body” *He and they* were going to be affectingly one with each other.

**5. Fear Him ... Fear Him** — how striking the repetition here! *Only the one fear would effectually expel the other.*

**after he hath killed**, etc. — Learn here —

(1) To play false with one’s convictions to save one’s life, may fail of its end after all, for God can inflict a violent death in some other and equally formidable way.

(2) There is a *hell*, it seems, for the body as well as the soul; consequently, sufferings adapted to the one as well as the other.

(3) *Fear of hell* is a divinely authorized and needed motive of action even to Christ’s “friends.”

(4) As Christ’s meekness and gentleness were not compromised by such harsh notes as these, so those servants of Christ lack their

Master's spirit who soften down all such language to please ears "polite." (See on <sup><1043></sup>Mark 9:43-48).

**6, 7. five ... for two farthings** — In <sup><1049></sup>Matthew 10:29 it is "two for one farthing"; so if one took two farthings' worth, he got one in addition — of such small value were they.

**than many sparrows** — not "than millions of sparrows"; the charm and power of our Lord's teaching is very much in this simplicity.

**8, 9. confess ... deny** — The point lies in doing it "before men," because one has to do it "despising the *shame*." But when done, the Lord holds Himself bound to repay it *in kind* by confessing such "before the angels of God." For the rest, see on <sup><1049></sup>Luke 9:26.

**10. Son of man ... Holy Ghost** — (See on <sup><1028></sup>Matthew 12:31,32).

## <sup><1023></sup>LUKE 12:13-53.

### COVETOUSNESS — WATCHFULNESS — SUPERIORITY TO EARTHLY TIES.

**13. Master**, etc. — that is, "Great Preacher of righteousness, help; there is need of Thee in this rapacious world; here am I the victim of injustice, and that from my own brother, who withholds from me my rightful share of the inheritance that has fallen to us." In this most inopportune intrusion upon the solemnities of our Lord's teaching, there is a mixture of the absurd and the irreverent, the one, however, occasioning the other. The man had not the least idea that his case was not of as urgent a nature, and as worthy the attention of our Lord, as anything else He could deal with.

**14. Man**, etc. — *Contrast this style of address with "my friends,"* (<sup><1024></sup>Luke 12:4).

**who**, etc. — a question literally repudiating the office which Moses assumed (<sup><1048></sup>Exodus 2:14). *The influence of religious teachers in the external relations of life has ever been immense, when only the INDIRECT effect of their teaching; but whenever they intermeddle DIRECTLY with secular and political matters, the spell of that influence is broken.*

**15. unto them** — the multitude around Him (<sup><1026></sup>Luke 12:1).

**of covetousness** — The best copies have “all,” that is, “every kind of covetousness”; because as this was one of the more plausible forms of it, so He would strike at once at the *root* of the evil.

**a man's life**, etc. — a singularly weighty maxim, and not less so because its meaning and its truth are equally evident.

**16-19. a certain rich man**, etc. — Why is this man called a “fool?”  
(<sup><021></sup>Luke 12:20)

(1) Because he deemed a life of secure and abundant earthly enjoyment the summit of human felicity.

(2) Because, possessing the means of this, through prosperity in his calling, he flattered himself that he had a long lease of such enjoyment, and nothing to do but give himself up to it. Nothing else is laid to his charge.

**20, 21. this night**, etc. — This sudden cutting short of his career is designed to express not only the folly of building securely upon the future, but of throwing one's whole soul into what may at any moment be gone. “Thy *soul* shall be required of thee” is put in opposition to his own treatment of it, “I will say to my *soul*, *Soul*,” etc.

**whose shall those things be**, etc. — Compare <sup><006></sup>Psalm 39:6, “He heapeth up riches and *knoweth not who shall gather them.*”

**21. So is he**, etc. — Such is a picture of his folly here, and of its awful issue. and is not rich toward God — lives to amass and enjoy riches which terminate on *self*, but as to the riches of God's favor, which is life (<sup><005></sup>Psalm 30:5), of “precious” faith (<sup><000></sup>2 Peter 1:1 <sup><005></sup>James 2:5), of good works (<sup><008></sup>1 Timothy 6:18), of wisdom which is better than rubies (<sup><001></sup>Proverbs 8:11) — lives and dies *a beggar!*

**22-31.** (See on <sup><025></sup>Matthew 6:25-33).

**25, 26. which of you**, etc. — Corroding solicitude will not bring you the least of the things ye fret about, though it may double the evil of wanting them. And if not the least, why vex yourselves about things of more consequence?

**29. of doubtful**, etc. — unsettled mind; put off your balance.

**32. little flock**, etc. — How sublime and touching a contrast between this tender and pitying appellation, “Little flock” (in the original a double diminutive, which in German can be expressed, but not in English) — and the “good pleasure” of the Father to give them the Kingdom; the one

recalling the insignificance and helplessness of that then literal handful of disciples, the other holding up to their view the eternal love that encircled them, the everlasting arms that were underneath them, and the high inheritance awaiting them! — “the kingdom”; grand word; then why not “bread” (<sup>4123</sup>Luke 12:31 [BENGEL]). Well might He say, “Fear not!”

**33, 34. Sell,** etc. — This is but a more vivid expression of <sup>4169</sup>Matthew 6:19-21 (see on <sup>4169</sup>Matthew 6:19-21).

**35-40. loins ... girded** — to fasten up the long outer garment, always done before travel and work (<sup>4109</sup>2 Kings 4:29 <sup>4118</sup>Acts 12:8). The meaning is, Be in readiness.

**lights,** etc. — (See on <sup>4151</sup>Matthew 25:1).

**36. return from the wedding** — not come to it, as in the parable of the virgins. Both have their spiritual significance; but *preparedness for Christ's coming* is the prominent idea.

**37. gird himself,** etc. — “a promise the most august of all: Thus will the Bridegroom entertain his friends (nay, servants) on the solemn Nuptial Day” [BENGEL].

**38. second ... third watch** — To find them ready to receive Him at any hour of day or night, when one might least of all expect Him, is peculiarly blessed. A servant may be truly faithful, even though taken so far unawares that he has not everything in *such* order and readiness for his master's return as he thinks is due to him, and both could and would have had if he had had notice of the time of his coming, and so may not be willing to open to him “*immediately*,” but fly to preparation, and let his master knock again ere he admit him, and even then *not with full joy*. A too common case this with Christians. But if the servant have himself and all under his charge in such a state that at any hour when his master knocks, he can open to him “*immediately*,” and hail his “return” — that is the most enviable, “blessed” servant of all.

**41-48. unto us or even to all?** — us the Twelve, or all this vast audience?

**42. Who then,** etc. — answering the question indirectly by another question, from which they were left to gather what it would be: — To you certainly in the first instance, representing the “stewards” of the “household” I am about to collect, but generally to all “servants” in My house.

**faithful and wise** — *Fidelity* is the first requisite in a servant, *wisdom* (discretion and judgment in the exercise of his functions), the next.

**steward** — house steward, whose it was to distribute to the servants their allotted portion of food.

**shall make** — will deem fit to be made.

**44. make him ruler over all he hath** — will advance him to the highest post, referring to the world to come. (See <sup><152></sup>Matthew 25:21,23).

**45. begin to beat**, etc. — In the confidence that his Lord's return will not be speedy, he throws off the role of servant and plays the master, maltreating those faithful servants who refuse to join him, seizing on and revelling in the fullness of his master's board; intending, when he has got his fill, to resume the mask of fidelity ere his master appear.

**46. cut him in sunder** — a punishment not unknown in the East; compare <sup><815></sup>Hebrews 11:37, "sawn asunder" (<sup><953></sup>1 Samuel 15:33 <sup><708></sup>Daniel 2:5).

**the unbelievers** — the unfaithful, those unworthy of trust (<sup><125></sup>Matthew 24:51), "the hypocrites," falsely calling themselves "servants."

**48. knew not** — that is knew but *partially*; for *some* knowledge is presupposed both in the name "servant" of Christ, and his being liable to punishment at all.

**many ... few stripes** — degrees of future punishment proportioned to the knowledge sinned against. Even heathens are not without knowledge enough for future judgment; but the reference here is not to such. It is a solemn truth, and though *general*, like all other revelations of the future world, discloses a tangible and momentous principle in its awards.

**49-53. to send** — cast.

**fire** — "the higher spiritual element of life which Jesus came to introduce into this earth (compare <sup><108></sup>Matthew 3:11), with reference to its mighty effects in quickening all that is akin to it and *destroying all that is opposed*. To cause this element of life to take up its abode on earth, and wholly to pervade human hearts with its warmth, was the lofty destiny of the Redeemer" [OLSHAUSEN: so CALVIN, STIER, ALFORD, etc.].

**what will I**, etc. — an obscure expression, uttered under deep and half-smothered emotion. In its general import all are agreed; but the nearest to the precise meaning seems to be, "And what should I have to desire if it were once already kindled?" [BENGEL and BLOOMFIELD].

**50. But ... a baptism**, etc. — clearly, His own bloody baptism, first to take place.

**how ... straitened** — not, “how do I long for its accomplishment,” as many understand it, thus making it but a repetition of <sup><0134></sup>Luke 12:49; but “what a pressure of spirit is upon Me.”

**till it be accomplished** — till it be over. Before a promiscuous audience, such obscure language was fit on a theme like this; but oh, what surges of mysterious emotion in the view of what was now so near at hand does it reveal!

**51. peace ... ? Nay**, etc. — the reverse of peace, *in the first instance*. (See on <sup><0084></sup>Matthew 10:34-36.) The connection of all this with the foregoing warnings about hypocrisy, covetousness, and watchfulness, is deeply solemn: “My conflict hasten apace; Mine over, yours begins; and then, let the servants tread in their Master’s steps, uttering their testimony entire and fearless, neither loving nor dreading the world, anticipating awful wrenches of the dearest ties in life, but looking forward, as I do, to the completion of their testimony, when, reaching the haven after the tempest, they shall enter into the joy of their Lord.”

## <sup><0254></sup>LUKE 12:54-59.

### NOT DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIME.

**54. to the people** — “the multitude,” a word of special warning to the thoughtless crowd, before dismissing them. (See on <sup><0062></sup>Matthew 16:2,3).

**56. how ... not discern**, etc. — unable to perceive what a critical period that was for the Jewish Church.

**57. why even of yourselves**, etc. — They might say, To do this requires more knowledge of Scripture and providence than we possess; but He sends them to their own conscience, as enough to show them who He was, and win them to immediate discipleship.

**58. When thou goest**, etc. — (See on <sup><0155></sup>Matthew 5:25,26). The *urgency of the case with them, and the necessity, for their own safety, of immediate decision*, was the object of these striking words.

# CHAPTER 13

## LUKE 13:1-9.

### THE LESSON, “REPENT OR PERISH,” SUGGESTED BY TWO RECENT INCIDENTS, AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE.

**1-3. Galileans** — possibly the followers of Judas of Galilee, who, some twenty years before this, taught that Jews should not pay tribute to the Romans, and of whom we learn, from ~~ACTS~~ Acts 5:37, that he drew after him a multitude of followers, who on his being slain were all dispersed. About this time that party would be at its height, and if Pilate caused this detachment of them to be waylaid and put to death as they were offering their sacrifices at one of the festivals, that would be “mingling their blood with their sacrifices” [GROTIUS, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, but doubted by DE WETTE, MEYER, ALFORD, etc.]. News of this being brought to our Lord, to draw out His views of such, and whether it was not a judgment of Heaven, He simply points them to the practical view of the matter: “These men are not signal examples of divine vengeance, as ye suppose; but every impenitent sinner — *ye yourselves*, except ye repent — shall be like monuments of the judgment of Heaven, and in a more awful sense.” The reference here to the impending destruction of Jerusalem is far from exhausting our Lord’s weighty words; they manifestly point to a “perdition” of a more awful kind — *future, personal, remediless*.

**4, 5. tower in Siloam** — probably one of the towers of the city wall, near the pool of Siloam. Of its fall nothing is known.

**6-9. fig tree** — Israel, as the visible witness of God in the world, but generally all within the pale of the visible Church of God; a familiar figure (compare ~~ISAIAH~~ Isaiah 5:1-7 ~~JOHN~~ John 15:1-8, etc.).

**vineyard** — a spot selected for its fertility, separated from the surrounding fields, and cultivated with special care, with a view solely to *fruit*.

**came and sought fruit** — a heart turned to God; the fruits of righteousness; compare ~~MATTHEW~~ Matthew 21:33,34, and ~~ISAIAH~~ Isaiah 5:2, “He *looked* that it should bring forth fruit”; He has a *right* to it, and will *require* it.



**7. three years** — a long enough trial for a fig tree, and so denoting probably just a *sufficient* period of culture for spiritual fruit. The supposed allusion to the duration of our Lord's ministry is precarious.

**cut it down** — indignant language.

**cumbereth** — not only doing no good, but wasting ground.

**8. he answering**, etc. — Christ, as Intercessor, loath to see it cut down so long as there was any hope (see <sup><2334></sup>Luke 13:34).

**dig**, etc. — loosen the earth about it and enrich it with manure; pointing to changes of method in the divine treatment of the impenitent, in order to freshen spiritual culture.

**9. if ... fruit, well** — Genuine repentance, however late, avails to save (<sup><2342></sup>Luke 23:42,43).

**after that**, etc. — The final perdition of such as, after the utmost limits of reasonable forbearance, are found fruitless, will be pre-eminently and confessedly just (<sup><2102></sup>Proverbs 1:24-31 <sup><2343></sup>Ezekiel 24:13).

## <sup><2310></sup>LUKE 13:10-17.

### WOMAN OF EIGHTEEN YEAR'S INFIRMITY HEALED ON THE SABBATH.

**11. spirit of infirmity** — Compare <sup><2317></sup>Luke 13:17, "whom *Satan* hath bound." From this it is probable, though not certain, that her protracted infirmity was the effect of some milder form of *possession*; yet she was "a daughter of Abraham," in the same gracious sense, no doubt, as Zaccheus, after his conversion, was "a son of Abraham" (<sup><2349></sup>Luke 19:9).

**12, 13. said ... Woman ... and laid** — both at once.

**14. with indignation** — not so much at the sabbath violation as at the glorification of Christ. (Compare <sup><2115></sup>Matthew 21:15) [TRENCH].

**said to the people** — "Not daring directly to find fault with the Lord, he seeks circuitously to reach Him through the people, who were more under his influence, and whom he feared less" [TRENCH].

**15. the Lord** — (See on <sup><2115></sup>Luke 10:1).

**hypocrite!** — How "the faithful and true Witness" tears off the masks which men wear!

**his ox**, etc. — (See on <sup><1019></sup>Matthew 12:9-13; and <sup><1019></sup>Luke 6:9).

**16. ought not**, etc. — How gloriously the Lord vindicates the superior claims of this woman, in consideration of the sadness and long duration of her suffering, and of her dignity notwithstanding, as an heir of the promise!

## <sup><1038></sup>LUKE 13:18-30.

### MISCELLANEOUS TEACHINGS.

**18-21. mustard seed ... leaven** — (See on <sup><1008></sup>Mark 4:30-32). The parable of “the Leaven” sets forth, perhaps, rather the *inward* growth of the kingdom, while “the Mustard Seed” seems to point chiefly to the *outward*. It being a woman’s work to knead, it seems a refinement to say that “the woman” here represents *the Church*, as the instrument of depositing the leaven. Nor does it yield much satisfaction to understand the “three measures of meal” of that threefold division of our nature into “spirit, soul, and body,” (alluded to in <sup><1023></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:23) or of the threefold partition of the world among the three sons of Noah (<sup><1002></sup>Genesis 10:32), as some do. It yields more real satisfaction to see in this brief parable just the *all-penetrating* and *assimilating* quality of the Gospel, by virtue of which it will yet mould all institutions and tribes of men, and exhibit over the whole earth one “Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” (See on <sup><1015></sup>Revelation 11:15).

**23. Lord**, etc. — one of those curious questions by talking of which some flatter themselves they are *religious*.

**said unto them** — the multitude; taking no notice of the man or his question, save as furnishing the occasion of a solemn warning not to trifle with so momentous a matter as “salvation.”

**24. Strive** — The word signifies to “contend” as for the mastery, to “struggle,” expressive of the *difficulty* of being saved, as if one would have to *force his way in*.

**strait gate** — another figure of the same. (See on <sup><1073></sup>Matthew 7:13,14).

**for many ... will seek** — “desire,” that is, with a mere wish or slothful endeavor.

**and shall not be able** — because it must be made a *life-and-death struggle*.

**25. master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door** — awfully sublime and vivid picture! At present he is represented as in a *sitting* posture, as if calmly looking on to see who will “strive,” while entrance is practicable, and who will merely “seek” to enter in. But this is to have an end, by the great Master of the house Himself rising and shutting the door, after which there will be *no admittance*.

**Lord, Lord** — emphatic reduplication, expressive of the earnestness *now* felt, but too late. (See on <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:21,22).

**26, 27.** See on the similar passage (<sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:22,23).

**eaten and drunk**, etc. — We have sat with Thee at the same table. (See on <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:22).

**taught in our streets** — Do we not remember listening in our own streets to Thy teaching? Surely *we* are not to be denied admittance?

**27. But he shall say**, etc. — (See on <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 7:23). *No nearness of external communion with Christ will avail at the great day, in place of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.* Observe the style which Christ intimates that He will then assume, that of absolute Disposer of men’s eternal destinies, and contrast it with His “despised and rejected” condition at that time.

**28, 29.** (See <sup><4181></sup>Matthew 8:11,12). Also see on <sup><4132></sup>Matthew 13:42.

## <sup><4131></sup>LUKE 13:31-35.

### MESSAGE TO HEROD.

**31. and depart hence** — and “go forward,” *push on*. He was on His way out of Perea, east of Jordan, and in Herod’s dominions, “journeying towards Jerusalem” (<sup><4132></sup>Luke 13:22). Haunted by guilty fears, probably, Herod wanted to get rid of Him (see on <sup><4164></sup>Mark 6:14), and seems, from our Lord’s answer, to have sent these Pharisees, under pretense of a friendly hint, to persuade Him that the sooner He got beyond Herod’s jurisdiction the better it would be for His own safety. Our Lord saw through both of them, and sends the cunning ruler a message couched in dignified and befitting irony.

**32. that fox** — that crafty, cruel enemy of God’s innocent servants.

**Behold, I cast out devils and I do cures** — that is, “Plot on and ply thy wiles; I also have My plans; My works of mercy are nearing completion, but some yet remain; I have work for to-day and to-morrow too, and the third day; by that time I shall be where his jurisdiction reaches not; the guilt of My blood shall not lie at his door; that dark deed is reserved for others.” He does not say, I preach the Gospel — that would have made little impression upon Herod — in the light of the *merciful* character of Christ’s *actions* the *malice* of Herod’s snares is laid bare [BENGEL].

**to-day, to-morrow, the third day** — remarkable language expressive of *successive steps* of His work yet remaining, the calm *deliberateness* with which He meant to go through with them, one after another, to the last, unmoved by Herod’s threat, yet the *rapid march* with which they were now hastening to completion. (Compare <sup>12:37</sup>Luke 22:37).

**I shall be perfected** — I finish my course, I attain completion.

**33. it cannot be that a prophet**, etc. — “*It would never do that*,” etc. — awful severity of satire this upon “the bloody city!” “He seeks to kill me, does he? Ah! I must be out of Herod’s jurisdiction for that. Go tell him I neither fly from him nor fear him, but Jerusalem is the prophets’ slaughter-house.”

**34, 35. O Jerusalem**, etc. — (See on <sup>12:37</sup>Matthew 23:37; <sup>12:39</sup>Matthew 23:39).

# CHAPTER 14

## LUKE 14:1-24.

### HEALING OF A DROPSICAL MAN, AND MANIFOLD TEACHINGS AT A SABBATH FEAST.

**2. man before him** — not one of the company, since this was apparently *before* the guests sat down, and probably the man came in hope of a cure, though not expressly soliciting it [DE WETTE].

**3-6.** (See on <sup><021></sup>Matthew 12:11,12).

**7-11. a parable** — showing that His design was not so much to inculcate mere politeness or good manners, as *underneath* this to teach something *deeper* (<sup><041></sup>Luke 14:11).

**chief rooms** — principal seats, in the middle part of the couch on which they reclined at meals, esteemed the most honorable.

**8. wedding** — and seating thyself at the wedding *feast*. Our Lord avoids the appearance of personality by this delicate allusion to a different kind of entertainment than this of his host [BENGEL].

**9. the lowest** — not a *lower* merely [BENGEL].

**with shame** — “To be lowest is only ignominious to him who affects the highest” [BENGEL].

**10. Friend** — said to the *modest* guest only, not the proud one (<sup><049></sup>Luke 14:9) [BENGEL].

**worship** — honor. The whole of this is but a reproduction of <sup><156></sup>Proverbs 25:6,7. But it was reserved for the matchless Teacher to *utter articulately*, and *apply to the regulation of the minutest features of social life*, such *great laws of the Kingdom of God*, as that of <sup><041></sup>Luke 14:11.

**11. whosoever**, etc. — couching them in a chaste simplicity and proverbial terseness of style which makes them “apples of gold in a setting of silver.” (See on <sup><084></sup>Luke 18:14).

**12-14. call not thy friends** — Jesus certainly did not mean us to dispense with the duties of ordinary fellowship, but, remitting these to their proper place, inculcates what is better [BENGEL].

**lest ... a recompense be given thee** — a fear the world is not afflicted with [BENGEL]. The meaning, however, is that no *exercise of principle* is involved in it, as selfishness itself will suffice to prompt to it (<sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:46,47).

**13. call the poor** — “Such God Himself calls” (<sup><4141></sup>Luke 14:21) [BENGEL].

**14. blessed** — acting from disinterested, god-like compassion for the wretched.

**15-24. when one ... heard ... he said, Blessed**, etc. — As our Lord’s words seemed to hold forth the future “recompense” under the idea of a great Feast, the thought passes through this man’s mind, how blessed they would be who should be honored to sit down to it. Our Lord’s reply is in substance this: “The great Feast is prepared already; the invitations are issued, *but declined*; the feast, notwithstanding, shall not want abundance of guests; but not one of its present contemnors — who shall yet come to sue for admission — shall be allowed to taste of it.” This shows what was lacking in the seemingly pious exclamation of this man. It was Balaam’s, “Let me *die the death* of the righteous, and let my last end be like his”

(<sup><4230></sup>Numbers 23:10), without any anxiety about *living his life*; fondly wishing that all were right with him *at last*, while all heedless of the precious *present*.

**16. a great supper** — (Compare <sup><2216></sup>Isaiah 25:6).

**bade many** — *historically*, the Jews (see on <sup><4121></sup>Matthew 22:3); generally, those within the pale of professed discipleship.

**17. supper-time ... all now ready** — pointing undoubtedly to the now ripening preparations for the great Gospel call. (See on <sup><4121></sup>Matthew 22:4.)

**18. all began to make excuse** — (Compare <sup><4121></sup>Matthew 22:5). Three excuses, given as specimens of the rest, answer to “the *care of this world*” (<sup><4148></sup>Luke 14:18), “the *deceitfulness of riches*” (<sup><4149></sup>Luke 14:19), and “the *pleasures of this life*” (<sup><4141></sup>Luke 14:20), which “choke the word” (<sup><4132></sup>Matthew 13:22 and <sup><4184></sup>Luke 8:14). Each differs from the other, and each has its own plausibility, but *all come to the same result*: “We have other things to attend to, more pressing just now.” Nobody is represented as saying, *I will not* come; nay, all the answers imply that *but for* certain things they *would* come, and when these are out of the way they *will* come. So it

certainly is in the case intended, for the last words clearly imply that the *refusers* will one day become *petitioners*.

**21. came, and showed**, etc. — saying as in <sup><2518></sup>Isaiah 53:1. “It is the part of ministers to report to the Lord in their prayers the compliance or refusal of their hearers” [BENGEL].

**angry** — in one sense a *gracious* word, showing how sincere he was in issuing his invitations (<sup><2511></sup>Ezekiel 33:11). But it is the *slight* put upon him, the sense of which is intended to be marked by this word.

**streets and lanes** — *historically*, those within the same pale of “the city” of God as the former class, but the despised and outcasts of the nation, the “publicans and sinners” [TRENCH]; generally, all similar classes, usually overlooked in the first provision for supplying the means of grace to a community, half heathen in the midst of revealed light, and in every sense miserable.

**22. yet there is room** — implying that these classes *had* embraced the invitation (<sup><4133></sup>Matthew 21:32 <sup><4137></sup>Mark 12:37, last clause; <sup><4178></sup>John 7:48,49); and beautifully expressing the longing that should fill the hearts of ministers to see their Master’s table filled.

**23. highways and hedges** — outside the city altogether; *historically*, the heathen, sunk in the lowest depths of spiritual wretchedness, as being beyond the pale of all that is revealed and saving, “without Christ, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (<sup><4177></sup>Ephesians 2:12); generally, all such still. Thus, this parable *prophetically* contemplates the extension of the kingdom of God to the whole world; and *spiritually*, directs the Gospel invitations to be carried to the lowest strata, and be brought in contact with the outermost circles, of human society.

**compel them to come in** — not as if they would make the “excuses” of the first class, but because it would be hard to get them over two difficulties:

(1) “We are not fit company for such a feast.”

(2) “We have no proper dress, and are ill in order for such a presence.”

How fitly does this represent the difficulties and fears of the *sincere*! How is this met? “Take no excuse — make them come as

they are — bring them along with you.” What a directory for ministers of Christ!

**that my house may be filled** — “Grace no more than nature will endure a vacuum” [BENGEL].

**24. I say unto you, That none** — Our Lord here appears to throw off the veil of the parable, and proclaim the Supper *His own*, intimating that when transferred and transformed into its final glorious form, and the refusers themselves would give all for another opportunity, He will not allow one of them to taste it. (*Note.* This parable must not be confounded with that of <sup><0028</sup>Proverbs 1:24-33; *The Marriage Supper*, <sup><0029</sup>Matthew 22:2-14).

## <sup><0105</sup>LUKE 14:25-35.

### ADDRESS TO GREAT MULTITUDES TRAVELLING WITH HIM.

**25. great multitudes with him** — on His final journey to Jerusalem. The “great multitudes” were doubtless people going to the passover, who moved along in clusters (<sup><0028</sup>Luke 2:44), and who on this occasion falling in with our Lord had formed themselves into one mass about Him.

**26, 27. If any man, etc.** — (See on <sup><0028</sup>Matthew 10:34-36, and <sup><0029</sup>Mark 8:34,35).

**28-33. which of you, etc.** — Common sense teaches men not to *begin* any costly work without first seeing that they have wherewithal to *finish*. And he who does otherwise exposes himself to general ridicule. Nor will any wise potentate enter on a war with any hostile power without first seeing to it that, despite formidable odds (two to one), he be able to stand his ground; and if he has no hope of this, he will feel that nothing remains for him but to make the best terms he can. *Even so*, says our Lord, “in the warfare you will each have to wage as My disciples, despise not your enemy’s strength, for the odds are all against you; and you had better see to it that, despite every disadvantage, you still have wherewithal to hold out and win the day, or else not begin at all, and make the best you can in such awful circumstances.” In this simple sense of the parable (STIER, ALFORD, etc., go wide of the mark here in making the enemy to be *God*, because of the “conditions of peace,” <sup><0103</sup>Luke 14:32), two things are taught:

(1) Better not begin (<sup><0028</sup>Revelation 3:15), than begin and not finish.

(2) Though the contest for salvation be on our part an awfully unequal one, *the human will*, in the exercise of that “faith which overcometh the world” (<sup><0028</sup>1 John 5:4), and nerved by power from above, which “out



of *weakness* makes it *strong*” (◌<sup>58134</sup> Hebrews 11:34 ◌<sup>60075</sup> 1 Peter 1:5), becomes heroical and will come off “more than conqueror.” But without *absolute surrender of self* the contest is hopeless (◌<sup>21433</sup> Luke 14:33).

**34, 35. Salt,** etc. — (See on ◌<sup>40513</sup> Matthew 5:13-16; and ◌<sup>40087</sup> Mark 9:50).

# CHAPTER 15

## ◀1518 LUKE 15:1-32.

### PUBLICANS AND SINNERS WELCOMED BY CHRIST — THREE PARABLES TO EXPLAIN THIS.

**1. drew near ... all the publicans and sinners**, etc. — drawn around Him by the extraordinary adaptation of His teaching to their case, who, till He appeared — at least His forerunner — might well say, “No man careth for my soul.”

**2. murmured, saying**, etc. — took it ill, were scandalized at Him, and insinuated (on the principle that a man is known by the company he keeps) that He must have some secret sympathy with their *character*. But oh, what a truth of unspeakable preciousness do their lips, as on other occasions, unconsciously utter., Now follow three parables representing the sinner:

(1) *in his stupidity;*

(2) *as all-unconscious of his lost condition;*

(3) *knowingly and willingly estranged from God* [BENGEL]. The first two set forth the *seeking* love of God; the last, His *receiving* love [TRENCH].

## ◀1518 LUKE 15:3-7.

### I. THE LOST SHEEP.

**3-7.** Occurring again (◀1512 Matthew 18:12-14); but there to show how precious one of His sheep is to the Good Shepherd; here, to show that the shepherd, though the sheep stray never so widely, will seek it out, and when he hath found, will rejoice over it.

**4. leave the ninety and nine** — bend all His attention and care, as it were, to the one object of recovering the lost sheep; not saying. “It is but one; let it go; enough remain.”

**go after ... until**, etc. — pointing to all the diversified means which God sets in operation for recovering sinners.

**6. Rejoice with me**, etc. — The principle here is, that one feels *exuberant joy* to be almost too much for himself to bear alone, and is positively relieved by having others to *share it with him*. (See on ~~LUKE~~ Luke 15:10).

**7. ninety-nine just ... needing no repentance** — not *angels*, whose place in these parables is very different from this; but those represented by the *prodigal's well-behaved brother*, who have “served their Father” many years and not at any time transgressed His commandment (in the outrageous sense of the prodigal). (See on ~~LUKE~~ Luke 15:29; ~~LUKE~~ Luke 15:31). In other words, *such as have grown up from childhood* in the fear of God and as the sheep of His pasture. Our Lord does not say “the Pharisees and scribes” were such; but as there was undoubtedly such a class, while “the publicans and sinners” were confessedly the strayed sheep and the prodigal children, He leaves them to fill up the place of the other class, *if they could*.

## ~~LUKE~~ LUKE 15:8-10.

### II. THE LOST COIN.

**8. sweep the house** — “not done without *dust* on man's part” [BENGEL].

**10. Likewise** — on the same principle.

**joy**, etc. — Note carefully the language here — not “joy *on the part*,” but “joy *in the presence* of the angels of God.” True to the idea of the parables. The Great Shepherd. The Great Owner Himself, is He *whose the joy properly is over His own recovered property*; but so vast and exuberant is it (~~ZECHARIAH~~ Zechariah 8:17), that as if He could not keep it to Himself, He “calleth His friends and neighbors together” — His whole celestial family — saying, “Rejoice WITH ME, for I have found *My* sheep-*My*-piece,” etc. In this sublime sense it is “joy,” *before* “or in the presence of the angels”; they

only “catch the flying joy,” sharing it *with Him!* The application of this to the reception of those publicans and sinners that stood around our Lord is grand in the extreme: “Ye turn from these lost ones with disdain, and because I do not the same, ye murmur at it: but a very different feeling is cherished in heaven. There, the recovery of even one such outcast is watched with interest and hailed with joy; nor are they left to come home of themselves or perish; for lo! even now the great Shepherd is going after His

lost sheep, and the Owner is making diligent search for the lost property; and He is finding it, too, and bringing it back with joy, and all heaven is full of it.” (Let the reader mark what sublime claims Himself our Lord covertly puts in here — as if in Him they beheld, all unknown to themselves, nothing less than heaven in the habiliments of earth, the Great Shepherd above, clothed in a garment of flesh, come “to seek and to save that which was lost”)!

## LUKE 15:11-32.

### III. THE PRODIGAL SON.

**12. the younger** — as the more thoughtless.

**said**, etc. — weary of restraint, panting for independence, unable longer to abide the check of a father’s eye. *This is man* impatient of divine control, desiring to be independent of God, seeking to be his own master; that “sin of sins, in which all subsequent sins are included as in their germ, for they are but the unfolding of this one” [TRENCH].

**he divided**, etc. — Thus “God, when His service no longer appears a perfect freedom, and man promises himself something far better elsewhere, allows him to make the trial; and he shall discover, if need be by saddest proof, that to depart from Him is not to throw off the yoke, but to exchange a light yoke for a heavy one, and one gracious Master for a thousand imperious tyrants and lords” [TRENCH].

**13. not many days** — intoxicated with his new — found resources, and eager for the luxury of using them at Will.

**a far country** — beyond all danger of interference from home.

**wasted**, etc. — So long as it lasted, the inward monitor (<sup><2810></sup>Isaiah 55:2) would be silenced (<sup><29100></sup>Isaiah 9:10 <sup><3000></sup>57:10 <sup><3100></sup>Amos 4:6-10).

**riotous living** — (<sup><2510></sup>Luke 15:30), “with harlots.” Ah! but this reaches farther than the sensualist; for “in the deep symbolical language of Scripture fornication is the standing image of idolatry; they are in fact ever spoken of as one and the same sin, considered now in its fleshly, now in its spiritual aspect” (<sup><2400></sup>Jeremiah 3:1-15 <sup><2600></sup>Ezekiel 16:1-17:24) [TRENCH].

**14. when he had spent all ... a mighty famine** — a mysterious providence holding back the famine till he was in circumstances to feel it in all its rigor. Thus, like Jonah, whom the storm did not overtake till on the

mighty deep at the mercy of the waves, does the sinner feel as if “the stars in their courses were fighting against” him (<sup>4051</sup>Judges 5:20).

**in want** — the first stage of his bitter experience, and preparation for a change.

**15. joined himself**, etc. — his pride not yet humbled, unable to brook the shame of a return.

**to feed swine** — glad to keep life anyhow, behold the son sank into a swineherd — among the Jews, on account of the prohibition of swine’s flesh, emphatically vile! “He who begins by using the world as a servant, to minister to his pleasure, ends by reversing the relationship” [TRENCH].

**16. would fain have filled** — rather, “was fain to fill,” ate greedily of the only food he could get.

**the husks** — “the hulls of a leguminous plant which in the East is the food of cattle and swine, and often the nourishment of the poorest in times of distress” [STIER].

**no man gave ... him** — not this food, for that he had, but *anything better* (<sup>4014</sup>Jeremiah 30:14). This was his lowest depth — *perishing unpitied, alone in the world, and ready to disappear from it unmissed!* But this is just the blessed turning-point; midnight before dawn of day (<sup>4428</sup>2 Chronicles 12:8 33:11-13 <sup>4429</sup>Jeremiah 2:19).

**17. came to himself** — Before, he had been “beside himself” (<sup>4018</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:3), in what sense will presently appear.

**How many hired**, etc. — What a testimony to the *nature* of the home he had left! But did he not know all this ere he departed and every day of his voluntary exile? He did, and he did not. His heart being wholly estranged from home and steeped in selfish gratification, his father’s house never came within the range of his vision, or but as another name for bondage and gloom. Now empty, desolate, withered, perishing, *home*, with all its peace, plenty, freedom, dignity, starts into view, fills all his visions as a warm and living reality, and breaks his heart.

**18. I will arise and go to my FATHER** — The change has come at last, and what a change! — couched in terms of such exquisite simplicity and power as if expressly framed for all heart-broken penitents.

**Father**, etc. — Mark the term. Though “no more *worthy* to be called his son,” the prodigal sinner is taught to claim the *defiled*, but *still existing* relationship, asking not to be made a servant, but *remaining a son* to be

made “*as a servant*,” willing to take the lowest place and do the meanest work. Ah! and is it come to this? Once it was, “Any place rather than home.” Now, “Oh, that home! Could I but dare to hope that the door of it would not be closed against me, how gladly would I take any place and do any work, happy only to be there at all.” Well, *that is conversion* — nothing absolutely new, yet all new; old familiar things seen in a new light and for the first time as realities of overwhelming magnitude and power. *How this is brought about the parable says not.* (We have that abundantly elsewhere, <sup><1818></sup>Philippians 2:13, etc.). Its one object is to paint the *welcome home* of the greatest sinners, when (no matter for the present *how*) they “arise and go to *their Father*.”

**20. a great way off** — Oh yes, when but the face is turned *homeward*, though as yet far, far away, our Father recognizes His own child in us, and bounds to meet us — not saying, Let him come to Me and sue for pardon first, but Himself taking the first step.

**fell on his neck and kissed him** — What! In all his filth? Yes. In all his rags? Yes. In all his haggard, shattered wretchedness? Yes. “Our Father who art in heaven,” is this Thy portraiture? It is even so (<sup><3812></sup>Jeremiah 31:20). And because it is so, I wonder not that such incomparable teaching hath made the world new.

**21. Father, I have sinned**, etc. — “This confession is uttered *after the kiss of reconciliation*” (<sup><3168></sup>Ezekiel 16:63) [TRENCH].

**22. But the Father said**, etc. — The son has not said all he purposed, not so much, because the father’s demonstrations had rekindled the filial, and swallowed up all servile feeling [TRENCH] (on the word “Father,” see on <sup><1518></sup>Luke 15:18), but because the father’s heart is made to appear too full to listen, at that moment, to more in this strain.

**the best robe** — Compare <sup><3817></sup>Zechariah 3:4,5, “Take away the filthy garments from him; behold I have clothed thee with change of raiment; and they clothed him with garments” (<sup><3110></sup>Isaiah 61:10 <sup><1188></sup>Revelation 3:18).

**a ring** — (Compare <sup><1442></sup>Genesis 41:42 <sup><5112></sup>James 2:2).

**shoes** — Slaves went barefoot. Thus, we have here a threefold symbol of *freedom* and *honor*, restored, as the fruit of *perfect reconciliation*.

**23. the fatted calf** — kept for festive occasions.

**24. my son** — now *twice* his son.

**dead ... lost** — to *me*; to *himself* — to my service, my satisfaction; to his own dignity, peace, profit.

**alive again ... found** — to all these.

**merry** — (See on <sup><DIS10></sup>Luke 15:10).

**25. in the field** — engaged in his father's business: compare <sup><DIS9></sup>Luke 15:29, "These many years do I *serve* thee."

**28. came his father out, and entreated him** — "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (<sup><PA313></sup>Psalms 103:13). As it is the elder brother who now errs, so it is *the same paternal compassion* which had fallen on the neck of the younger that comes forth and pleads with the elder.

**29. these many years ... neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment** — The words are not to be pressed too far. He is merely contrasting *his constancy of love and service* with the conduct of his brother; just as Job, resenting the charge of *hypocrisy* by his friends, speaks as if nothing could be laid to his charge (<sup><KE20></sup>Job 23:10-12), and David too (<sup><PS181></sup>Psalms 18:20-24). *The father attests the truth of all he says.*

**never ... a kid** — I say not a *calf*, but not even a kid.

**that I might make merry with my friends** — Here lay his misapprehension. It was no entertainment for the gratification of the prodigal: it was a *father's* expression of the joy *he* felt at his recovery.

**thy son ... thy living** — How unworthy a reflection on the common father of both, for the one not only to disown the other, but fling him over upon his father, as if he should say, Take him, and have joy of him!

**31. Son**, etc. — The father resents not the insult — how could he, after the largeness of heart which had kissed the returning prodigal? He calmly expostulates with him, "Son, listen to reason. What need for special, exuberant joy over thee? Didst thou say, 'Lo, these many years do I serve thee?' In that saidst thou truly; but *just for that reason* do I not set the whole household a-rejoicing over thee. For thee is reserved *what is higher still* — a tranquil lifelong satisfaction in thee, as a true-hearted faithful son in thy father's house, nor of the inheritance reserved for thee is aught alienated by this festive and fitting joy over the once foolish but now wise and newly recovered one."

**32. It was meet** — Was it possible he should simply take his long vacant place in the family without one special sign of wonder and delight at the

change? Would that have been *nature*? But *this* being the meaning of the festivity, it would for that very reason be *temporary*. In time, the dutifulness of even the younger son would become the *law* and not the *exception*; he too at length might venture to say, “Lo, these many years do I serve thee”; and of him the father would say, “Son, thou art ever with me.” In that case, therefore, it would *not* be “meet that they should make merry and be glad.” The lessons are obvious, but how beautiful!

- (1) The deeper sunk and the longer estranged any sinner is, the more exuberant is the joy which his recovery occasions.
- (2) Such joy is *not* the portion of those whose whole lives have been spent in the service of their Father in heaven.
- (3) Instead of grudging the want of this, they should deem it the highest testimony to their lifelong fidelity, that something better is reserved for them — the deep, abiding complacency of their Father in heaven.



# CHAPTER 16

## LUKE 16:1-31.

### PARABLES OF THE UNJUST STEWARD AND OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS, OR, THE RIGHT USE OF MONEY.

1. **steward** — manager of his estate.

**accused** — informed upon.

**had wasted** — rather, “was wasting.”

3. **cannot dig ... to beg, ashamed** — therefore, when dismissed, shall be in utter want.

4. **may receive me**, etc. — Observe his one object — *when cast out of one home to secure another*. This is the key to the parable, on which there have been many differing views.

5-7. **fifty ... fourscore** — deducting a half from the debt of the one, and a fifth from that of the other.

8. **the lord** — evidently the steward’s lord, so called in <sup>4218</sup>Luke 16:3,5.

**commended**, etc. — not for his “injustice,” but “because he had done wisely,” or prudently; with commendable *foresight* and *skillful adaptation of means to end*.

**children of this world** — so <sup>4218</sup>Luke 20:34; compare <sup>4174</sup>Psalms 17:14 (“their portion in this life”); <sup>4189</sup>Philippians 3:19 (“mind earthly things”); <sup>4005</sup>Psalms 4:6,7.

**their generation** — or “for their generation” — that is, for the purposes of the “world” they are “of.” The greater wisdom (or shrewdness) of the one, in *adaptation of means to ends*, and in energetic, determined prosecution of them, is none of it for *God* and *eternity* — a region they were never in, an atmosphere they never breathed, an undiscovered world, an unborn existence to them — but all for the purposes of their own grovelling and fleeting generation.

**children of light** — (so <sup>4026</sup>John 12:36 <sup>4008</sup>Ephesians 5:8 <sup>4151</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:5). Yet this is only “as night-birds see better in the dark than those of the

day owls than eagles” [CAJETAN and TRENCH]. But we may learn lessons from them, as our Lord now shows, and “be wise as *serpents*.”

**9. Make ... friends of** — Turn to your advantage; that is, as the steward did, “by showing mercy to the poor” (<sup>2007</sup>Daniel 4:27; compare <sup>0123</sup>Luke 12:33 14:13,14).

**mammon of unrighteousness** — treacherous, precarious. (See on <sup>0103</sup>Matthew 6:24).

**ye fail** — in respect of life.

**they may receive you** — not generally, “ye may be received” (as <sup>0168</sup>Luke 6:38, “shall *men* give”), but “those ye have relieved may rise up as witnesses for you” at the great day. Then, like the steward, when turned out of one home shall ye secure another; but better than he, a heavenly for an earthly, an everlasting for a temporary habitation. Money is not here made the key to heaven, more than “the deeds done in the body” in general, according to which, as a test of character — but not by the merit of which — men are to be judged (<sup>0180</sup>2 Corinthians 5:10, and see <sup>0123</sup>Matthew 25:34-40).

**10. He**, etc. — a maxim of great pregnancy and value; rising from the *prudence* which the steward had to the *fidelity* which he had not, the “*harmlessness* of the dove, to which the serpent” with all his “*wisdom*” is a total stranger. Fidelity depends not on the *amount entrusted*, but on the *sense of responsibility*. He that feels this in little will feel it in much, and conversely.

**11, 12. unrighteous mammon** — To the whole of this He applies the disparaging term “what is least,” in contrast with “the true riches.”

**12. another man’s ... your own** — an important turn to the subject. Here all we have is *on trust* as stewards, who have an account to render. Hereafter, what the faithful have will be *their own property*, being no longer on probation, but in secure, undisturbed, rightful, everlasting possession and enjoyment of all that is graciously bestowed on us. Thus money is neither to be *idolized* nor *despised*: we must sit loose to it and use it for God’s glory.

**13. can serve** — be *entirely at the command of*; and this is true even where the services are not opposed.

**hate ... love** — showing that the two *here intended* are in uncompromising hostility to each other: an awfully searching principle!

**14-18. covetous ... derided him** — sneered at Him; their master sin being too plainly struck at for them to relish. But it was easier to *run down* than to *refute* such teaching.

**15. justify yourselves** — make a show of righteousness.

**highly esteemed among men** — generally carried away by plausible appearances. (See <sup><0947></sup>1 Samuel 16:7; and <sup><0441></sup>Luke 14:11).

**16. The law**, etc. — (See <sup><0013></sup>Matthew 11:13).

**and every man presseth**, etc. — Publicans and sinners, all indiscriminately, are eagerly pressing into it; and ye, interested adherents of the mere forms of an economy which is passing away, “discerning not the signs of this time,” will allow the tide to go past you and be found a stranded monument of blindness and obstinacy.

**17. it is easier**, etc. — (See on <sup><0157></sup>Matthew 5:17,18)

**18. putteth away his wife**, etc. — (See on <sup><0098></sup>Matthew 19:3-9). Far from intending to weaken the force of the law, in these allusions to a new economy, our Lord, in this unexpected way, sends home its high requirements with a pungency which the Pharisees would not fail to feel.

**19. purple and fine linen**, etc. — (Compare <sup><0785></sup>Esther 8:15 <sup><0682></sup>Revelation 18:12); wanting nothing which taste and appetite craved and money could procure.

**20, 21. laid** — having to be carried and put down.

**full of sores** — open, running, “not closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment” (<sup><0006></sup>Isaiah 1:6).

**21. desiring to be fed with** — but was not [GROTIUS, BENDEL, MEYER, TRENCH, etc.]. The words may mean indeed “was fain to feed on,” or “gladly fed on,” as in <sup><0516></sup>Luke 15:16 [ALFORD, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, etc.]. But the context rather favors the former.

**licked**, etc. — a touching act of brute pity, in the absence of human relief. It is a case of heartless indifference, amidst luxuries of every kind, to one of God’s poorest and most afflicted ones, presented daily before the eye.

**22. died** — His burial was too unimportant to mention; while “the rich man died and *was buried*” — his carcass carried in pomp to its earthly resting-place.

**in to Abraham’s bosom** — as if seen reclining next to Him at the heavenly feast (<sup><0011></sup>Matthew 8:11).

**23. in hell** — not the final place of the lost (for which another word is used), but as we say “the unseen world.” But as the object here is certainly to depict the *whole torment* of the one and the *perfect bliss* of the other, it comes in this case to much the same.

**seeth Abraham** — not God, to whom therefore he cannot cry [BENGEL].

**24. Father Abraham** — a well-founded, but unavailing, claim of natural descent (<sup><Q88</sup>Luke 3:8 <sup><Q82</sup>John 8:37).

**mercy on me** — who never showed any (<sup><Q8B</sup>James 2:3).

**send Lazarus** — the pining victim of his merciless neglect.

**that he may** — take me hence? No; that he dares not to ask.

**dip ... tongue** — that is the *least* conceivable and the *most momentary* abatement of his torment; that is all. But even this he is told is

(1) *unreasonable*.

**25, 26. Son** — stinging acknowledgment of the claimed relationship.

**thou ... Lazarus**, etc. — As it is a great law of God’s kingdom, that *the nature of our present desires shall rule that of our future bliss*, so by that law, he whose “good things,” craved and enjoyed, were all bounded by time, could look for none after his connection with time had come to an end (<sup><Q84</sup>Luke 6:24). But by this law, he whose “evil things,” all crowded into the present life, drove him to seek, and find, consolation in a life beyond the grave, is by death released from all evil and ushered into unmixed and uninterrupted good (<sup><Q82</sup>Luke 6:21).

(2) It is *impossible*.

**26. besides all this** — independently of this consideration.

**a great gulf fixed** — *By an irrevocable decree* there has been placed a vast impassable abyss between the two states, and the occupants of each.

**27-31. Then he said** — now abandoning all hope for himself.

**send him to my father’s house**, etc. — no waking up of good in the heart of the lost, but bitter reproach against God and the old economy, as not warning him sufficiently [TRENCH]. The answer of Abraham is, They *are* sufficiently warned.

**30. Nay** — giving the lie to Abraham.

**but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent** — a principle of awful magnitude and importance. The greatest miracle will have no effect on those who are determined not to believe. A *real* Lazarus soon “rose from the dead,” but the sight of him by crowds of people, inclined thereby to Christ, only crowned the unbelief and hastened the murderous plots of the Pharisees against the Lord of glory; nor has His own resurrection, far more overpowering, yet won over that “crooked and perverse nation.”

# CHAPTER 17

## LUKE 17:1-10.

### OFFENSES — FAITH — HUMILITY.

1, 2. (See <sup><0816></sup>Matthew 18:6,7).

3, 4. (See on <sup><0815></sup>Matthew 18:15-17; <sup><0821></sup>Matthew 18:21,22).

4. **seven times** — not a *lower* measure of the forgiving spirit than the “seventy times seven” enjoined on Peter, which was occasioned by his asking if he was to *stop* at seven times. “No,” is the virtual answer, “though it come to seventy times that number, if only he ask forgiveness in sincerity.”

5. **Lord** — (See on <sup><2001></sup>Luke 10:1).

**increase our faith** — moved by the difficulty of avoiding and forgiving “offenses.” This is the only instance in which *a spiritual operation upon their souls* was solicited of Christ by the Twelve; but a kindred and higher prayer had been offered before, by one with far fewer opportunities. (See on <sup><0024></sup>Mark 9:24.)

6. **sycamine** — mulberry. (See on <sup><4112></sup>Mark 11:22-24.)

7-10. **say unto him by and by** — The “by and by” (or rather “directly”) should be joined not to the *saying* but the *going*: “Go directly.” The connection here is: “But when your faith *has* been so increased as both to avoid and forgive offenses, and do things impossible to all but faith, be not puffed up as though you had laid the Lord under any obligations to you.”

9. **I trow not** — or, as we say, when much more is meant, “I should think not.”

10. **unprofitable** — a word which, though usually denoting the *opposite* of profit, is here used simply in its *negative* sense. “We have not, as his servants, profited or benefited God at all.” (Compare <sup><8212></sup>Job 22:2,3 <sup><6135></sup>Romans 11:35.)

## LUKE 17:11-19.

### TEN LEPERS CLEANSED.

**11-13. through the midst of Samaria and Galilee** — probably on the *confines* of both.

**12. stood afar off** — (Compare <sup><1838></sup>Leviticus 13:45,46).

**13. they lifted up** — their common misery drawing these poor outcasts together (<sup><1808></sup>2 Kings 7:3), nay, making them forget the fierce national antipathy of Jew and Samaritan [TRENCH].

**Jesus**, etc. — (Compare <sup><1889></sup>Matthew 20:30-33). How quick a teacher is felt misery, even though as here the teaching may be soon forgotten!

**14. show yourselves** — as cleansed persons. (See on <sup><1898></sup>Matthew 8:4.) Thus too would the Samaritan be taught that “salvation is of the Jews” (<sup><1802></sup>John 4:22).

**as they went, were cleansed** — In how many different ways were our Lord’s cures wrought, and this different from all the rest.

**17, 18. Were there not ten cleansed** — rather, were not *the ten* cleansed? that is, the whole of them — an example (by the way) of Christ’s omniscience [BENGEL].

**18. this stranger** — “this alien” (literally, “of another race”). The language is that of wonder and admiration, as is expressly said of another exhibition of Gentile faith (<sup><1889></sup>Matthew 8:10).

**19. Arise** — for he had “fallen down on his face at His feet” (<sup><1716></sup>Luke 17:16) and there lain prostrate.

**faith made thee whole** — not as the others, merely in body, but in that higher spiritual sense with which His constant language has so familiarized us.

## <D77>LUKE 17:20-37.

### COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND OF THE SON OF MAN.

**20-25. when,** etc. — To meet the erroneous views not only of the Pharisees, but of the disciples themselves, our Lord addresses both, announcing the coming of the kingdom under different aspects.

**It cometh not with observation** — with watching or lying in wait, as for something outwardly imposing and at once revealing itself.

**21. Lo here! ... lo there!** — shut up within *this* or *that* sharply defined and visible geographical or ecclesiastical limit.

**within you** — is of an internal and *spiritual* character (as contrasted with their *outside* views of it). But it has its *external* side too.

**22. The days** — rather “Days.”

**will come** — as in <D98> Luke 19:43, when, amidst calamities, etc., you will anxiously look for a deliverer, and deceivers will put themselves forward in this character.

**one of the days of the Son of man** — Himself again among them but for one day; as we say when all seems to be going wrong and the one person who could keep them right is removed [NEANDER in STIER, etc.]. “This is said to guard against the mistake of supposing that His visible presence would accompany the manifestation and establishment of His kingdom” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**23. they shall say, See here ... go not,** etc. — a warning to all so-called expositors of prophecy and their followers, who cry, Lo there and see here, every time that war breaks out or revolutions occur.

**24. as lightning ... so ... the Son of man** — that is it will be as manifest. The Lord speaks here of His coming and manifestation in a prophetically indefinite manner, and in these preparatory words *blends into one the distinctive epochs* [STIER]. When the whole polity of the Jews, civil and ecclesiastical alike, was broken up at once, and its continuance rendered impossible by the destruction of Jerusalem, it became as manifest to all as the lightning of heaven that the kingdom of God had ceased to exist in its old, and had entered on a new and perfectly different form. So it may be again, ere its final and greatest change at the personal coming of Christ, and of which the words in their highest sense are alone true.



**25. But first ... suffer**, etc. — This shows that the more immediate reference of <sup><1723></sup>Luke 17:23 is to an event *soon* to follow the death of Christ. It was designed to withdraw the attention of “His disciples” from the *glare* in which His foregoing words had invested the approaching establishment of His kingdom.

**26-30. eat ... married ... planted** — all the ordinary occupations and enjoyments of life. Though the antediluvian world and the cities of the plain were awfully wicked, it is not their *wickedness*, but their *worldliness*, their unbelief and indifference to the future, their *unpreparedness*, that is here held up as a warning. *Note.* — These recorded events of Old Testament history — denied or explained away nowadays by not a few — are referred to here as *facts*.

**31-33. to take it away ... Remember**, etc. — a warning against that *lingering reluctance to part with present treasures* which induces some to remain in a burning house, in hopes of saving this and that precious article till consumed and buried in its ruins. The cases here supposed, though different, are similar.

**32. Lot's wife** — her “*look back*,” for that is all that is said of her, and her recorded *doom*. Her heart was in Sodom still, and the “look” just said, “And must I bid it adieu?”

**33. Whosoever**, etc. — (See on <sup><1723></sup>Luke 9:23-27).

**34. two in one bed** — the prepared and unprepared mingled in closest intercourse together in the ordinary walks and fellowships of life, when the moment of severance arrives. Awful truth! realized before the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Christians found themselves forced by their Lord's directions (<sup><1723></sup>Luke 21:21) at once and for ever away from their old associates; but most of all when the second coming of Christ shall burst upon a heedless world.

**37. Where** — shall this occur?

**Wheresoever**, etc. — “As birds of prey scent out the carrion, so wherever is found a mass of incurable moral and spiritual corruption, there will be seen alighting the ministers of divine judgment,” a proverbial saying terrifically verified at the destruction of Jerusalem, and many times since, though its most tremendous illustration will be at the world's final day.

# CHAPTER 18

## LUKE 18:1-8.

### PARABLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

**1-5. always** — Compare ~~CRIT~~ Luke 18:7, “night and day.”

**faint** — lose heart, or slacken.

**2. feared not ... neither regarded** — defying the vengeance of God and despising the opinion of men.

**widow** — weak, desolate, defenseless (~~SURE~~ 1 Timothy 5:5, which is taken from this).

**3. came** — kept coming. See ~~CRIT~~ Luke 18:5, “her continual coming.”

**Avenge me** — that is, rid me of the oppression of.

**5. continual coming** — coming for ever.

**6-8. the Lord** — a name expressive of the *authoritative* style in which He interprets His own parable.

**7. shall not God** — not unjust, but the infinitely righteous Judge.

**avenge** — redeem from oppression.

**his own elect** — not like this widow, the object of indifference and contempt, but dear to Him as the apple of the eye (~~CRIT~~ Zechariah 2:8).

**cry day and night** — whose every cry enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth (~~SURE~~ James 5:4), and how much more their incessant and persevering cries!

**bear long with them** — rather, “in their case,” or “on their account” (as ~~SURE~~ James 5:7, “for it”), [GROTIUS, DE WETTE, etc.].

**8. speedily** — as if pained at the long delay, impatient for the destined moment to interpose. (Compare ~~CRIT~~ Proverbs 29:1.)

**Nevertheless**, etc. — that is, Yet ere the Son of man comes to redress the wrongs of His Church, so low will the hope of relief sink, through the

length of the delay, that one will be fain to ask, Will He find any faith of a coming avenger left on the earth? From this we learn:

- (1) That the *primary* and *historical* reference of this parable is to the Church in its *widowed*, desolate, oppressed, defenseless condition during the present absence of her Lord in the heavens;
- (2) That in these circumstances importunate, persevering prayer for deliverance is the Church's fitting exercise;
- (3) That notwithstanding every encouragement to this, so long will the answer be delayed, while the need of relief continues the same, and all hope of deliverance will have nearly died out, and "faith" of Christ's coming scarcely to be found. But the application of the parable to *prayer in general* is so obvious as to have nearly hidden its more direct reference, and so precious that one cannot allow it to disappear in any public and historical interpretation.

## <PR> LUKE 18:9-14.

### PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

**11, 12. stood** — as the Jews in prayer (<41125> Mark 11:25).

**God**, etc. — To have been kept from gross iniquities was undoubtedly a just cause of thankfulness to God; but instead of the devoutly humble, admiring frame which this should inspire, the Pharisee arrogantly severs himself from the rest of mankind, as quite above them, and, with a contemptuous look at the poor publican, thanks God that he has not to stand afar off like him, to hang down his head like a bulrush and beat his breast like him. But these are only his *moral* excellencies. His *religious* merits complete his grounds for congratulation. Not confining himself to the one divinely prescribed annual fast (<PR> Leviticus 16:29), he was not behind the most rigid, who fasted on the second and fifth days of every week [LIGHTFOOT], and gave the tenth not only of what the law laid under tithing, but of "all his gains." Thus, besides doing *all his duty*, he did *works of supererogation*; while sins to confess and spiritual wants to be supplied he seems to have felt none. What a picture of the Pharisaic character and religion!

**13. standing afar off** — as unworthy to draw near; but that was the way to get near (<4848> Psalm 34:18 <2515> Isaiah 57:15).

**would not lift up** — blushing and ashamed to do so (<4890> Ezra 9:6).

**smote**, etc. — kept smiting; for anguish (<sup><4238></sup>Luke 23:48), and self-reproach (<sup><2619></sup>Jeremiah 31:19).

**be merciful** — “be propitiated,” a very unusual word in such a sense, only once else used in the New Testament, in the sense of “making reconciliation” by sacrifice (<sup><3827></sup>Hebrews 2:17). There *may* therefore, be some allusion to this here, though not likely.

**a sinner** — literally, “*the sinner*”; that is, “If ever there was one, I am he.”

**14. rather than the other** — The meaning is, “and not the other”; for the Pharisee was not seeking justification, and felt no need of it. This great law of the Kingdom of God is, in the teaching of Christ, inscribed, as in letters of gold, over its entrance gate. And in how many different forms is it repeated (<sup><4886></sup>Psalms 138:6 147:6 <sup><4163></sup>Luke 1:53). To be *self-emptyed*, or, “poor in spirit,” is the fundamental and indispensable preparation for the reception of the “grace which bringeth salvation”: wherever this exists, the “mourning” for it which precedes “comfort” and the earnest “hungerings and thirstings after righteousness” which are rewarded by the “fullness” of it, will, as we see here, be surely found. Such, therefore, and such only, are the justified ones (<sup><3832></sup>Job 33:27,28 <sup><4948></sup>Psalms 34:18 <sup><2575></sup>Isaiah 57:15).

## <sup><4285></sup>LUKE 18:15-17.

### LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

**15. infants** — showing that some, at least, of those called in Matthew (<sup><4913></sup>Matthew 19:13) and Mark (<sup><4103></sup>Mark 10:13) simply “little” or “young children,” were literally “*babes*.”

**touch them** — or, as more fully in Matthew (<sup><4093></sup>Matthew 19:13), “put His hands on them and *pray*,” or invoke a “blessing” on them (<sup><4106></sup>Mark 10:16), according to venerable custom (<sup><4484></sup>Genesis 48:14,15).

**rebuked them** — Repeatedly the disciples thus interposed to save annoyance and interruption to their Master; but, as the result showed, *always against the mind of Christ* (<sup><4153></sup>Matthew 15:23 <sup><4133></sup>Luke 18:39,40). Here, it is plain from our Lord’s reply, that they thought the intrusion a useless one, as *infants* were not capable of receiving anything from Him. His ministrations were for *grown people*.

**16. But Jesus** — “*much displeased*,” says Mark (<sup><4104></sup>Mark 10:14); and invaluable addition.

**said** — “SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME” — “AND FORBID THEM NOT,” is the important addition of Matthew (~~404~~Matthew 19:14) and Mark (~~4104~~Mark 10:14). What words are these from the lips of Christ! The price of them is above rubies. But the *reason* assigned, “FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD,” or “of heaven,” as in ~~4044~~Matthew 19:14, completes the previous information here conveyed; especially as interpreted by what immediately follows: “AND HE TOOK THEM UP IN HIS ARMS, PUT HIS HANDS UPON THEM, AND BLESSED THEM” (~~4006~~Mark 10:16). It is surely not to be conceived that all our Lord meant was to inform us, that seeing *grown people* must become childlike in order to be capable of the Kingdom of God, therefore they should not hinder *infants* from coming to Him, and therefore He took up and blessed *the infants themselves*. Was it not just the grave mistake of the disciples that infants should not be brought to Christ, because only grown people could profit by Him, which “much displeased” our Lord? And though He took the irresistible opportunity of lowering their pride of reason, by informing them that, in order to enter the Kingdom, “*instead of the children first becoming like them, they must themselves become like the children*” [RICHTER in STIER], this was but by the way; and, returning to the *children themselves*, He took them up in His gracious arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them, for no conceivable reason but to show that *they were thereby made capable, AS INFANTS, of the Kingdom of God*. And if so, then “*Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*” (~~4104~~Acts 10:47). But such application of the baptismal water can have no warrant here, save where the infants have been *previously brought to Christ Himself* for His benediction, and only as the *sign and seal* of that benediction.

## ~~4008~~ LUKE 18:18-30.

### THE RICH YOUNG RULER AND DISCOURSE THEREON.

This case presents some remarkable points.

- (1) The man was of irreproachable moral character; and this amidst all the temptations of *youth*, for he was a “young man” (~~4042~~Matthew 19:22), and *wealth*, for “he was very rich” (~~4023~~Luke 18:23 ~~4102~~Mark 10:22).
- (2) But restless notwithstanding, his heart craves eternal life.

(3) Unlike the “rulers,” to whose class he belonged (<sup><4088></sup>Luke 18:18), he so far believed in Jesus as to be persuaded He could authoritatively direct him on this vital point.

(4) So earnest is he that he comes “running” and even “kneeling before Him,” and that when He was gone forth *into the war* (<sup><4107></sup>Mark 10:17) — the high-road, by this time crowded with travelers to the passover; undeterred by the virulent opposition of the class he belonged to as a “ruler” and by the shame he might be expected to feel at broaching such a question in the hearing of a crowd and on the open road.

**19. Why**, etc. — Did our Lord mean then to teach that God only ought to be called “good?” Impossible, for that had been to contradict all Scripture teaching, and His own, too (<sup><4416></sup>Psalms 112:5 <sup><4129></sup>Matthew 25:21 <sup><5008></sup>Titus 1:8). Unless therefore we are to ascribe captiousness to our Lord, He could have had but one object — *to raise the youth’s ideas of Himself*, as not to be classed merely with other “good masters,” and declining to receive this title *apart from* the “One” who is essentially and only “good.” This indeed is but distantly hinted; but unless this is seen in *the background* of our Lord’s words, nothing worthy of Him can be made out of them. (Hence, *Socinianism*, instead of having any support here, is only baffled by it).

**20. Thou knowest**, etc. — Matthew (<sup><4097></sup>Matthew 19:17) is more complete here: “but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which — as if he had said, Point me out one of them which I have not kept? — “Jesus said, Thou shalt,” etc. (<sup><4097></sup>Matthew 19:17,18). Our Lord purposely confines Himself to the *second* table, which He would consider easy to keep, enumerating them all — for in Mark (<sup><4109></sup>Mark 10:19), “Defraud not” stands for the *tenth* (else the eighth is twice repeated). In Matthew (<sup><4099></sup>Matthew 19:19) the *sum* of this second table of the law is added, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” as if to see if he would venture to say he had kept *that*.

**21. All these**, etc. — “what lack I yet?” adds Matthew (<sup><4020></sup>Matthew 19:20). Ah! this gives us a glimpse of his heart. Doubtless he was perfectly sincere; but something within whispered to him that *his* keeping of the commandments was *too easy* a way of getting to heaven. He felt something beyond this to be necessary; after keeping all the commandments he was at a loss to know what that could be; and he came to Jesus just upon that point. “Then,” says Mark (<sup><4121></sup>Mark 10:21), “Jesus beholding him loved him,” or “looked lovingly upon him.” His sincerity, frankness, and nearness to the kingdom of God, in themselves most winning qualities, won our Lord’s regard even though he turned his back upon Him — a lesson to those who can see nothing lovable save in the regenerate.

**22. lackest ... one thing** — Ah! but that a fundamental, fatal lack.

**sell**, etc. — As riches were his idol, our Lord, who knew if from the first, lays His great authoritative grasp at once upon it, saying, “Now give Me up that, and all is right.” No general direction about the disposal of riches, then, is here given, save that we are to sit loose to them and lay them at the feet of Him who gave them. He who does this with all he has, whether rich or poor, is a true heir of the kingdom of heaven.

**23-25. was very sorrowful** — Matthew (<sup><10922></sup>Matthew 19:22) more fully, “*went away sorrowful*”; Mark still more, “was sad” or “sullen” at that saying, and “went away grieved.” Sorry he was, very sorry, to part with Christ; but to part with his riches would have cost him a pang more. When Riches or Heaven, on Christ’s terms, were the alternative, the result showed to which side the balance inclined. Thus was he shown to lack the one all-comprehensive requirement of the law — the *absolute subjection of the heart to God*, and this want vitiated all his other obediences.

**24. when Jesus saw** — Mark says (<sup><1038></sup>Mark 3:34), He “looked round about” — as if first following the departing youth with His eye — “and saith unto His disciples.”

**How hardly**, etc. — with what difficulty. In Mark (<sup><1024></sup>Mark 10:24) an explanation is added, “How hard is it for them that *trust* in riches,” etc. — that is, with what difficulty is this idolatrous trust conquered, without which they cannot enter; and this is introduced by the word “children” — sweet diminutive of affection and pity (<sup><205></sup>John 21:5).

**25. easier for a camel**, etc. — a proverbial expression denoting literally a thing impossible, but figuratively, very difficult.

**26, 27. For**, etc. — “At that rate none can be saved”: “Well, it does pass *human* power, but not *divine*.”

**28-30. Lo**, etc. — in the simplicity of his heart (as is evident from the reply), conscious that the required surrender had been made, and generously taking in his brethren with him — “*we*”; not in the spirit of the young ruler. “All these have I kept,”

**left all** — “The workmen’s little is as much his “all” as the prince’s much” [BENGEL]. In Matthew (<sup><1027></sup>Matthew 19:27) he adds, “What shall we have therefore?” How shall it fare with us?

**29. There is no man**, etc. — graciously acknowledging at once the completeness and the acceptableness of the surrender as a thing already made.

**house**, etc. — The specification is still more minute in Matthew and Mark, (<sup><4197></sup>Matthew 19:27 <sup><4109></sup>Mark 10:29) to take in *every* form of self-sacrifice.

**for the kingdom of God's sake** — in Mark (<sup><4109></sup>Mark 10:29), “for MY sake and the Gospel's.” See on <sup><4162></sup>Luke 6:22.

**30. manifold more in this present time** — in Matthew (<sup><4099></sup>Matthew 19:29) “an hundredfold,” to which Mark (<sup><4108></sup>Mark 10:30) gives this most interesting addition, “Now in this present time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions.” We have here the blessed promise of a *reconstruction of all human relationships and affections on a Christian basis and in a Christian state, after being sacrificed, in their natural form, on the altar of love to Christ*. This He calls “manifold more” — “an hundredfold more” — than what they sacrificed. Our Lord was Himself the first to exemplify this *new adjustment of His own relationships*. (See on <sup><4099></sup>Matthew 12:49,50; and <sup><4164></sup>2 Corinthians 6:14-18.) But this “with persecutions”; for how could such a transfer take place without the most cruel wrenches to flesh and blood? but the persecution would haply follow them into their new and higher circle, breaking that up too! But best of all, “in the world to come life everlasting.” And

When the shore is won at last Who will count the billows past? KEBLE

These promises are for *every one* who forsakes his all for Christ. But in Matthew (<sup><4198></sup>Matthew 19:28) this is prefaced by a special promise to *the Twelve*: “Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me in the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Ye who have now adhered to Me shall, in the new kingdom, rule, or give law to, the great Christian world, here set forth in Jewish dress as the twelve tribes, presided over by the twelve apostles on so many judicial thrones. In this sense certainly the promise has been illustriously fulfilled [CALVIN, GROTIUS, LIGHTFOOT, etc.]. But if the promise refers to the yet future glory (as may be thought from <sup><4278></sup>Luke 22:28-30, and as most take it), it points to the highest personal distinction of the first founders of the Christian Church.



## LUKE 18:31-34.

### FULLER ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPROACHING DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

(See on <sup><4118></sup>Mark 10:32-34.)

**31. all written by the prophets concerning the Son of man ... be accomplished** — showing how Christ Himself read, and would have us to read, the Old Testament, in which some otherwise evangelical interpreters find no prophecies, or *virtually* none, of the sufferings of the Son of man.

**34. understood none**, etc. — The Evangelist seems unable to say strongly enough how entirely hidden from them at that time was the *sense* of these exceeding plain statements: no doubt to add weight to their subsequent testimony, which from this very circumstance was prodigious, and with all the simple-hearted irresistible.

## LUKE 18:35-43.

### BLIND MAN HEALED.

In <sup><4119></sup>Matthew 20:29-34, they are *two*, as in the case of the Demoniac of Gadara. In Matthew and Mark (<sup><4106></sup>Mark 10:46-52) the occurrence is connected with Christ's *departure from Jericho*; in Luke with His *approach* to it. Many ways of accounting for these slight divergences of detail have been proposed. Perhaps, *if we knew all the facts*, we should see no difficulty; but that we have been left so far in the dark shows that the thing is of no moment any way. One thing is plain, there could have been no collusion among the authors of these Gospels, else they would have taken care to remove these "spots on the sun."

**38. son of David**, etc. — (See on <sup><4123></sup>Matthew 12:23).

**39. rebuked**, etc. — (See on <sup><4135></sup>Luke 18:15).

**so much the more** — that *importunity* so commended in the Syrophenician woman, and so often enjoined (<sup><4115></sup>Luke 11:5-13 18:1-8).

**40. commanded**, etc. — Mark (<sup><4106></sup>Mark 10:49) has this interesting addition: "And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, He calleth thee" — just as one earnestly desiring an interview with some exalted person, but told by one official after another that it is vain

to wait, as he will not succeed (they know it), yet persists in waiting for some answer to his suit, and at length the door opens, and a servant appears, saying, “You will be admitted — he has called you.” *And are there no other suitors to Jesus who sometimes fare thus?* “And he, casting away his garment” — how lively is this touch, evidently of an eye-witness, expressive of his earnestness and joy — “came to Jesus” (~~410B~~ Mark 10:49,50).

**41-43. What wilt thou**, etc. — to try them; to deepen their present consciousness of need; and to draw out their faith in Him. Lord “*Rabboni*” (~~410B~~ Mark 10:51); an emphatic and confiding exclamation. (See on ~~4310B~~ John 20:16.)

# CHAPTER 19

## ⌄ LUKE 19:1-10.

### ZACCHEUS THE PUBLICAN.

The name is Jewish.

**2-4. chief among the publicans** — farming a considerable district, with others under him.

**rich** — Ill-gotten riches some of it certainly was. (See on ⌄ Luke 19:8.)

**3. who he was** — what sort of person. *Curiosity* then was his only motive, though his determination not to be balked was overruled for more than he sought.

**4. sycamore** — the Egyptian fig, with leaves like the mulberry.

**5, 6. looked up,** — in the full knowledge of who was in the tree, and preparatory to addressing him.

**Zaccheus** — whom he had never seen in the flesh, nor probably heard of. “He calleth His own sheep *by name* and leadeth them out” (⌄ John 10:3).

**make haste, and come down** — to which he literally responded — “he made haste and came down.”

**for to-day,** etc. — Our Lord *invites Himself*, and in “royal” style, which waits not for invitations, but as the honor is done to the subject, not the sovereign, announces the purpose of royalty to partake of the subject’s hospitalities. Manifestly our Lord speaks as knowing how the privilege would be appreciated.

**to-day ... abide** — (Compare ⌄ John 1:39), probably over night.

**6. joyfully** — Whence this so sudden “joy” in the cold bosom of an avaricious publican? The internal revolution was as perfect as instantaneous. “He spake and it was done.” “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing” (⌄ Isaiah 35:6).

**7. to be guest** — or *lodge*: something more than “eating with” such (⌄ Luke 15:2).

**a sinner** — that was one but a minute ago, but now is not. This mighty change, however, was all unknown to them. But they shall know it presently. “Sinner” would refer both to his office, vile in the eyes of a Jew, and to his character, which it is evident was not good.

**8-10. stood** — before all.

**said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord** — Mark how frequently Luke uses this title, and always where lordly *authority, dignity, or power* is intended.

**if I have** — that is, “so far as I have,” for evidently the “if” is so used (as in <sup><1008></sup>Philippians 4:8).

**taken by false accusation** — defrauded, overcharged (<sup><482></sup>Luke 3:12,13).

**fourfold** — The Roman law required this; the Jewish law, but the principal and a fifth more (<sup><0407></sup>Numbers 5:7). There was no *demand* made for either; but, as if to revenge himself on his hitherto reigning sin (see on <sup><4125></sup>John 20:28), and to testify the change he had experienced, besides surrendering the half of his *fair* gains to the poor, he voluntarily determines to give up all that was ill-gotten, quadrupled. He gratefully addressed this to the “Lord,” to whom he owed the wonderful change.

**9. Jesus said unto him** — but also before all.

**This day**, etc. — memorable saying! Salvation already come, but not a day old.

**to this house** — so expressed probably to meet the taunt, “He is gone to be guest,” etc. The house is no longer polluted; it is now fit to receive Me. But *salvation to a house* is an exceedingly precious idea, expressing the new air that would henceforth breathe in it, and the new impulses from its head which would reach its members (<sup><19815></sup>Psalms 118:15 <sup><4165></sup>Acts 16:15,16,31).

**son of Abraham** — He was that by birth, but here it means a partaker of his *faith*, being mentioned as the sufficient explanation of *salvation* having come to him.

**10. lost** — and such “lost” ones as this Zaccheus. (See on <sup><0530></sup>Luke 15:32.) What encouragement is there in this narrative to hope for unexpected conversions?

## LUKE 19:11-27.

### PARABLE OF THE POUNDS.

A different parable from that of the Talents ( ⲁⲓⲙⲁⲩ Matthew 25:14-30). For,

(1) This parable was spoken “when He was *nigh* to Jerusalem” ( ⲁⲓⲙⲁⲩ Luke 19:11); that one, some days after entering it, and from the Mount of Olives.

(2) This parable was spoken to the promiscuous crowd; that, to the Twelve alone. Accordingly,

(3) Besides the “servants” in this parable, who profess subjection to Him, there is a class of “citizens” who refuse to own Him, and who are treated differently, whereas in the parable of the talents, spoken to the *former* class alone, this latter class is omitted.

(4) In the Talents, each servant receives a different number of them (five, two, one); in the Pounds all receive the same one pound, which is but about the sixtieth part of a talent; also, in the talents, each shows the same fidelity by doubling what he received (the five are made ten; the two, four); in the Pounds, each receiving the same, render a *different* return (one making his pound ten, another five). Plainly, therefore, the intended lesson is different; the one illustrating *equal fidelity with different degrees of advantage*; the other, *different degrees of improvement of the same opportunities*; yet with all this difference, the parables are remarkably similar.

**12. a far country** — said to put down the notion that He was just on His way to set up His kingdom, and to inaugurate it by His personal presence.

**to receive ... a kingdom** — be invested with royalty; as when Herod went to Rome and was there made king; a striking expression of what our Lord went away for and received, “sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

**to return** — at His second coming.

**13. Occupy** — “negotiate,” “do business,” with the resources entrusted.

**14. his citizens** — His proper subjects; meaning the Jews, who expressly repudiating our Lord’s claims said, “We have no king but Caesar” ( ⲁⲓⲙⲁⲩ John 19:15). In Christendom, these correspond to infidel rejecters of Christianity, as distinguished from professed Christians.

**15-26.** (See on <sup><15></sup>Matthew 25:19-29.)

**ten ... five cities** — different degrees of future gracious reward, proportioned to the measure of present fidelity.

**27. bring hither**, etc. — (Compare <sup><15></sup>1 Samuel 15:32,33). Referring to the awful destruction of Jerusalem, but pointing to the final destruction of all that are found in open rebellion against Christ.

## <sup><19></sup>LUKE 19:28-44.

### CHRIST'S TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM AND TEARS OVER IT.

(See on <sup><10></sup>Matthew 21:1-11.)

**29-38. Bethphage** — “house of figs,” a village which with Bethany lay along the further side of Mount Olivet, east of Jerusalem.

**30. whereon**, etc. — (See on <sup><30></sup>John 19:41).

**31. the Lord hath need**, etc. — He both knew all and had the key of the human heart. (See on <sup><29></sup>Luke 19:5.) Perhaps the owner was a disciple.

**35. set Jesus on** — He allowing this, as befitting the *state* He was for the first and only time assuming.

**37. whole multitude**, etc. — The language here is very grand, intended to express a burst of admiration far wider and deeper than ever had been witnessed before.

**38. Blessed be the King, etc.** — Mark (<sup><11></sup>Mark 11:9,10) more fully, “Hosanna,” that is, “*Save now*,” the words of <sup><18></sup>Psalms 118:25, which were understood to refer to Messiah; and so they add, “to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord (<sup><18></sup>Psalms 118:26), Hosanna in the highest.” This was the very loftiest style in which He could be saluted as the promised Deliverer.

**peace**, etc. — (See on <sup><13></sup>Luke 2:13,14).

**40. the stones**, etc. — Hitherto the Lord had discouraged all demonstrations in His favor; latterly He had *begun* an opposite course; on this one occasion He seems to yield His whole soul to the wide and deep acclaim with a mysterious satisfaction, regarding it as *so necessary* a part of the regal dignity in which as Messiah He for this last time entered the city,

that if not offered by the vast multitude, it would have been *wrung out of the stones* rather than be withheld (<sup><3211></sup>Habakkuk 2:11).

**41-44. when beheld ... wept** — Compare <sup><2081></sup>Lamentations 3:51, “Mine eye affecteth mine heart”; the heart again affecting the eye. Under this sympathetic law of the relation of mind and body, Jesus, in His beautiful, tender humanity, was constituted even as we. What a contrast to the immediately preceding profound joy! He yielded Himself alike freely to both. (See on <sup><1237></sup>Matthew 23:37.)

**42. at least in this**, etc. — even at this moving moment. (See on <sup><0239></sup>Luke 13:9.)

**thy peace** — thinking perhaps of the name of the city. (<sup><3002></sup>Hebrews 7:2) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. How much is included in this word!

**now ... hid** — It was His among His *last* open efforts to “gather them,” but their eyes were judicially closed.

**43. a trench** — a rampart; first of wood, and when this was burnt, a built wall, four miles in circuit, built in three days — so determined were they. This “cut off all hope of escape,” and consigned the city to unparalleled horrors. (See JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 6.2; 12.3,4.) All here predicted was with dreadful literally fulfilled.

## <sup><0205></sup>LUKE 19:45-48.

### SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE AND SUBSEQUENT TEACHING.

**45, 46.** As the *first* cleansing was on His first visit to Jerusalem (<sup><0213></sup>John 2:13-22), so this second cleansing was on His last.

**den of thieves** — banded together for plunder, reckless of principle. The mild term “house of merchandise,” used on the former occasion, was now unsuitable.

**47. sought** — continued seeking, that is, daily, as He taught.

**48. were very attentive to hear him** — hung upon His words.

# CHAPTER 20

## LUKE 20:1-19.

### THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED, AND HIS REPLY — PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN.

(See on <sup><4123></sup>Matthew 21:23.)

**2. these things** — particularly the clearing of the temple.

**4. baptism of John** — his whole ministry and mission, of which baptism was the seal.

**5. Why then believed ye him not?** — that is, in his testimony to Jesus, the sum of his whole witness.

**7. could not tell** — crooked, cringing hypocrites! No wonder Jesus gave you no answer (<sup><4106></sup>Matthew 7:6). But what dignity and composure does our Lord display as He turns their question upon themselves!

**9-13. vineyard** — (See on <sup><4236></sup>Luke 13:6). In <sup><4123></sup>Matthew 21:33 additional points are given, taken literally from <sup><2162></sup>Isaiah 5:2, to fix down the application and sustain it by Old Testament authority.

**husbandmen** — the ordinary spiritual guides of the people, under whose care and culture the fruits of righteousness might be yielded.

**went**, etc. — leaving it to the laws of the spiritual husbandry during the whole length of the Jewish economy. (See on <sup><4105></sup>Mark 4:26.)

**10. beat**, etc. — (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 21:35); that is, the prophets, extraordinary messengers raised up from time to time. (See on <sup><4137></sup>Matthew 23:37.)

**13. my beloved son** — Mark (<sup><4116></sup>Mark 12:6) still more affectingly, “Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved”; our Lord thus severing Himself from all merely *human* messengers, and claiming *Sonship* in its loftiest sense. (Compare <sup><3838></sup>Hebrews 3:3-6.)

**it may be** — “surely”; implying the almost unimaginable guilt of *not* doing so.



**14. reasoned among themselves** — (Compare <sup><1378></sup>Genesis 37:18-20 <sup><8147></sup>John 11:47-53).

**the heir** — sublime expression of the great truth, that God's inheritance was destined for, and in due time to come into the possession of, His Son *in our nature* (<sup><8002></sup>Hebrews 1:2).

**inheritance ... ours** — and so from mere *servants* we may become *lords*; the deep aim of the depraved heart, and literally “*the root of all evil.*”

**15. cast him out of the vineyard** — (Compare <sup><8318></sup>Hebrews 13:11-13 <sup><12131></sup>1 Kings 21:13 <sup><8977></sup>John 19:17).

**16. He shall come**, etc. — This answer was given by the Pharisees themselves (<sup><1248></sup>Matthew 21:41), thus pronouncing their own righteous doom. Matthew alone (<sup><1243></sup>Matthew 21:43) gives the naked application, that “the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” — the great evangelical community of the faithful, chiefly Gentiles.

**God forbid** — His whole meaning now bursting upon them.

**17-19. written** — (in <sup><4802></sup>Psalms 118:22,23. See on <sup><1298></sup>Luke 19:38). The Kingdom of God is here a Temple, in the erection of which *a certain stone*, rejected as unsuitable by the spiritual builders, is, by the great Lord of the House, made the keystone of the whole. On that Stone the builders were now “falling” and being “broken” (<sup><2085></sup>Isaiah 8:15), “sustaining great spiritual hurt; but soon that Stone should fall upon *them* and grind them to powder” (<sup><2038></sup>Daniel 2:34,35 <sup><8018></sup>Zechariah 12:3) — in their *corporate* capacity in the tremendous destruction of Jerusalem, but *personally*, as unbelievers, in a more awful sense still.

**19. the same hour** — hardly able to restrain their rage.

## <sup><1210></sup>LUKE 20:20-40.

### ENTANGLING QUESTIONS ABOUT TRIBUTE AND THE RESURRECTION — THE REPLIES.

**20-26. sent forth** — after consulting (<sup><1225></sup>Matthew 22:15) on the best plan.

**spies** — “of the Pharisees and Herodians” (<sup><1123></sup>Mark 12:13). See <sup><1106></sup>Mark 3:6.

**21. we know**, etc. — hoping by flattery to throw Him off His guard.

**22. tribute** — (See on <sup><40724</sup>Matthew 17:24).

**25. things which be Caesar's** — Putting it in this general form, it was impossible for sedition itself to dispute it, and yet it dissolved the snare.

**and unto God** — How much there is in this profound but to them startling addition to the maxim, and how incomparable is the whole for fullness, brevity, clearness, weight!

**27-34. no resurrection** — “nor angel nor spirit” (<sup><4038</sup>Acts 23:8); the *materialists* of the day.

**34. said unto them** — In <sup><4029</sup>Matthew 22:29, the reply begins with this important statement: — “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures,” regarding the future state, “nor the power of God,” before which a thousand such difficulties vanish (also <sup><4024</sup>Mark 12:24).

**36. neither ... die any more** — Marriage is ordained to perpetuate the human family; but as there will be no breaches by death in the future state, this ordinance will cease.

**equal** — or “like.”

**unto the angels** — that is, in the *immortality* of their nature.

**children of God** — not in respect of *character* but *nature*; “being the children of the resurrection” to an undecaying existence (<sup><5020</sup>Romans 8:21,23). And thus the children of their Father’s immortality (<sup><5016</sup>1 Timothy 6:16).

**37, 38. even Moses** — whom they had just quoted to entangle Him.

**38. not ... of the dead, ... for all**, etc. — To God, no human being is dead, or ever will be; but all sustain an abiding conscious relation to Him. But the “all” here meant “those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world.” These *sustain a gracious covenant relation to God, which cannot be dissolved*. In this sense our Lord affirms that for Moses to

call the Lord the “God” of His patriarchal servants if at that moment they had no existence, would be unworthy of Him. He “would be *ashamed* to be called their God, if He had not prepared for them a city” (<sup><5016</sup>Hebrews 11:16). How precious are these glimpses of the *resurrection state*!

**39. scribes ... well said** — enjoying His victory over the Sadducees.

**they durst not** — neither party, both for the time utterly foiled.

LUKE 20:41-47.

**CHRIST BAFFLES THE PHARISEES BY A QUESTION ABOUT DAVID AND MESSIAH, AND DENOUNCES THE SCRIBES.**

**41. said,** etc. — “What think ye of Christ [the promised and expected Messiah]? Whose son is He [to be]? They say unto Him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit [by the Holy Ghost, <sup><123></sup>Mark 12:36] call Him Lord?” (<sup><122></sup>Matthew 22:42,43). The difficulty can only be solved by the *higher* and *lower* — the *divine* and *human* natures of our Lord (<sup><123></sup>Matthew 1:23). Mark the testimony here given to the *inspiration* of the Old Testament (compare <sup><144></sup>Luke 24:44).

**46, 47. Beware,** etc. — (See on <sup><123></sup>Matthew 23:5; and <sup><141></sup>Luke 14:7).

**47. devour,** etc. — taking advantage of their helpless condition and confiding character, to obtain possession of their property, while by their “long prayers” they made them believe they were raised far above “filthy lucre.” So much “the greater damnation” awaits them. What a lifelike description of the Romish clergy, the true successors of “the scribes!”

# CHAPTER 21

## LUKE 21:1-4.

### THE WIDOW'S TWO MITES.

**1. looked up** — He had “sat down over against the treasury” (<sup><4124></sup>Mark 12:41), probably to rest, for He had continued long standing as he taught in the temple court (<sup><4127></sup>Mark 11:27), and “looking up He saw” — as in Zaccheus’ case, not quite casually.

**the rich**, etc. — “the people,” says <sup><4124></sup>Mark 12:41 “cast money into the treasury, and many rich east in much”; that is, into chests deposited in one of the courts of the temple to receive the offerings of the people towards its maintenance (<sup><4219></sup>2 Kings 12:9 <sup><4830></sup>John 8:20).

**2. two mites** — “which make a farthing” (<sup><4124></sup>Mark 12:42), the smallest Jewish coin. “She might have kept one” [BENGEL].

**3. And he said** — “to His disciples,” whom He “called to Him” (<sup><4124></sup>Mark 12:43), to teach from it a great future lesson.

**more than ... all** — in proportion to her means, which is God’s standard (<sup><482></sup>2 Corinthians 8:12).

**4. of their abundance** — their *superfluity*; what they had to spare,” or beyond what they needed.

**of her penury** — or “want” (<sup><4124></sup>Mark 12:44) — her *deficiency*, of what was *less* than her own wants required, “all the living she had.” Mark (<sup><4124></sup>Mark 12:44) still more emphatically, “all that she had — her whole subsistence.” *Note*:

(1) *As temple offerings are needed still for the service of Christ at home and abroad, so “looking down” now, as then “up,” Me “sees” who “cast in,” and how much.*

(2) *Christ’s standard of commendable offering is not our superfluity, but our deficiency — not what will never be missed, but what costs us some real sacrifice, and just in proportion to the relative amount of that sacrifice. (See <sup><4801></sup>2 Corinthians 8:1-3.)*

## LUKE 21:5-38.

### CHRIST'S PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND WARNINGS TO PREPARE FOR HIS SECOND COMING, SUGGESTED BY IT — HIS DAYS AND NIGHTS DURING HIS LAST WEEK.

5-7. (See on <sup><1811></sup>Matthew 24:1-3.)

8. **the time** — of the Kingdom, in its full glory.

**go ... not ... after them** — “I come not so very soon” (<sup><1812></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:1,2) [STIER].

9-11. **not terrified** — (See <sup><2119></sup>Luke 21:19 <sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 8:11-14).

**end not by and by** — or immediately, not yet (<sup><1806></sup>Matthew 24:6 <sup><1137></sup>Mark 13:7): that is, “Worse must come before all is over.”

10. **Nation**, etc. — Matthew and Mark (<sup><1808></sup>Matthew 24:8 <sup><1138></sup>Mark 13:8) add, “All these are the beginning of sorrows,” or travail pangs, to which heavy calamities are compared (<sup><2061></sup>Jeremiah 4:31, etc.).

12. **brought before**, etc. — The book of Acts verifies all this.

13. **for a testimony** — an opportunity of bearing testimony.

18. **not a hair ... perish** — He had just said (<sup><2116></sup>Luke 21:16) they should be *put to death*; showing that this precious promise is far above immunity from mere bodily harm, and furnishing a key to the right interpretation of the ninety-first Psalm, and such like. Matthew adds the following (<sup><1812></sup>Matthew 24:12): “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many,” the many or, the most — the generality of professed disciples — “shall wax cold.” But he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Sad illustrations of the effect of abounding iniquity in cooling the love of faithful disciples we have in the *Epistle of James*, written about this period referred to, and too frequently ever since (<sup><3038></sup>Hebrews 10:38,39 <sup><1120></sup>Revelation 2:10). “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness, and then shall the end come” (<sup><1814></sup>Matthew 24:14). God never sends judgment without previous warning; and there can be no doubt that the Jews, already dispersed over most known countries, had nearly all heard the Gospel “as a witness,” before the end of the Jewish state. The same principle was repeated and will repeat itself to *the end*.

**20, 21. by armies** — encamped armies, that is, besieged: “the abomination of desolation” (meaning the Roman ensigns, as the symbols of an idolatrous, pagan, unclean power) “spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (<sup>2107</sup>Daniel 9:27) “standing where it ought not” (<sup>4134</sup>Mark 13:14). “Whoso readeth [that prophecy] let him understand” (<sup>4185</sup>Matthew 24:15).

**Then ... flee**, etc. — EUSEBIUS says the Christians fled to *Pella*, at the north extremity of Perea, being “prophetically directed”; perhaps by some prophetic intimation still more explicit than this, which still would be their *chart*.

**23. woe unto** — “alas for.”

**with child**, etc. — from the greater suffering it would involve; as also “flight in winter, and on the sabbath,” which they were to “pray” against (<sup>4120</sup>Matthew 24:20), the one as more trying to the body, the other to the soul. “For then shall be tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be” — language not unusual in the Old Testament for tremendous calamities, though of this it may perhaps be literally said, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened” (<sup>4121</sup>Matthew 24:21,22). But for this merciful “shortening,” brought about by a remarkable concurrence of causes, the whole nation would have perished, in which there yet remained a remnant to be afterwards gathered out. Here in Matthew and Mark (<sup>4124</sup>Matthew 24:24 <sup>4132</sup>Mark 13:22) are some particulars about “false Christs,” who should, “*if possible*” — a precious clause — “deceive the very elect.” (Compare <sup>5109</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:9-11 <sup>6133</sup>Revelation 13:13.)

**24. Jerusalem ... trodden down ... until**, etc. — Implying

(1) that one day Jerusalem shall cease to be “trodden down by the *Gentiles*” (<sup>6102</sup>Revelation 11:2), as then by pagan so now by Mohammedan unbelievers;

(2) that this shall be at the “completion” of “the times of the Gentiles,” which from <sup>6125</sup>Romans 11:25 (taken from this) we conclude to mean till the Gentiles have had their *full time* of that place in the Church which the Jews in *their time* had before them — after which, the Jews being again “grafted into their own olive tree,” one Church of Jew and Gentile together shall fill the earth (<sup>6101</sup>Romans 11:1-36). What a vista this opens up!

**25-28. signs**, etc. — Though the grandeur of this language carries the mind over the head of all periods but that of Christ’s second coming, nearly every

expression will be found used of the Lord's coming in terrible national judgments, as of Babylon, etc.; and from <sup><1218></sup>Luke 21:28,32, it seems undeniable that its *immediate* reference was to the destruction of Jerusalem, though its *ultimate* reference beyond doubt is to Christ's final coming.

**28. redemption** — from the oppression of ecclesiastical despotism and legal bondage by the total subversion of the Jewish state and the firm establishment of the evangelical kingdom (<sup><1218></sup>Luke 21:31). But the words are of far wider and more precious import. Matthew (<sup><1218></sup>Matthew 24:30) says, "And then shall appear *the sign* of the Son of man in heaven," evidently something distinct from Himself, mentioned immediately after. What this was intended to mean, interpreters are not agreed. But as before Christ came to destroy Jerusalem, some appalling portents were seen in the air, so before His personal appearing it is likely that something *analogous* will be witnessed, though of what nature it is vain to conjecture.

**32. This generation** — not "this nation," as some interpret it, which, though admissible in itself, seems very unnatural here. It is rather as in <sup><1217></sup>Luke 9:27.

**34-37. surfeiting, and drunkenness** — All animal excesses, quenching spirituality.

**cares of this life** — (See on <sup><1217></sup>Mark 4:7; <sup><1218></sup>Mark 4:19).

**36. Watch ... pray**, etc. — the two great duties which in prospect of trial are constantly enjoined. These warnings, suggested by the need of preparedness for the tremendous calamities approaching, and the total wreck of the existing state of things, are the *general improvement* of the whole discourse, carrying the mind forward to Judgment and Vengeance of another kind and on a grander and more awful scale — not ecclesiastical or political but personal, not temporal but eternal — when all safety and blessedness will be found to lie in being able to "STAND BEFORE THE SON OF MAN" in the glory of His personal appearing.

**37, 38. in the daytime** — of this His last week.

**abode in the mount** — that is, at Bethany (<sup><1217></sup>Matthew 21:17).

# CHAPTER 22

## LUKE 22:1-6.

### CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES TO PUT JESUS TO DEATH — COMPACT WITH JUDAS.

1, 2. (See on <sup><4181></sup>Matthew 26:1-5.)

3. **Then entered Satan**, etc. — but not yet in the full sense. The awful stages of it were these:

(1) *Covetousness* being his master — passion, the Lord let it reveal itself and gather strength by entrusting him with “the bag” (<sup><6116></sup>John 12:6), as treasurer to Himself and the Twelve.

(2) In the discharge of that most sacred trust he became “a thief,” appropriating its contents from time to time to his own use. Satan, seeing this door into his heart standing wide open, determines to enter by it, but cautiously (<sup><4121></sup>2 Corinthians 2:11); first merely “*putting it into his heart to betray Him*” (<sup><6112></sup>John 13:2), suggesting the thought to him that by this means he might enrich himself.

(3) This thought was probably converted into a settled purpose by what took place in Simon’s house at Bethany. (See <sup><4116></sup>Matthew 26:6, and see on <sup><6114></sup>John 12:4-8.)

(4) Starting back, perhaps, or mercifully held back, for some time, the determination to carry it into immediate effect was not consummated till, sitting at the paschal supper, “*Satan entered into him*” (see on <sup><6127></sup>John 13:27), and conscience, effectually stifled, only rose again to be his tormentor. What lessons in all this for every one (<sup><4027></sup>Ephesians 4:27 <sup><4017></sup>James 4:7 <sup><4118></sup>1 Peter 5:8,9)!

5. **money** — “thirty pieces of silver” (<sup><4115></sup>Matthew 26:15); thirty shekels, the fine payable for man- or maid-servant accidentally killed (<sup><4123></sup>Exodus 21:32), and equal to \$25 in our money — “a *goodly price* that I was priced at of them” (<sup><3113></sup>Zechariah 11:13). (See on <sup><6116></sup>John 19:16.)

6. **in the absence**, etc. — (See <sup><4116></sup>Matthew 26:5).



◀D21E LUK 22:7-38.

**LAST PASSOVER — INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER —  
DISCOURSE AT THE TABLE.**

**7. the day of unleavened bread** — strictly the fifteenth Nisan (part of our March and April) *after* the paschal lamb was killed; but here, the fourteenth (Thursday). Into the difficult questions raised on this we cannot here enter.

**10-13. when ye are entered the city** — He Himself probably stayed at Bethany during the day.

**there shall a man**, etc. — (See on ▶D23E Luke 19:29-32).

**14-18. the hour** — about six P.M. Between three and this hour the lamb was killed (▶D11E Exodus 12:6, *Margin*)

**15. With desire ... desired** — “earnestly have I longed” (as ▶D33E Genesis 31:30, “sore longedst”). Why? It was to be His last “before He suffered” — and so became “*Christ our Passover sacrificed for us*” (▶A1E1 Corinthians 5:7), when it was “fulfilled in the Kingdom of God,” the typical ordinance thenceforth disappearing.

**17. took the cup** — the first of several partaken of in this service.

divide *it* among, etc. — that is, It is to be *your* last as well as Mine, “until the Kingdom of God come,” or as it is beautifully given in ▶D29E Matthew 26:29, “until that day when I shall drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” It was *the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals*, the one about to close for ever, the other immediately to open and run its majestic career until from earth it be transferred to heaven.

**21, 22.** (See on ▶E32E John 13:21, etc.).

**24-30. there was** — or “had been,” referring probably to some symptoms of the former strife which had reappeared, perhaps on seeing the whole paschal arrangements committed to two of the Twelve. (See on ▶A10E Mark 10:42-45.)

**25. benefactors** — a title which the vanity of princes eagerly coveted.

**26. But ye ... not** — Of how little avail has this condemnation of “lordship” and vain titles been against the vanity of Christian ecclesiastics?

**28. continued**, etc. — affecting evidence of Christ's tender susceptibility to human sympathy and support! (See on <sup><406></sup>John 6:66,67; see <sup><462></sup>John 16:32.)

**29. I appoint**, etc. — Who is this that dispenses kingdoms, nay, the Kingdom of kingdoms, within an hour or two of His apprehension, and less than a day of His shameful death? These sublime contrasts, however, perpetually meet and entrance us in this matchless history.

**30. eat and drink**, etc. — (See <sup><226></sup>Luke 22:16 and see on <sup><488></sup>Luke 18:28, etc.).

**31-34. Simon, Simon** — (See on <sup><204></sup>Luke 10:41).

desired *to have* — rather, “hath obtained you,” properly “asked and obtained”; alluding to Job (<sup><406></sup>Job 1:6-12 2:1-6), whom he solicited and obtained that he might sift him as wheat, insinuating as “the accuser of the brethren” (<sup><620></sup>Revelation 12:10), that he would find chaff enough in his religion, if indeed there was any wheat at all.

**you** — not Peter only, but them *all*.

**32. But I have prayed** — have been doing it already.

**for thee** — as most in danger. (See on <sup><274></sup>Luke 22:61,62.)

**fail not** — that is, entirely; for partially it did fail.

**converted** — brought back afresh as a penitent disciple.

**strengthen**, etc. — that is, make use of thy bitter experience for the fortifying of thy tempted brethren.

**33. I am ready**, etc. — honest-hearted, warmly-attached disciple, thinking thy present feelings immovable as a rock, thou shalt find them in the hour of temptation unstable as water: “I have been praying for thee,” therefore thy faith shall not perish; but thinking this superfluous, thou shalt find that “he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (<sup><183></sup>Proverbs 28:26).

**34. cock ... crow** — “twice” (<sup><440></sup>Mark 14:30).

**35-38. But now** — that you are going forth not as before on a temporary mission, provided for without purse or scrip, but into scenes of continued and severe trial, your *methods* must be different; for purse and scrip will now be needed for support, and the usual means of defense.


**37. the things concerning me** — decreed and written.

**have an end** — are rapidly drawing to a close.

**38. two swords ... enough** — they thinking He referred to present defense, while His answer showed He meant something else.

## LUKE 22:39-46.


### AGONY IN THE GARDEN.

**39. as ... wont** — (See  John 18:2).

**40. the place** — the Garden of Gethsemane, on the west or city side of the mount. Comparing all the accounts of this mysterious scene, the facts appear to be these:

(1) He bade nine of the Twelve remain “here” while He went and prayed “yonder.”

(2) He “took the other three, Peter, James, and John, and began to be sore amazed [appalled], sorrowful, and very heavy [oppressed], and said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death” — “I feel as if nature would sink under this load, as if life were ebbing out, and death coming before its time” — “tarry ye here, and watch with Me”; not, “Witness for Me,” but, “Bear Me company.” It did Him good, it seems, to have them beside Him.

(3) But soon even they were too much for Him: He must be alone. “He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s-throw” — though near enough for them to be competent witnesses and kneeled down, uttering that most affecting prayer ( Mark 14:36), that if possible “the cup,” of His approaching *death*, “might pass from Him, but if not, His Father’s will be done”: implying that *in itself* it was so purely revolting that only its being the Father’s will would induce Him to taste it, but that *in that view* of it He was perfectly prepared to drink it. It is no struggle between a reluctant and a compliant will, but between two views of one event — an *abstract* and a *relative* view of it, in the one of which it was *revolting*, in the other *welcome*. By signifying how it felt in the *one* view, He shows His beautiful oneness with ourselves in nature and feeling; by expressing how He regarded it in the other light, He reveals His absolute obediential subjection to His Father.

(4) On this, having a momentary relief, for it came upon Him, we imagine, by surges, He returns to the three, and finding them sleeping,

He addresses them affectingly, particularly *Peter*, as in <sup><414></sup>Mark 14:37,38. He then

(5) goes back, not now to kneel, but fell on His face on the ground, saying the same words, but with this turn, “If this cup *may not pass*,” etc. (<sup><416></sup>Matthew 26:42) — that is, ‘Yes, I understand this mysterious silence (<sup><421></sup>Psalm 22:1-6); it may not pass; I am to drink it, and I will’ — “Thy will be done!”

(6) Again, for a moment relieved, He returns and finds them “sleeping for sorrow,” warns them as before, but puts a loving construction upon it, separating between the “willing spirit” and the “weak flesh.”

(7) Once more, returning to His solitary spot, the surges rise higher, beat more tempestuously, and seem ready to overwhelm Him. To fortify Him for this, “there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him” — not to minister light or comfort (He was to have none of that, and they were not needed nor fitted to convey it), but purely to sustain and brace up sinking nature for a yet hotter and fiercer struggle. And now, He is “in an agony, and prays more earnestly” — even Christ’s prayer, it seems, admitted of and now demanded such increase — “and His sweat was as it were great drops [literally, ‘clots’] of blood falling down to the ground.” What was this? *Not His proper sacrificial offering*, though essential to it. It was just the internal struggle, apparently hushing itself before, but now swelling up again, convulsing His whole inner man, and this so affecting His animal nature that the sweat oozed out from every pore in thick drops of blood, falling to the ground. It was just *shuddering nature* and *indomitable will* struggling together. But again the cry, If it must be, *Thy will be done*, issues from His lips, and all is over. “The bitterness of death is past.” He has anticipated and rehearsed His final conflict, and won the victory — now on the theater of an *invincible will*, as then on the arena of the Cross. “I *will* suffer,” is the grand result of Gethsemane: “It is finished” is the shout that bursts from the Cross. The Will without the Deed had been all in vain; but His work was consummated when He carried the now manifested Will into the palpable Deed, “*by the which WILL we are sanctified THROUGH THE OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST ONCE FOR ALL*” (<sup><310></sup>Hebrews 10:10).

(8) At the close of the whole scene, finding them still sleeping (worn out with continued sorrow and racking anxiety), He bids them, with an irony of deep emotion, “sleep on now and take their rest, the hour is come, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners, rise, let us be going, the traitor is at hand.” And while He spoke, Judas approached

with his armed band. Thus they proved “miserable comforters,” broken reeds; and thus in His whole work He was *alone*, and “of the people there was none with Him.”

### LUKE 22:47-54.

## BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS — FLIGHT OF HIS DISCIPLES.

### LUKE 22:55-62.

## JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS — FALL OF PETER.

The particulars of these two sections require a combination of all the narratives, for which see on <sup><4147></sup>John 18:1-27.

**61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter** — (Also see on <sup><4142></sup>Mark 14:72.)

**62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly** — (Also see on <sup><4142></sup>Mark 14:72.)

### LUKE 22:63-71.

## JESUS CONDEMNED TO DIE AND SHAMEFULLY ENTREATED.

(See on <sup><4145></sup>Mark 14:53-63; <sup><4149></sup>John 18:19, etc.; and <sup><4225></sup>Luke 22:55-62.)

# CHAPTER 23

## LUKE 23:1-5.

### JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

(See on <sup><4151></sup>Mark 15:1-5; and <sup><6828></sup>John 18:28-19:22.)

## LUKE 23:6-12.

### JESUS BEFORE HEROD.

(See <sup><4156></sup>Mark 15:6.)

**7. sent him to Herod** — hoping thus to escape the dilemma of an unjust condemnation or an unpopular release.

**at Jerusalem ... at that time** — to keep the passover.

**8. some miracle** — Fine sport thou expectedst, as the Philistines with Samson (<sup><0765></sup>Judges 16:25), O coarse, crafty, cruel tyrant! But thou hast been baulked before (see on <sup><0238></sup>Luke 13:31-33), and shalt be again.

**9. answered ... nothing** — (See <sup><4006></sup>Matthew 7:6).

**10. stood and vehemently accused him** — no doubt both of *treason* before the *king*, and of *blasphemy*, for the king was a *Jew*.

**11. his men of war** — his bodyguard.

**set him at naught**, etc. — stung with disappointment at His refusal to amuse him with miracles or answer any of his questions.

**gorgeous robe** — bright robe. If this mean (as sometimes) of shining white, this being the royal color among the Jews, it may have been in derision of His claim to be “King of the Jews.” But if so, “He in reality honored Him, as did Pilate with His true title blazoned on the cross” [BENGEL].

**sent him again to Pilate** — instead of releasing him as he ought, having established nothing against Him (<sup><0234></sup>Luke 23:14,15). “Thus he implicated

himself with Pilate in all the guilt of His condemnation, and with him accordingly he is classed” (<sup><402></sup>Acts 4:27) [BENGEL].

**at enmity** — perhaps about some point of disputed jurisdiction, which this exchange of the Prisoner might tend to heal.

## <sup><423></sup>LUKE 23:13-38.

### JESUS AGAIN BEFORE PILATE — DELIVERED UP — LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.

(See on <sup><4156></sup>Mark 15:6-15; and <sup><6912></sup>John 19:2-17).

**26. Cyrenian** — of Cyrene, in Libya, on the north coast of Africa, where were many Jews who had a synagogue at Jerusalem (<sup><4069></sup>Acts 6:9, and see <sup><4420></sup>Acts 2:10). He was “the father of ALEXANDER and Rufus” (<sup><4152></sup>Mark 15:21), probably better known afterwards than himself, as disciples. (See <sup><5163></sup>Romans 16:13).

**out of the country** — and casually drawn into that part of the crowd.

**laid the cross** — “Him they compel to bear His cross,” (<sup><4273></sup>Matthew 27:32) — sweet compulsion, if it issued in him or his sons *voluntarily* “taking up *their* cross!” It would appear that our Lord had first to bear His own cross (<sup><6917></sup>John 19:17), but being from exhaustion unable to proceed, it was laid on another to bear it “after Him.”

**27-31. women** — not the precious Galilean women (<sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:49), but part of the crowd.

**28. not for me**, etc. — noble spirit of compassion, rising above His own dread endurance, in tender commiseration of sufferings yet in the distance and far lighter, but *without His supports and consolations!*

**30. mountains ... hills**, etc. — (<sup><2908></sup>Hosea 10:8), flying hither and thither as they did in despair for shelter, during the siege; a very slight premonition of cries of another and more awful kind (<sup><2120></sup>Isaiah 2:10,19,21 <sup><6666></sup>Revelation 6:16,17).

**31. green tree** — that naturally resists the fire.

**the dry** — that attracts the fire, being its proper fuel. The proverb here plainly means: “If such sufferings alight upon the innocent One, the very Lamb of God, what must be in store for those who are provoking the flames?”

## LUKE 23:32-38, 44-46.

### CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS.

(See on ~~23:32~~ John 19:17-30).

## LUKE 23:39-43.

### THE TWO THIEVES.

**39. railed on him** — catching up the universal derision, but with a turn of his own. Jesus, “reviled, reviles not again”; but another voice from the cross shall nobly wipe out this dishonor and turn it to the unspeakable glory of the dying Redeemer.

**40. Dost not thou** — “thou” is emphatic: “Let others jeer, but dost *thou*?”

**fear God** — Hast thou no fear of meeting Him so soon as thy righteous Judge? Thou art within an hour or two of eternity, and dost thou spend it in reckless disregard of coming judgment?

**in the same condemnation** — He has been condemned to die, but is it better with thee? Doth even a common lot kindle no sympathy in thy breast?

**41. we ... justly**, etc. — He owns the worst of his crimes and deserts, and would fain shame his fellow into the same.

**nothing amiss** — literally, “out of place”; hence “unnatural”; a striking term here. Our Lord was not charged with *ordinary crime*, but only with laying claim to office and honors which amounted to blasphemy. The charge of treason had not even a show of truth, as Pilate told His enemies. In this defense then there seems more than meets the eye. “He made Himself the promised Messiah, the Son of God; but in this He ‘did nothing amiss’; He ate with publicans and sinners, and bade all the weary and heavy laden come and rest under His wing; but in this He ‘did nothing amiss’: He claimed to be Lord of the Kingdom of God, to shut it at will, but also to open it at pleasure even to such as we are; but in this He ‘did nothing amiss!’” Does His next speech imply *less* than this? Observe:

(1) His frank confession and genuine self-condemnation.



(2) His astonishment and horror at the very different state of his fellow's mind.

(3) His anxiety to bring him to a better mind while yet there was hope.

(4) His noble testimony, not only to the innocence of Jesus, but to all that this implied of the rightfulness of His claims.

**42. said unto Jesus,** etc. — Observe here

(1) The “kingdom” referred to was one *beyond the grave*; for it is inconceivable that he should have expected Him to come down from the cross to erect any *temporal* kingdom.

(2) This he calls Christ's own (Thy) kingdom.

(3) As such, he sees in Christ the absolute right to dispose of that kingdom to whom He pleased.

(4) He does not presume to *ask* a place in that kingdom, though that is what he means, but with a humility quite affecting, just says, “Lord, *remember me* when,” etc. Yet was there mighty faith in that word. If Christ will but “think upon him” (~~cf~~ Nehemiah 5:19), at that august moment when He “cometh into His kingdom,” it will do. “Only assure me that then Thou wilt not forget such a wretch as I, that once hung by Thy side, and I am content.” Now contrast with this bright act of faith the darkness even of the apostles' minds, who could hardly be got to believe that their Master would die at all, who now were almost despairing of Him, and who when dead had almost buried their hopes in His grave. Consider, too, the man's previous *disadvantages* and *bad life*. And then mark how his faith comes out — not in protestations, “Lord, I cannot doubt, I am firmly persuaded that Thou art Lord of a kingdom, that death cannot disannul Thy title nor impede the assumption of it in due time,” etc. — but as having no shadow of doubt, and rising above it as a question altogether, he just says, “Lord, remember me *when* Thou comest,” etc. Was ever faith like this exhibited upon earth? It looks as if the brightest crown had been reserved for the Savior's head at His darkest moment!

**43. Jesus said,** etc. — The dying Redeemer speaks as if He Himself viewed it in this light. It was a “song in the night.” It ministered cheer to His spirit in the midnight gloom that now enwrap it.

**Verily I say unto thee** — “Since thou speakest as to the king, with kingly authority speak I to thee.”

**To-day** — “Thou art prepared for a long delay before I come into My kingdom, but not a day’s delay shall there be for thee; thou shalt not be parted from Me even for a moment, but together we shall go, and with Me, ere this day expire, shalt thou be in Paradise” (future bliss, <471214> 2 Corinthians 12:4 <6181> Revelation 2:7). Learn

- (1) How “One is taken and another left”;
- (2) How easily divine teaching can raise the rudest and worst above the best instructed and most devoted servants of Christ;
- (3) How *presumption* and *despair* on a death hour are equally discountenanced here, the one in the impenitent thief, the other in his penitent fellow.

### <2342> LUKE 23:47-56.

#### SIGNS AND CIRCUMSTANCES FOLLOWING HIS DEATH — HIS BURIAL.

(See on <4751> Matthew 27:51-56; <4763> Matthew 27:62-66; and <6181> John 19:31-42).

# CHAPTER 24

## LUKE 24:1-12.

### ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE WOMEN THAT CHRIST IS RISEN — PETER'S VISIT TO THE EMPTY SEPULCHRE.

(See on <sup>4140F</sup>Mark 16:1-8; and <sup>4180F</sup>Matthew 28:1-5).

**5. Why**, etc. — Astonishing question! not “the *risen*,” but “the *Living One*” (compare <sup>4018F</sup>Revelation 1:18); and the surprise expressed in it implies an *incongruity* in His being there at all, as if, though He might *submit* to it, “it was impossible He should be *holden* of it” (<sup>4124F</sup>Acts 2:24).

**6. in Galilee** — to which these women themselves belonged (<sup>4255F</sup>Luke 23:55).

**7. Saying**, etc. — How remarkable it is to hear angels quoting a whole sentence of Christ's to the disciples, mentioning where it was uttered, and wondering it was not fresh in their memory, as doubtless it was in theirs! (<sup>5186F</sup>1 Timothy 3:16, “seen of angels,” and <sup>4012F</sup>1 Peter 1:12).

**10. Joanna** — (See on <sup>4088F</sup>Luke 8:1-3).

**12. Peter**, etc. — (See on <sup>4300F</sup>John 20:1-10).

## LUKE 24:13-35.

### CHRIST APPEARS TO THE TWO GOING TO EMMAUS.

**13. two of them** — One was *Cleopas* (<sup>4248F</sup>Luke 24:18); who the other was is mere conjecture.

**Emmaus** — about seven and a half miles from Jerusalem. They probably lived there and were going home after the Passover.

**14-16. communed and reasoned** — exchanged views and feelings, weighing afresh all the facts, as detailed in <sup>4248F</sup>Luke 24:18-24.

**drew near** — coming up behind them as from Jerusalem.

**eyes holden** — Partly He was “in another form” (~~4162~~ Mark 16:12), and partly there seems to have been an operation on their own vision; though certainly, as they did not believe that He was alive, His company as a fellow traveler was the last thing they would expect,

**17-24. communications**, etc. — The words imply the earnest discussion that had appeared in their manner.

**18. knowest not**, etc. — If he knew not the events of the last few days in Jerusalem, he must be a mere sojourner; if he did, how could he suppose they would be talking of anything else? How artless all this!

**19. Concerning Jesus**, etc. — As if feeling it a relief to have someone to unburden his thoughts and feelings to, this disciple goes over the main facts in his own desponding style, and this was just what our Lord wished.

**21. we trusted**, etc. — They expected the promised Deliverance at His hand, but in the current sense of it, not by His death.

**besides all this** — not only did His death seem to give the fatal blow to their hopes, but He had been two days dead already, and this was the third. It is true, they add, some of our women gave us a surprise, telling us of a vision of angels they had at the empty grave this morning that said He was alive, and some of ourselves who went thither confirmed their statement; but then Himself they saw not. A doleful tale truly, told out of the deepest despondency.

**25-27. fools** — senseless, without understanding.

**26. Ought not Christ** — “the Christ,” “the Messiah.”

**to suffer ... and enter** — that is, through the gate of suffering (and suffering “*these things*,” or *such a death*) to enter into His glory. “Ye believe in the glory; but these very sufferings are the predicted gate of entrance into it.”

**27. Moses and all the prophets**, etc. — Here our Lord both teaches us the reverence due to Old Testament Scripture, and the great burden of it — “Himself.”

**28-31. made as though**, etc. — (Compare ~~4168~~ Mark 6:48 ~~4183~~ Genesis 18:3,5 32:24-26).

**29. constrained**, etc. — But for this, the whole design of the interview had been lost; but *it was not to be lost*, for He who only wished to be constrained had kindled a longing in the hearts of His travelling companions which was not to be so easily put off. And does not this still

repeat itself in the interviews of the Savior with His loving, longing disciples? Else why do they say,

Abide with me from morn to eve, For without Thee I cannot live; Abide with me when night is nigh, For without Thee I cannot die. KEBLE

**30, 31. he took ... and blessed ... and their eyes were opened** — The stranger first startles them by taking the place of master at their own table, but on proceeding to that act which reproduced the whole scene of the last Supper, a rush of associations and recollections disclosed their guest, and He stood confessed before their astonished gaze — THEIR RISEN LORD! They were going to gaze on Him, perhaps embrace Him, but that moment He is gone! It was enough.

**32-34.** They now tell each to the other how their hearts burned — were fired — within them at His talk and His expositions of Scripture. “Ah! this accounts for it: We could not understand the glow of self-evidencing light, love, glory that ravished our hearts; but now we do.” They cannot rest — how could they? — they must go straight back and tell the news. They find the eleven, but ere they have time to tell their tale, their ears are saluted with the thrilling news, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to *Simon*.” Most touching and precious intelligence this. The only one of the Eleven to whom He appeared *alone* was he, it seems, who had so shamefully denied Him. What passed at that interview we shall never know here. Probably it was too sacred for disclosure. (See on <sup><41137></sup>Mark 16:7). The two from Emmaus now relate what had happened to them, and while thus comparing notes of their Lord’s appearances, lo! Christ Himself stands in the midst of them. What encouragement to doubting, dark, true-hearted disciples!

## <sup><428></sup>LUKE 24:36-53.

### JESUS APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES — HIS ASCENSION.

**36. Jesus ... stood** — (See on <sup><4119></sup>John 20:19).

**37, 38. a spirit** — the ghost of their dead Lord, but not Himself in the body (<sup><4125></sup>Acts 12:15 <sup><4149></sup>Matthew 14:26).

**thoughts** — rather, “reasonings”; that is, whether He were risen or no, and whether this was His very self.

**39-43. Behold**, etc. — lovingly offering them both *ocular* and *tangible* demonstration of the reality of His resurrection.

**a spirit hath not** — an important statement regarding “spirits.”

**flesh and bones** — He says not “flesh and *blood*”; for the blood is the life of the animal and corruptible body (<sup>GEN</sup>Genesis 9:4), which “cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (<sup>1CO</sup>1 Corinthians 15:50); but “flesh and bones,” implying the *identity*, but *with diversity of laws*, of the resurrection body. (See on <sup>JOH</sup>John 20:24-28).

**41. believed not for joy**, etc. — They did believe, else they had not rejoiced [BENGEL]. But it seemed *too good* to be true (<sup>PSA</sup>Psalms 126:1,2).

**42. honeycomb** — common frugal fare, anciently.

**43. eat before them** — that is, let them see Him doing it: not for His own necessity, but their conviction.

**44-49. These are the words**, etc. — that is, “Now you will understand what seemed so dark to you when I told you about the Son of man being put to death and rising again” (<sup>LUK</sup>Luke 18:31-34).

**while ... yet with you** — a striking expression, implying that He was now, as the dead and risen Savior, virtually dissevered from this scene of mortality, and from all ordinary intercourse with His mortal disciples.

**law ... prophets ... psalms** — the three Jewish divisions of the Old Testament Scriptures.

**45. Then opened he**, etc. — a statement of unspeakable value; expressing, on the one hand, Christ’s *immediate access to the human spirit* and *absolute power over it*, to the adjustment of its vision, and permanent rectification for spiritual discernment (than which it is impossible to conceive a stronger evidence of His proper divinity); and, on the other hand, making it certain that the *manner of interpreting the \ Old Testament which the apostles afterwards employed* (see the Acts and Epistles), *has the direct sanction of Christ Himself*.

**46. behoved Christ** — (See on <sup>LUK</sup>Luke 24:26).

**47. beginning at Jerusalem** —

(1) As the metropolis and heart of the then existing kingdom of God: — “to the Jew first” (<sup>ROM</sup>Romans 1:16 <sup>ACT</sup>Acts 13:46 <sup>ISA</sup>Isaiah 2:3, see on <sup>MAT</sup>Matthew 10:6).

(2) As the great reservoir and laboratory of all the sin and crime of the nation, thus proclaiming for all time that there is mercy in Christ for the chief of sinners. (See on <sup>MAT</sup>Matthew 23:37).

**48. witnesses** — (Compare <sup><4008></sup>Acts 1:8,22).

**49. I send** — the present tense, to intimate its nearness.

**promise of my Father** — that is, what My Father hath promised; the Holy Ghost, of which Christ is the authoritative Dispenser (<sup><6407></sup>John 14:7 <sup><6100></sup>Revelation 3:1,5:6).

**endued** — invested, or clothed with; implying, as the parallels show (<sup><6134></sup>Romans 13:14 <sup><6153></sup>1 Corinthians 15:53 <sup><8027></sup>Galatians 3:27 <sup><5009></sup>Colossians 3:9,10), their being *so penetrated and acted upon by conscious supernatural power* (in the full sense of that word) *as to stamp with divine authority the whole exercise of their apostolic office*, including, of course, their *pen* as well as their *mouth*.

**50-53. to Bethany** — not to the village itself, but on the “descent” to it from Mount Olivet.

**51. while he blessed ... parted**, etc. — Sweet intimation! Incarnate Love, Crucified Love, Risen Love, now on the wing for heaven, waiting only those odorous gales which were to waft Him to the skies, goes away in benedictions, that in the character of Glorified, Enthroned Love, He might continue His benedictions, but in yet higher form, until He come again! And oh, if angels were so transported at His birth into this scene of tears and death, what must have been their ecstasy as they welcomed and attended Him “far above all heavens” into the presence-chamber, and conducted Him to the right hand of the Majesty on High! Thou hast an everlasting right, O my Savior, to that august place. The brightness of the Father’s glory, enshrined in our nature, hath won it well; for He poured out His soul unto death, and led captivity captive, receiving gifts for men, yea for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Thou art the King of glory, O Christ. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in! Even so wilt Thou change these vile bodies of ours, that they may be like unto Thine own glorious body; and then with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter into the King’s palace!

**52. worshipped him** — certainly in the strictest sense of adoration.

**returned to Jerusalem** — as instructed to do: but not till after gazing, as if entranced, up into the blue vault in which He had disappeared, they were gently checked by two shining ones, who assured them He would come again to them in the like manner as He had gone into heaven. (See on <sup><4010></sup>Acts 1:10,11). This made them return, not with disappointment at His removal, but “with great joy.”

**53. were continually in the temple** — that is, every day at the regular hours of prayer till the day of Pentecost.



# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

# JOHN

*Commentary by* **DAVID BROWN**

## INTRODUCTION

THE author of the Fourth Gospel was the younger of the two sons of Zebedee, a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, who resided at Bethsaida, where were born Peter and Andrew his brother, and Philip also. His mother's name was Salome, who, though not without her imperfections (~~4000~~ Matthew 20:20-28), was one of those dear and honored women who accompanied the Lord on one of His preaching circuits through Galilee, ministering to His bodily wants; who followed Him to the cross, and bought sweet spices to anoint Him after His burial, but, on bringing them to the grave, on the morning of the First Day of the week, found their loving services gloriously superseded by His resurrection ere they arrived. His father, Zebedee, appears to have been in good circumstances, owning a vessel of his own and having hired servants (~~4000~~ Mark 1:20). Our Evangelist, whose occupation was that of a fisherman with his father, was beyond doubt a disciple of the Baptist, and one of the two who had the first interview with Jesus. He was called while engaged at his secular occupation (~~4000~~ Matthew 4:21,22), and again on a memorable occasion (~~4000~~ Luke 5:1-11), and finally chosen as one of the Twelve Apostles (~~4000~~ Matthew 10:2). He was the youngest of the Twelve — the “Benjamin,” as DA COSTA calls him — and he and James his brother were named in the native tongue by Him who knew the heart, “Boanerges,” which the Evangelist Mark (~~4000~~ Mark 3:17) explains to mean “Sons of thunder”; no doubt from their natural *vehemence of character*. They and Peter constituted that select triumvirate of whom see on ~~4000~~ Luke 9:28. But the highest honor bestowed on this disciple was his being admitted to the bosom place with his Lord at the table, as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (~~4000~~ John 13:23 20:2 21:7,20:24), and to have committed to him by the dying Redeemer the care of His mother (~~4000~~ John 19:26,27). There can be no reasonable doubt that this distinction was due to a sympathy with His own spirit and mind on the part of John which the all-penetrating Eye of their common Master beheld in none of the rest; and although this was probably never seen either in his

life or in his ministry by his fellow apostles, it is brought out wonderfully in his writings, which, in Christ-like spirituality, heavenliness, and love, surpass, we may freely say, all the other inspired writings.

After the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we find him in constant but silent company with Peter, the great spokesman and actor in the infant Church until the accession of Paul. While his love to the Lord Jesus drew him spontaneously to the side of His eminent servant, and his chastened vehemence made him ready to stand courageously by him, and suffer with him, in all that his testimony to Jesus might cost him, his modest humility, as the youngest of all the apostles, made him an admiring listener and faithful supporter of his brother apostle rather than a speaker or separate actor. Ecclesiastical history is uniform in testifying that John went to Asia Minor; but it is next to certain that this could not have been till after the death both of Peter and Paul; that he resided at Ephesus, whence, as from a center, he superintended the churches of that region, paying them occasional visits; and that he long survived the other apostles. Whether the mother of Jesus died before this, or went with John to Ephesus, where she died and was buried, is not agreed. One or two anecdotes of his later days have been handed down by tradition, one at least bearing marks of reasonable probability. But it is not necessary to give them here. In the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) he was banished to “the isle that is called Patmos” (a small rocky and then almost uninhabited island in the aegean Sea), “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (~~Rev~~ Revelation 1:9). IRENAEUS and EUSEBIUS say that this took place about the end of Domitian’s reign. That he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and miraculously delivered, is one of those legends which, though reported by TERTULLIAN and JEROME, is entitled to no credit. His return from exile took place during the brief but tolerant reign of Nerva; he died at Ephesus in the reign of Trajan [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.23], at an age above ninety, according to some; according to others, one hundred; and even one hundred twenty, according to others still. The intermediate number is generally regarded as probably the nearest to the truth.

As to the *date* of this Gospel, the arguments for its having been composed before the destruction of Jerusalem (though relied on by some superior critics) are of the slenderest nature; such as the expression in ~~John~~ John 5:2, “there *is* at Jerusalem, by the sheep-gate, a pool,” etc.; there being no allusion to Peter’s martyrdom as having occurred according to the prediction in ~~John~~ John 21:18 — a thing too well known to require mention. That it was composed long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and after the decease of all the other apostles, is next to certain, though the precise time cannot be determined. Probably it was before his banishment, however; and

if we date it between the years 90 and 94, we shall probably be close to the truth.

As to the *readers* for whom it was more immediately designed, that they were Gentiles we might naturally presume from the lateness of the date; but the multitude of explanations of things familiar to every Jew puts this beyond all question.

No doubt was ever thrown upon the genuineness and authenticity of this Gospel till about the close of the eighteenth century; nor were these embodied in any formal attack upon it till BRETSCHNEIDER, in 1820, issued his famous treatise [*Probabilia*], the conclusions of which he afterwards was candid enough to admit had been satisfactorily disproved. To advert to these would be as painful as unnecessary; consisting as they mostly do of assertions regarding the Discourses of our Lord recorded in this Gospel which are revolting to every spiritual mind. The Tübingen school did their best, on their peculiar mode of reasoning, to galvanize into fresh life this theory of the post-Joannean date of the Fourth Gospel; and some Unitarian critics still cling to it. But to use the striking language of VAN OOSTERZEE regarding similar speculations on the Third Gospel, “Behold, the feet of them that shall carry it out dead are already at the door” (~~418~~ Acts 5:9). Is there one mind of the least elevation of spiritual discernment that does not see in this Gospel marks of historical truth and a surpassing glory such as none of the other Gospels possess, brightly as they too attest their own verity; and who will not be ready to say that if not historically true, and true *just as it stands*, it never could have been by mortal man composed or conceived?

Of the peculiarities of this Gospel, we note here only two. The one is its *reflective* character. While the others are purely *narrative*, the Fourth Evangelist, “pauses, as it were, at every turn,” as DA COSTA says [*Four Witnesses*, p. 234], “at one time to give a reason, at another to fix the attention, to deduce consequences, or make applications, or to give utterance to the language of praise.” See ~~412~~ John 2:20,21,23-25 4:1,2 7:37-39 11:12,13,49-52 21:18,19,22,23. The other peculiarity of this Gospel is its *supplementary* character. By this, in the present instance, we mean something more than the studiousness with which he omits many most important particulars in our Lord’s history, for no conceivable reason but that they were already familiar as household words to all his readers, through the three preceding Gospels, and his substituting in place of these an immense quantity of the richest matter not found in the other Gospels. We refer here more particularly to the *nature* of the additions which distinguish this Gospel; particularly the notices of the different Passovers which occurred during our Lord’s public ministry, and the record of His

teaching at Jerusalem, without which it is not too much to say that we could have had but a most imperfect conception either of the duration of His ministry or of the plan of it. But another feature of these additions is quite as noticeable and not less important. “We find,” to use again the words of DA COSTA [*Four Witnesses*, pp. 238, 239], slightly abridged, “only six of our Lord’s miracles recorded in this Gospel, but these are all of the most remarkable kind, and surpass the rest in depth, specialty of application, and fullness of meaning. Of these six we find only one in the other three Gospels — the multiplication of the loaves. That miracle chiefly, it would seem, on account of the important instructions of which it furnished the occasion (~~☩~~ John 6:1-71), is here recorded anew. The five other tokens of divine power are distinguished from among the many recorded in the three other Gospels by their furnishing a still higher display of power and command over the ordinary laws and course of nature. Thus we find recorded here the first of all the miracles that Jesus wrought — the changing of water into wine (~~☩~~ John 2:1-11), the cure of the nobleman’s son *at a distance* (~~☩~~ John 4:43-54); of the numerous cures of the lame and the paralytic by the word of Jesus, only one — of the man impotent for *thirty and eight years* (~~☩~~ John 5:1-9); of the many cures of the blind, one only — of the man *born blind* (~~☩~~ John 9:1-12); the restoration of Lazarus, not from a deathbed, like Jairus’ daughter, nor from a bier, like the widow of Nain’s son, but *from the grave*, and after lying there four days, and there sinking into corruption (~~☩~~ John 11:1-44); and lastly, after His resurrection, the miraculous draught of fishes on the Sea of Tiberias (~~☩~~ John 21:5-11). But these are all recorded chiefly to give occasion for the record of those astonishing discourses and conversations, alike with friends and with foes, with His disciples and with the multitude which they drew forth.”

Other illustrations of the peculiarities of this Gospel will occur, and other points connected with it be adverted to, in the course of the Commentary.

# CHAPTER 1

## JOHN 1:1-14.

### THE WORD MADE FLESH.

**1. In the beginning** — of all time and created existence, for this Word gave it being (~~AND~~ John 1:3,10); therefore, “before the world was” (~~AND~~ John 17:5,24); or, from all eternity.

**was the Word** — He *who is to God what man’s word is to himself, the manifestation or expression of himself to those without him.* (See on ~~AND~~ John 1:18). On the *origin* of this most lofty and now for ever consecrated title of Christ, this is not the place to speak. It occurs only in the writings of this seraphic apostle.

**was with God** — having a conscious personal existence *distinct from God* (as one is from the person he is “with”), but *inseparable from Him* and *associated with Him* (~~AND~~ John 1:18 ~~AND~~ John 17:5 ~~AND~~ 1 John 1:2), where “THE FATHER” is used in the same sense as “GOD” here.

**was God** — in substance and essence GOD; or was possessed of essential or proper divinity. Thus, each of these brief but pregnant statements is the complement of the other, correcting any misapprehensions which the others might occasion. Was the Word *eternal*? It was *not* the eternity of “*the Father*,” but of a conscious personal existence *distinct from Him and associated with Him*. Was the Word thus “with God?” It was not the distinctness and the fellowship of *another being*, as if there were *more Gods than one*, but of One who was *Himself God* — in such sense that the *absolute unity* of the God head, the great principle of all religion, is only transferred from the region of shadowy abstraction to the region of essential life and love. But why all this definition? Not to give us any *abstract information* about certain mysterious distinctions in the Godhead, but solely to let the reader know *who it was that* in the fullness of time “*was made flesh*.” After each verse, then, the reader must say, “It was He who is thus, and thus, and thus described, who was made flesh.”

**2. The same**, etc. — See what property of the Word the stress is laid upon — His *eternal distinctness*, in unity, from God — the Father (~~AND~~ John 1:2).

**3. All things**, etc. — all things *absolutely* (as is evident from <sup><400></sup>John 1:10 <sup><406></sup>1 Corinthians 8:6 <sup><500></sup>Colossians 1:16,17; but put beyond question by what follows).

**without Him was not any thing** — *not one thing*.

**made** — brought into being.

**that was made** — This is a denial of the *eternity* and *non-creation* of matter, which was held by the whole thinking world *outside of Judaism and Christianity*: or rather, its proper *creation* was never so much as dreamt of save by the children of *revealed religion*.

**4. In Him was life** — *essentially* and *originally*, as the previous verses show to be the meaning. Thus He is *the Living Word*, or, as He is called in <sup><600></sup>1 John 1:1,2, “the Word of Life.”

**the life ... the light of men** — All that in men which is *true light* — knowledge, integrity, intelligent, willing subjection to God, love to Him and to their fellow creatures, wisdom, purity, holy joy, rational happiness — all this “light of men” has its fountain in the essential original “life” of “the Word” (<sup><600></sup>1 John 1:5-7 <sup><400></sup>Psalms 36:9).

**5. shineth in darkness**, etc. — in this dark, fallen world, or in mankind “sitting in darkness and the shadow of death,” *with no ability to find the way either of truth or of holiness*. In this thick darkness, and consequent intellectual and moral obliquity, “the light of the Word” shineth — *by all the rays whether of natural or revealed teaching which men* (apart from the Incarnation of the Word) *are favored with*.

**the darkness comprehended it not** — *did not take it in*, a brief summary of the effect of all the strivings of this *unincarnate* Word throughout this wide world from the beginning, and a hint of the necessity of His putting on *flesh*, if any recovery of men was to be effected (<sup><402></sup>1 Corinthians 1:21).

**6-9.** The Evangelist here *approaches* his grand thesis, so paving his way for the full statement of it in <sup><404></sup>John 1:14, that we may be able to bear the bright light of it, and take in its length and breadth and depth and height.

**7. through him** — John.

**8. not that Light** — (See on <sup><405></sup>John 5:35). What a testimony to John to have to explain that “he was *not* that Light!” Yet was he but a foil to set it off, his night-taper dwindling before the Dayspring from on high (<sup><400></sup>John 3:30).

**9. lighteth every man**, etc. — rather, “which, coming into the world, enlighteneth every man”; or, is “the Light of the world” (<sup><495></sup>John 9:5). “Coming into the world” is a superfluous and quite unusual description of “every man”; but it is of all descriptions of Christ amongst the most familiar, especially in the writings of this Evangelist (<sup><426></sup>John 12:46 16:28 18:37 <sup><449></sup>1 John 4:9 <sup><515></sup>1 Timothy 1:15, etc.).

**10-13. He was in the world**, etc. — The language here is nearly as wonderful as the thought. Observe its compact simplicity, its sonorousness — “the world” resounding in each of its three members — and the enigmatic form in which it is couched, startling the reader and setting his ingenuity a-working to solve the stupendous enigma of *Christ ignored in His own world*. “The world,” in the first two clauses, plainly means the *created* world, *into* which *He* came, says <sup><409></sup>John 1:9; “*in* it He was,” says this verse. By His Incarnation, He became *an inhabitant of it*, and bound up with it. Yet it “was made by Him” (<sup><408></sup>John 1:3-5). Here, then, it is merely alluded to, in contrast partly with His being *in* it, but still more with the reception He met with from it. “The world that knew Him not” (<sup><408></sup>1 John 3:1) is of course the intelligent world of mankind. (See on <sup><411></sup>John 1:11,12). Taking the first two clauses as one statement, we try to apprehend it by thinking of the infant Christ conceived in the womb and born in the arms of His own creature, and of the Man Christ Jesus breathing His own air, treading His own ground, supported by substances to which He Himself gave being, and the Creator of the very men whom He came to save. But the most vivid commentary on this entire verse will be got by tracing (in His matchless history) Him of whom it speaks walking amidst all the elements of nature, the diseases of men and death itself, the secrets of the human heart, and “the rulers of the darkness of this world” in all their number, subtlety, and malignity, not only with absolute ease, as their conscious Lord, but, as we might say, with full consciousness on their part of the presence of their Maker, whose will to one and all of them was law. And this is He of whom it is added, “the world knew Him not!”

**11. his own** — “His own” (property or possession), for the word is in the *neuter* gender. It means His own land, city, temple, Messianic rights and possessions.

**and his own** — “His own (people)”; for now the word is *masculine*. It means the Jews, as the “peculiar people.” Both *they* and their *land*, with all that this included, were “HIS OWN,” not so much as part of “the world which was made by Him,” but as “THE HEIR” of the inheritance (<sup><214></sup>Luke 20:14; see also on <sup><221></sup>Matthew 22:1).

**received him not** — *nationally*, as God’s chosen witnesses.



**12. But as many** — *individuals*, of the “disobedient and gainsaying people.”

**gave he power** — The word signifies both *authority* and *ability*, and both are certainly meant here.

**to become** — Mark these words: Jesus is the Son of God; He is never said to have become such.

**the sons** — or more simply, “sons of God,” in *name* and in *nature*.

**believe on his name** — *a phrase never used in Scripture of any mere creature*, to express the credit given to human testimony, even of prophets or apostles, inasmuch it carries with it the idea of *trust* proper only towards GOD. In this sense of *supreme faith*, as due to Him who “gives those that *believe in Himself* power to become sons of God,” it is manifestly used here.

**13. Which were born** — a sonship therefore not of mere title and privilege, but of *nature*, the soul being made conscious of the vital capacities, perceptions, and emotions of *a child of God*, before unknown.

**not of blood**, etc. — not of superior human descent, not of human generation at all, not of man in any manner of way. By this elaborate threefold denial of the *human* source of this sonship, immense force is given to what follows,

**but of God** — Right royal gift, and He who confers must be absolutely divine. For who would not worship Him who can bring him into the family, and evoke within him the very life, of the sons of God?

**14. And the Word**, etc. — *To raise the reader to the altitude of this climax were the thirteen foregoing verses written.*

**was made flesh** — BECAME MAN, in man’s present frail, mortal condition, denoted by the word “flesh” (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 40:6 <sup>1024</sup>1 Peter 1:24). It is directed probably against the *Docetae*, who held that Christ was not really but only *apparently* man; against whom this gentle spirit is vehement in his Epistles (<sup>1048</sup>1 John 4:3 <sup>1002</sup>2 John 1:7:10,11), [LUCKE, etc.]. Nor could He be too much so, for with the verity of the Incarnation all substantial Christianity vanishes. But now, married to our nature, henceforth He is as *personally conscious of all that is strictly human as of all that is properly divine*; and our nature is in His Person redeemed and quickened, ennobled and transfigured.



**and dwelt** — tabernacled or pitched his tent; a word peculiar to John, who uses it four times, all in the sense of a *permanent stay* (<sup>4175</sup>Revelation 7:15 12:12 13:6 21:3). For ever wedded to our “*flesh*,” He has entered this tabernacle to “go no more out.” The allusion is to that tabernacle where dwelt the *Shekinah* (see on <sup>4138</sup>Matthew 23:38,39), or manifested “GLORY OF THE LORD,” and with reference to God’s *permanent dwelling among His people* (<sup>4391</sup>Leviticus 26:11 <sup>4988</sup>Psalms 68:18 132:13,14 <sup>3577</sup>Ezekiel 37:27). This is put almost beyond doubt by what immediately follows, “And we beheld his glory” [LUCKE, MEYER, DE WETTE which last critic, rising higher than usual, says that thus were perfected all former partial manifestations of God in *an essentially Personal and historically Human* manifestation].

**full of grace and truth** — So it should read: “He dwelt among us full of grace and truth”; or, in Old Testament phrase, “Mercy and truth,” denoting the whole fruit of God’s purposes of love towards sinners of mankind, which until now existed only in *promise*, and the *fulfillment* at length of that promise in Christ; in one great word, “*the SURE MERCIES of David*” (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 55:3 <sup>4134</sup>Acts 13:34; compare <sup>4025</sup>2 Samuel 23:5). In His Person all that Grace and Truth which had been floating so long in shadowy forms, and darting into the souls of the poor and needy its broken beams, took everlasting possession of human flesh and filled it full. By this Incarnation of Grace and Truth, the teaching of thousands of years was at once transcended and beggared, and the family of God sprang into Manhood.

**and we beheld his glory** — not by the eye of *sense*, which saw in Him only “the carpenter.” His glory was “spiritually discerned” (<sup>4117</sup>1 Corinthians 2:7-15 <sup>4138</sup>2 Corinthians 3:18 4:4,6 5:16) — the glory of surpassing grace, love, tenderness, wisdom, purity, spirituality; majesty and meekness, richness and poverty, power and weakness, meeting together in unique contrast; ever attracting and at times ravishing the “babes” that followed and forsook all for Him.

**the glory as of the only begotten of the Father** — (See on <sup>4135</sup>Luke 1:35); not *like*, but “such as (belongs to),” such as *became* or was *befitting* the only begotten of the Father [CHRYSOSTOM in LUCKE, CALVIN, etc.], according to a well-known use of the word “as.”

◀<sup>R15</sup> **JOHN 1:15.**

**A SAYING OF THE BAPTIST CONFIRMATORY OF THIS.**

**15. after me** — in *official manifestation*.

**before me** — in *rank and dignity*.

**for he was before me** — in *existence*; “His goings forth being from of old, from everlasting” (◀<sup>R15</sup> Micah 5:2). (Anything lower than this His words cannot mean); that is, “My Successor is my Superior, for He was my Predecessor.” This enigmatic play upon the different senses of the words “before” and “after” was doubtless employed by the Baptist to arrest attention, and rivet the thought; and the Evangelist introduces it just to clinch his own statements.

◀<sup>R16</sup> **JOHN 1:16-18.**

**SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.**

**16. of his fullness** — of “grace and truth,” resuming the thread of ◀<sup>R14</sup> John 1:14.

**grace for grace** — that is, grace upon grace (so all the best interpreters), in successive communications and larger measures, as each was able to take it in. Observe, the word “truth” is here dropped. “Grace” being the chosen New Testament word for the whole fullness of the new covenant, all that dwells in Christ for men.

**17. For**, etc. — The Law elicits the consciousness of sin and the need of redemption; it only typifies the reality. The Gospel, on the contrary, actually communicates reality and power from above (compare ◀<sup>R14</sup> Romans 6:14). Hence Paul terms the Old Testament “shadow,” while he calls the New Testament “substance” (◀<sup>R17</sup> Colossians 2:17) [OLSHAUSEN].

**18. No man** — “No one,” in the widest sense.

**hath seen God** — by immediate gaze, or direct intuition.

**in the bosom of the Father** — A remarkable expression, used only here, presupposing *the Son’s conscious existence distinct from the Father, and expressing His immediate and most endeared access to, and absolute acquaintance with, Him.*

**he** — emphatic; As if he should say, “He and He only hath declared Him,” because He only *can*.

## ~~<R19>~~ JOHN 1:19-36.

### THE BAPTIST’S TESTIMONY TO CHRIST.

**19. record** — testimony.

**the Jews** — that is, the heads of the nation, the members of the Sanhedrim.  
*In this peculiar sense our Evangelist seems always to use the term.*

**20. confessed**, etc. — that is, While many were ready to hail him as the Christ, he neither gave the slightest ground for such views, nor the least entertainment to them.

**21. Elias** — in His own proper person.

**that prophet** — announced in ~~<R18>~~ Deuteronomy 18:15, etc., about whom they seem not to have been agreed whether he were the same with the Messiah or no.

**25. Why baptizest thou, if not**, etc. — Thinking he disclaimed any special connection with Messiah’s kingdom, they demand his right to gather disciples by baptism.

**26. there standeth** — This must have been spoken after the baptism of Christ, and possibly just after His temptation (see on ~~<R12>~~ John 1:29).

**28. Bethabara** — Rather, “Bethany” (according to nearly all the best and most ancient manuscripts); not the Bethany of Lazarus, but another of the same name, and distinguished from it as lying “beyond Jordan,” on the east.

**29. seeth Jesus** — fresh, probably, from the scene of the temptation.

**coming unto him** — as to congenial company (~~<R13>~~ Acts 4:23), and to receive from him His first greeting.

**and saith** — catching a sublime inspiration at the sight of Him approaching.

**the Lamb of God** — the one God-ordained, God-gifted sacrificial offering.

**that taketh away** — *taketh up* and *taketh away*. The word signifies both, as does the corresponding *Hebrew* word. Applied to sin, it means to *be chargeable with the guilt of it* (<sup><1288></sup>Exodus 28:38 <sup><1801></sup>Leviticus 5:1 <sup><3820></sup>Ezekiel 18:20), and to *bear it away* (as often). In the Levitical victims both ideas met, as they do in Christ, the people's guilt being viewed as *transferred* to them, *avenged* in their death, and so *borne away* by them (<sup><1845></sup>Leviticus 4:15 16:15,21,22; and compare <sup><2516></sup>Isaiah 53:6-12 <sup><4721></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21).

**the sin** — The *singular* number being used to mark the *collective burden* and *all-embracing efficacy*.

**of the world** — not of Israel only, for whom the typical victims were exclusively offered. Wherever there shall live a sinner throughout the wide world, sinking under that burden too heavy for him to bear, he shall find in this "Lamb of God," a shoulder equal to the weight. The right note was struck at the first — balm, doubtless, to Christ's own spirit; nor was ever after, or ever will be, a more glorious utterance.

**31-34. knew him not** — Living mostly apart, the one at Nazareth, the other in the Judean desert — to prevent all appearance of collusion, John only knew that at a definite time after his own call, his Master would show Himself. As He drew near for baptism one day, the last of all the crowd, the spirit of the Baptist heaving under a divine presentiment that the moment had at length arrived, and an air of unwonted serenity and dignity, not without traits, probably, of the family features, appearing in this Stranger, the Spirit said to him as to Samuel of his youthful type, "Arise, anoint Him, for this is He!" (<sup><1912></sup>1 Samuel 16:12). But *the* sign which he was told to expect was the visible descent of the Spirit upon Him as He emerged out of the baptismal water. *Then*, catching up the voice from heaven, "he saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

**35. John stood** — "was standing," at his accustomed place.

**36. looking** — having fixed his eyes, with significant gaze, on Jesus.

**as he walked** — but not now *to him*. To have done this once (see on <sup><1029></sup>John 1:29) was humility enough [BENGEL].

**Behold**, etc. — The repetition of that wonderful proclamation, in identical terms and without another word, could only have been meant as a gentle hint to go after Him — as they did.

## JOHN 1:37-51.

### FIRST GATHERING OF DISCIPLES — JOHN ANDREW, SIMON, PHILIP, NATHANAEL.

**38. What seek ye** — gentle, winning question, remarkable as the Redeemer's *first public utterance*. (See on <sup><1128></sup>Matthew 12:18-20.)

**where dwellest thou** — that is, "That is a question we cannot answer in a moment; but had we Thy company for a calm hour in private, gladly should we open our burden."

**39. Come and see** — His *second utterance*, more winning still.

**tenth hour** — not ten A.M. (as some), according to *Roman*, but four P.M., according to *Jewish* reckoning, which John follows. The hour is mentioned to show why they stayed out the day with him — because little of it remained.

**40. One ... was Andrew** — The other was doubtless our Evangelist himself. His great sensitiveness is touchingly shown in his representation of this first contact with the Lord; the circumstances are present to him in the minutest details; he still remembers the Very hour. But "he reports no particulars of those discourses of the Lord by which he was bound to Him for the whole of His life; he allows everything personal to retire" [OLSHAUSEN].

**Peter's brother** — and the elder of the two.

**41. have found the Messiah** — The previous preparation of their simple hearts under the Baptist's ministry, made quick work of this blessed conviction, while others hesitated till doubt settled into obduracy. *So it is still*.

**42. brought him to Jesus** — Happy brothers that thus do to each other!

**beheld him** — fixed his eyes on him, with significant gaze (as <sup><1135></sup>John 1:36).

**Cephas ... stone** — (See on <sup><1138></sup>Matthew 16:18).

**43. would go ... into Galilee** — for from His baptism He had sojourned in *Judea* (showing that the calling at the Sea of Galilee [<sup><1143></sup>Matthew 4:18] was a *subsequent* one, see on <sup><1146></sup>Luke 5:1).

**Follow me** — the first express call given, the former three having come to Him spontaneously.

**44. the city of Andrew and Peter** — of their *birth* probably, for they seem to have *lived* at Capernaum (<sup><4029></sup>Mark 1:29).

**45. Nathanael** — (See on <sup><4008></sup>Matthew 10:3).

**Moses** — (See <sup><4156></sup>John 5:46).

**son of Joseph** — the current way of speaking. (See <sup><4023></sup>Luke 3:23).

**46. any good out of Nazareth** — remembering Bethlehem, perhaps, as Messiah's predicted birthplace, and Nazareth having no *express* prophetic place at all, besides being in no repute. The question sprang from mere dread of mistake in a matter so vital.

**Come and see** — Noble remedy against preconceived opinions [BENGEL]. Philip, though he could not perhaps solve his difficulty, could show him how to get rid of it. (See on <sup><4068></sup>John 6:68).

**47. an Israelite indeed ... no guile** — not only no hypocrite, but with a guileless simplicity not always found even in God's own people, ready to follow wherever truth might lead him, saying, Samuel-like, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth" (<sup><4050></sup>1 Samuel 3:10).

**48. Whence knowest thou me** — conscious that his very heart had been read, and at this critical moment more than ever before.

**Before Philip called thee** — showing He knew all that passed between Philip and him at a distance.

**when ... under the fig tree**, etc. — where retirement for meditation and prayer was not uncommon [LIGHTFOOT]. Thither, probably — hearing that his master's Master had at length appeared, and heaving with mingled eagerness to behold Him and dread of deception — he had retired to pour out his guileless heart for light and guidance, ending with such a prayer as this, "Show me a token for good!" (See on <sup><4008></sup>Luke 2:8). Now he has it, "Thou guileless one, that fig tree scene, with all its heaving anxieties, deep pleadings and tremulous hopes — I saw it all." The first words of Jesus had astonished, but this quite overpowered and won him.

**49. Son of God ... King of Israel** — the one denoting His person, the other His office. How much loftier this than anything Philip had said to him! But just as the earth's vital powers, the longer they are frost-bound, take the greater spring when at length set free, so souls, like Nathanael and Thomas (see on <sup><4068></sup>John 20:28), the outgoings of whose faith are hindered

for a time, take the start of their more easy-going brethren when loosed and let go.

**50, 51. Because I said,** etc. — “So quickly convinced, and on this evidence only?” — an expression of admiration.

**51. Hereafter,** etc. — The key to this great saying is Jacob’s vision (~~GEN~~ Genesis 28:12-22), to which the allusion plainly is. To show the patriarch that though alone and friendless on earth his interests were busying all heaven, he was made to see “heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon a” mystic “*ladder* reaching from heaven to earth.” “By and by,” says Jesus here, “ye shall see this communication between heaven and earth thrown wide open, and the *Son of man the real Ladder of this intercourse.*”

# CHAPTER 2

## JOHN 2:1-12.

### FIRST MIRACLE, WATER MADE WINE — BRIEF VISIT TO CAPERNAUM.

**1. third day** — He would take two days to reach Galilee, and this was the third.

**mother there** — it being probably some relative's marriage. *John never names her* [BENGEL].

**3. no wine** — evidently expecting some display of His glory, and hinting that now was His time.

**4, 5. Woman** — no term of disrespect in the language of that day (~~400B~~ John 19:26).

**what ... to do with thee** — that is, "In my Father's business I have to do with Him only." It was a gentle rebuke for *officious interference*, entering a region from which all creatures were excluded (compare ~~400B~~ Acts 4:19,20).

**mine hour**, etc. — hinting that He *would* do something, but at His own time; and so she understood it (~~400B~~ John 2:5).

**6. firkins** — about seven and a half gallons in Jewish, or nine in Attic measure; each of these huge water jars, therefore, holding some twenty or more gallons, for washings at such feasts (~~400B~~ Mark 7:4).

**7, 8. Fill ... draw ... bear** — directing all, but Himself touching nothing, to prevent all appearance of collusion.

**9, 10. well drunk** — "drunk abundantly" (as ~~2700B~~ Song of Solomon 5:1), speaking of the general practice.

**10. the good wine ... until now** — thus testifying, while ignorant of the source of supply, not only that it was real wine, but better than any at the feast.

**11. manifested forth his glory** — Nothing in the least like this is said of the miracles of prophet or apostle, nor could without manifest blasphemy be said of any mere creature. Observe,



(1) At a marriage Christ made His first public appearance in any company, and at a marriage He wrought His first miracle — the noblest sanction that could be given to that God-given institution.

(2) As the miracle did not make *bad good*, but *good better*, so Christianity only redeems, sanctifies, and ennobles the beneficent but abused institution of marriage; and Christ's whole work only turns the water of earth into the wine of heaven. Thus "this beginning of miracles" exhibited the character and "manifested forth the glory" of His entire Mission.

(3) As Christ countenanced our seasons of *festivity*, so also that greater *fullness* which befits such; so far was He from encouraging that *asceticism* which has since been so often put for all religion.

(4) The character and authority ascribed by Romanists to the Virgin is directly in the teeth of this and other scriptures.

**12. Capernaum** — on the Sea of Galilee. (See on <sup><109></sup>Matthew 9:1).

**his mother and his brethren** — (See on <sup><115></sup>Luke 2:51, and <sup><118></sup>Matthew 13:54-56).

## <sup><123></sup>JOHN 2:13-25.

### CHRIST'S FIRST PASSOVER — FIRST CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE.

**14-17. in the temple** — not the temple itself, as <sup><129></sup>John 2:19-21, but the *temple-court*.

**sold oxen**, etc. — for the convenience of those who had to offer them in sacrifice.

**changers of money** — of Roman into Jewish money, in which the temple dues (see on <sup><172></sup>Matthew 17:24) had to be paid.

**15. small cords** — likely some of the rushes spread for bedding, and when twisted used to tie up the cattle there collected. "Not by this slender whip but by divine majesty was the ejection accomplished, the whip being but a sign of the scourge of divine anger" [GROTIUS].

**poured out ... overthrew** — thus expressing the mingled indignation and authority of the impulse.

**16. my Father's house** — How close the resemblance of these remarkable words to <sup><404></sup>Luke 2:49; the same *consciousness of intrinsic relation to the temple* — as the seat of His Father's most august worship, and so the symbol of all that is due to Him on earth — dictating both speeches. Only, when but a youth, *with no authority*, He was simply “a SON IN His own house”; now He was “a SON OVER His own house” (<sup><386></sup>Hebrews 3:6), the proper Representative, and in flesh “the Heir,” of his Father's rights.

**house of merchandise** — There was nothing wrong in the merchandise; but to bring it, for their own and others' convenience, into that most sacred place, was a high-handed profanation which the eye of Jesus could not endure.

**17. eaten me up** — a glorious feature in the predicted character of the suffering Messiah (<sup><390></sup>Psalm 69:9), and rising high even in some not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoes. (<sup><429></sup>Exodus 32:19, etc.).

**18-22. What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?** — Though the *act* and the *words* of Christ, taken together, were sign enough, they were unconvinced: yet they were *awed*, and though at His very next appearance at Jerusalem they “sought to kill Him” for speaking of “His Father” just as He did now (<sup><468></sup>John 5:18), they, at this early stage, only ask a sign.

**19. Destroy this temple**, etc. — (See on <sup><414></sup>Mark 14:58,59).

**20. Forty and six years** — From the eighteenth year of Herod till then was just forty-six years [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 15.11.1].

**21. temple of his body** — in which was enshrined the glory of the eternal Word. (See on <sup><614></sup>John 1:14). By its resurrection the true Temple of God upon earth was reared up, of which the stone one was but a shadow; so that the allusion is not *quite* exclusively to Himself, but takes in that Temple of which He is the foundation, and all believers are the “lively stones.” (<sup><404></sup>Peter 2:4,5).

**22. believed the scripture** — on this subject; that is, what was meant, which was hid from them till then. Mark

(1) *The act by which Christ signaled His first public appearance in the Temple.* Taking “His fan in His hand, He purges His floor,” not thoroughly indeed, but enough to *foreshadow His last act* towards that faithless people — *to sweep them out of God's house.*

(2) The sign of His authority to do this is the announcement, at this first outset of His ministry, of that coming death by their hands, and

resurrection by His own, which were to pave the way for their judicial ejection.

**23-25. in the feast day** — the foregoing things occurring probably before the feast began.

**many believed** — superficially, struck merely by “the miracles He did.” Of these we have no record.

**24. did not commit** — “entrust,” or let Himself down familiarly to them, as to His genuine disciples.

**25. knew what was in man** — It is impossible for language more clearly to assert of Christ what in <sup>2479</sup>Jeremiah 17:9,10, and elsewhere, is denied of all mere creatures.

# CHAPTER 3

## JOHN 3:1-21.

### NIGHT INTERVIEW OF NICODEMUS WITH JESUS.

**1, 2. Nicodemus** — In this member of the Sanhedrim sincerity and timidity are seen struggling together.

**2. came to Jesus by night** — One of those superficial “believers” mentioned in <sup><R23></sup>John 2:23,24, yet inwardly craving further satisfaction, Nicodemus comes to Jesus in quest of it, but comes “by night” (see <sup><R28></sup>John 19:38,39 12:42); he avows his conviction that He was

**come from God** — *an expression never applied to a merely human messenger*, and probably meaning more here — but only as “a teacher,” and in His miracles he sees a proof merely that “God is with Him.” Thus, while unable to repress his convictions, he is afraid of committing himself too far.

**3. Except**, etc. — This blunt and curt reply was plainly meant to shake the whole edifice of the man’s religion, in order to lay a deeper and more enduring foundation. Nicodemus probably thought he had gone a long way, and expected, perhaps, to be complimented on his candor. Instead of this, he is virtually told that he has raised a question which he is not in a capacity to solve, and that before approaching it, *his spiritual vision required to be rectified by an entire revolution on his inner man*. Had the man been less sincere, this would certainly have repelled him; but with persons in his mixed state of mind — to which Jesus was no stranger (<sup><R25></sup>John 2:25) — such methods speed better than more honeyed words and gradual approaches.

**a man** — not a Jew merely; the necessity is a universal one.

**be born again** — or, as it were, *begin life anew* in relation to God; his manner of thinking, feeling, and acting, with reference to spiritual things, undergoing *a fundamental and permanent revolution*.

**cannot see** — can have no part in (just as one is said to “see life,” “see death,” etc.).

**the kingdom of God** — whether in its beginnings here (<sup><266></sup>Luke 16:16), or its consummation hereafter (<sup><153></sup>Matthew 25:34 <sup><485></sup>Ephesians 5:5).

**4. How**, etc. — The figure of the new birth, if it had been meant only of *Gentile proselytes* to the Jewish religion, would have been intelligible enough to Nicodemus, being quite in keeping with the language of that day; but that *Jews themselves* should need a new birth was to him incomprehensible.

**5. of water and of the Spirit** — A twofold explanation of the “new birth,” so startling to Nicodemus. To a Jewish ecclesiastic, so familiar with the symbolical application of water, in every variety of way and form of expression, this language was fitted to show that the thing intended was no other than a *thorough spiritual purification by the operation of the Holy Ghost*. Indeed, element of *water* and operation of *the Spirit* are brought together in a glorious evangelical prediction of Ezekiel (<sup><265></sup>Ezekiel 36:25-27), which Nicodemus might have been reminded of had such spiritualities not been almost lost in the reigning formalism. Already had the symbol of water been embodied in an initiatory ordinance, in the baptism of the Jewish expectants of Messiah by the Baptist, not to speak of the baptism of Gentile proselytes before that; and in the Christian Church it was soon to become the great visible door of entrance into “the kingdom of God,” *the reality being the sole work of the Holy Ghost* (<sup><305></sup>Titus 3:5).

**6-8. That which is born**, etc. — A great universal proposition; “That which is begotten carries within itself the nature of that which begat it” [OLSHAUSEN].

**flesh** — Not the mere material body, but all that comes into the world by birth, *the entire man*; yet not humanity simply, but in its corrupted, depraved condition, *in complete subjection to the law of the fall* (<sup><806></sup>Romans 8:1-9). So that though a man “could enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born,” he would be no nearer this “new birth” than before (<sup><340></sup>Job 14:4 <sup><515></sup>Psalms 51:5).

**is spirit** — “partakes of and possesses His spiritual nature.”

**7. Marvel not**, etc. — If a spiritual nature only can see and enter the kingdom of God; if all we bring into the world with us be the reverse of spiritual; and if this spirituality be solely of the Holy Ghost, no wonder a new birth is indispensable.

**Ye must** — “Ye, says Jesus, not we” [BENGEL]. After those universal propositions, about what “*a man*” must be, to “enter the kingdom of God”

(~~4RR~~ John 3:5) — this is remarkable, showing that our Lord meant to hold Himself forth as “*separate from sinners.*”

**8. The wind**, etc. — *Breath* and *spirit* (one word both in *Hebrew* and *Greek*) are constantly brought together in Scripture as analogous (~~4RR~~ Job 27:3 33:4 ~~4509~~ Ezekiel 37:9-14).

**canst not tell**, etc. — The laws which govern the motion of the *winds* are even yet but partially discovered; but the risings, failings, and change in direction many times in a day, of those *gentle breezes* here referred to, will probably ever be a mystery to us: So of the operation of the Holy Ghost in the new birth.

**9, 10. How**, etc. — Though the subject still confounds Nicodemus, the necessity and possibility of the new birth is no longer the point with him, but the nature of it and how it is brought about [LUTHARDT]. “From this moment Nicodemus *says nothing more*, but has sunk unto a disciple who has found his true teacher. *Therefore* the Savior now graciously advances in His communications of truth, and once more solemnly brings to the mind of this teacher in Israel, now become a learner, his own not guiltless *ignorance*, that He may then proceed to utter, out of the fullness of His divine knowledge, such farther testimonies both of earthly and heavenly things as his docile scholar may to his own profit receive” [STIER].

**10. master** — “teacher.” The question clearly implies that *the doctrine of regeneration is so far disclosed in the Old Testament that Nicodemus was culpable in being ignorant of it*. Nor is it merely as something that should be experienced *under the Gospel* that the Old Testament holds it forth — as many distinguished critics allege, denying that there was any such thing as regeneration before Christ. For our Lord’s proposition is universal, that no fallen man is or can be spiritual without a regenerating operation of the Holy Ghost, and the necessity of a *spiritual obedience* under whatever name, in opposition to mere mechanical services, is proclaimed throughout all the Old Testament.

**11-13. We speak that we know, and ... have seen** — that is, by *absolute* knowledge and *immediate* vision of God, which “the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father” claims as exclusively His own (~~4RR~~ John 1:18). The “we” and “our” are here used, though Himself only is intended, in emphatic contrast, probably, with the opening words of Nicodemus, “Rabbi, *we know.*”, etc.

**ye receive not**, etc. — referring to the *class* to which Nicodemus belonged, but from which he was beginning to be separated in spirit.

**12. earthly things** — such as *regeneration*, the gate of entrance to the kingdom of God *on earth*, and which Nicodemus should have understood better, as a truth even of that more *earthly* economy to which he belonged.

**heavenly things** — the things of the new and more heavenly evangelical economy, only to be fully understood after the effusion of the Spirit from heaven through the exalted Savior.

**13. no man hath ascended**, etc. — There is something paradoxical in this language — “No one has gone up but He that came down, even He who is at once both up and down.” Doubtless it was intended to startle and constrain His auditor to think that there must be mysterious elements in His Person. The old Socinians, to subvert the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, seized upon this passage as teaching that the man Jesus was secretly caught up to heaven to receive His instructions, and then “came down from heaven” to deliver them. But the sense manifestly is this: “The perfect knowledge of God is not obtained by any man’s going up from earth to heaven to receive it — no man hath so ascended — but He whose *proper habitation*, in His essential and eternal nature, is heaven, hath, by taking human flesh, descended as the Son of man to disclose the Father, whom He knows by immediate gaze alike in the flesh as before He assumed it, being essentially and unchangeably ‘in the bosom of the Father’” (⋈ John 1:18).

**14-16. And as Moses**, etc. — Here now we have the “heavenly things,” as before the “earthly,” but under a veil, for the reason mentioned in ⋈ John 3:12. The crucifixion of Messiah is twice after this veiled under the same lively term — “*uplifting*,” ⋈ John 8:28 12:32,33. Here it is still further veiled — though to us who know what it means, rendered vastly more instructive — by reference to the brazen serpent. The venom of the fiery serpents, shooting through the veins of the rebellious Israelites, was spreading death through the camp — lively emblem of the perishing condition of men by reason of sin. In both cases the remedy was divinely provided. In both the way of cure strikingly resembled that of the disease. Stung by serpents, by a serpent they are healed. By “fiery serpents” bitten — serpents, probably, with skin spotted fiery red [KURTZ] — the instrument of cure is a serpent of brass or copper, having at a distance *the same appearance*. So in redemption, as by man came death, by Man also comes life — Man, too, “*in the likeness of sinful flesh*” (⋈ Romans 8:3), differing in nothing *outward* and *apparent* from those who, pervaded by the poison of the serpent, were ready to perish. But as the uplifted serpent had none of the venom of which the serpent-bitten people were dying, so while the whole human family were perishing of the deadly wound inflicted on it by the old serpent, “the Second Man,” who arose over humanity with

healing in His wings, was without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. In both cases the remedy is *conspicuously displayed*; in the one case on a pole, in the other on the cross, to “draw all men unto Him” (<sup>4823</sup>John 12:32). In both cases it is by *directing the eye to the uplifted Remedy* that the cure is effected; in the one case the bodily eye, in the other the gaze of the soul by “believing in Him,” as in that glorious ancient proclamation — “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,” etc. (<sup>23622</sup>Isaiah 45:22). Both methods are stumbling to human reason. What, to any thinking Israelite, could seem more unlikely than that a deadly poison should be dried up in his body by simply looking on a reptile of brass? Such a stumbling-block to the Jews and to the Greeks foolishness was faith in the crucified Nazarene as a way of deliverance from eternal perdition. Yet was the warrant in both cases to expect a cure equally rational and well grounded. As the serpent was *God’s ordinance* for the cure of every bitten Israelite, so is Christ for the salvation of every perishing sinner — the one however a purely *arbitrary* ordinance, the other divinely *adapted* to man’s complicated maladies. In both cases the efficacy is the same. As one simple look at the serpent, however distant and however weak, brought an instantaneous cure, even so, real faith in the Lord Jesus, however tremulous, however distant — be it but *real* faith — brings certain and instant healing to the perishing soul. In a word, the consequences of disobedience are the same in both. Doubtless many bitten Israelites, galling as their case was, would *reason* rather than *obey*, would *speculate* on the absurdity of expecting the bite of a living serpent to be cured by looking at a piece of dead metal in the shape of one — speculate thus *till they died*. Alas! is not salvation by a crucified Redeemer subjected to like treatment? Has the offense of the cross” yet ceased? (Compare <sup>11822</sup>2 Kings 5:12).

**16. For God so loved,** etc. — What proclamation of the Gospel has been so oft on the lips of missionaries and preachers in every age since it was first uttered? What has sent such thrilling sensations through millions of mankind? What has been honored to bring such multitudes to the feet of Christ? What to kindle in the cold and selfish breasts of mortals the fires of self-sacrificing love to mankind, as these words of transparent simplicity, yet overpowering majesty? The picture embraces several distinct compartments: “THE WORLD” — in its widest sense — *ready “to perish”*; the immense “LOVE OF GOD” *to that perishing world*, measurable only, and conceivable only, by the gift which it drew forth from Him; THE GIFT itself — “He *so* loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son,” or, in the language of Paul, “*spared not* His own Son” (<sup>48182</sup>Romans 8:32), or in that addressed to Abraham when ready to offer Isaac on the altar, “*withheld not* His Son, His only Son, whom He loved” (<sup>41226</sup>Genesis 22:16); the FRUIT of this stupendous gift — not only *deliverance from* impending



“*perdition*,” but *the bestowal of everlasting life*; the *MODE* in which all takes effect — by “*believing*” on the Son. How would Nicodemus’ narrow Judaism become invisible in the blaze of this Sun of righteousness seen rising on “the world” with healing in His wings! (<sup><300></sup>Malachi 4:2).

**17-21. not to condemn**, etc. — A statement of vast importance. Though “condemnation” is to many the *issue* of Christ’s mission (<sup><400></sup>John 3:19), it is not the *object* of His mission, which is purely a *saving* one.

**18. is not condemned** — Having, immediately on his believing, “passed from death unto life” (<sup><400></sup>John 5:24).

**condemned already** — Rejecting the one way of deliverance from that “condemnation” which God gave His Son to *remove*, and so wilfully *remaining* condemned.

**19. this is the condemnation**, etc. — emphatically so, *revealing* the condemnation already existing, and *sealing up* under it those who will not be delivered from it.

**light is come into the world** — in the Person of Him to whom Nicodemus was listening.

**loved darkness**, etc. — This can only be known by the deliberate rejection of Christ, but that *does* fearfully reveal it.

**20. reproved** — by detection.

**21. doeth truth** — whose only object in life is to be and do what will bear the light. Therefore he loves and “comes to the light,” that all he is and does, being thus thoroughly tested, may be seen to have nothing in it but what is divinely wrought and divinely approved. This is the “Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile.”

## <sup><400></sup>JOHN 3:22-36.

### JESUS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE BAPTIST — HIS NOBLE TESTIMONY TO HIS MASTER.

**22-24. land of Judea** — the rural parts of that province, the foregoing conversation being held in the capital.

**baptized** — in the sense explained in <sup><400></sup>John 4:2.

**23. aenon ... Salim** — on the west of Jordan. (Compare <sup>4028</sup>John 3:26 with <sup>4028</sup>John 1:28).

**24. John not yet cast into prison** — Hence it is plain that our Lord's ministry did not *commence* with the imprisonment of John, though, but for this, we should have drawn that inference from <sup>4012</sup>Matthew 4:12 and Mark's (<sup>4014</sup>Mark 1:14) express statement.

**25, 26. between some of** — rather, "on the part of."

**and the Jews** — rather (according to the best manuscripts), "and a Jew,"

**about purifying** — that is, baptizing, the symbolical meaning of washing with water being put (as in <sup>4016</sup>John 2:6) for the act itself. As John and Jesus were the only teachers who baptized Jews, discussions might easily arise between the Baptist's disciples and such Jews as declined to submit to that rite.

**26. Rabbi**, etc. — "Master, this man tells us that He to whom thou barest such generous witness beyond Jordan is requiting thy generosity by drawing all the people away to Himself. At this rate, thou shalt soon have no disciples at all." The reply to this is one of the noblest and most affecting utterances that ever came from the lips of man.

**27-30. A man**, etc. — "I do my heaven-prescribed work, and that is enough for me. Would you have me mount into my Master's place? Said I not unto you, I am not the Christ? The Bride is not mine, why should the people stay with me?? Mine it is to point the burdened to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, to tell them there is Balm in Gilead, and a Physician there. And shall I grudge to see them, in obedience to the call, flying as a cloud, and as doves to their windows? Whose is the Bride but the Bridegroom's? Enough for me to be the Bridegroom's *friend*, sent by Him to negotiate the match, privileged to bring together the Savior and those He is come to seek and to save, and rejoicing with joy unspeakable if I may but 'stand and hear the Bridegroom's voice,' witnessing the blessed espousals. Say ye, then, they go from me to Him? Ye bring me glad tidings of great joy. He must increase, but I must decrease; this, my joy, therefore is fulfilled."

**A man can receive**, etc. — assume nothing, that is, lawfully and with any success; that is, Every man has his work and sphere appointed him from above, Even Christ Himself came under this law (<sup>4034</sup>Hebrews 5:4).

**31-34. He that**, etc. — Here is the reason why He must increase while all human teachers must decrease. The Master "cometh from above" — descending from *His proper element*, the region of those "heavenly things"

which He came to reveal, and so, although mingling with men and things on the earth, is not “of the earth,” either in Person or Word. The servants, on the contrary, springing of earth, are of the earth, and their testimony, even though divine in authority, partakes necessarily of their own earthiness. (Song of Solomon strongly did the Baptist feel this contrast that the last clause just repeats the first). It is impossible for a sharper line of distinction to be drawn between Christ and all human teachers, even when divinely commissioned and speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost. And who does not perceive it? The words of prophets and apostles are undeniable and most precious truth; but in the words of Christ we hear a voice as from the excellent Glory, the Eternal Word making Himself heard in our own flesh.

**32. what he hath seen and heard** — (See on ◀REB John 3:11 and ◀RIS John 1:18).

**and no man receiveth**, etc. — John’s disciples had said, “*All come to Him*” (◀REB John 3:26). The Baptist here virtually says, Would it were so, but alas! they are next to “*none*” [BENGEL]. They were far readier to receive himself, and obliged him to say, I am not the Christ, and he seems pained at this.

**33. hath set to His seal**, etc. — gives glory to God whose words Christ speaks, not as prophets and apostles by a partial communication of the Spirit to them.

**34. for God giveth not the Spirit by measure** — Here, again, the sharpest conceivable line of distinction is drawn between Christ and all human-inspired teachers: “They have the Spirit in a *limited* degree; but God giveth not [to Him] the Spirit by *measure*.” It means the entire fullness of divine life and divine power. The present tense “*giveth*,” very aptly points out the permanent communication of the Spirit by the Father to the Son, so that a constant flow and reflow of living power is to be understood (Compare ◀RIS John 1:15) [OLSHAUSEN].

**35, 36. The Father loveth**, etc. — See on ◀R17 Matthew 11:27, where we have the “*delivering over* of all things into the hands of the Son,” while here we have the deep spring of that august act in the Father’s ineffable “*love of the Son*.”

**36. hath everlasting life** — already has it. (See on ◀REB John 3:18 and ◀RIS John 5:24).

**shall not see life** — The contrast here is striking: The one has already a life that will endure for ever — the other not only has it not now, but shall never have it — never see it.

**abideth on him** — It was on Him before, and not being *removed* in the only possible way, by “believing on the Son,” it necessarily *remaineth* on him! *Note.* — How flatly does this contradict the teaching of many in our day, that there neither was, nor is, anything *in God* against sinners which needed to be removed by Christ, but only *in men* against God!

# CHAPTER 4

## JOHN 4:1-42.

### CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA — THE SAMARITANS OF SYCHAR.

**1-4. the Lord knew** — not by report, but in the sense of ~~RD5~~ John 2:25, for which reason He is here styled “the Lord.”

**2. Jesus baptized not** — John being a servant baptized with his own hand; Christ as the Master, “baptizing with the Holy Ghost,” administered the outward symbol only through His disciples.

**3. left Judea** — to avoid persecution, which at that early stage would have marred His work.

**departed into Galilee** — by which time John had been cast into prison (~~MD14~~ Mark 1:14).

**4. must needs go through Samaria** — for a geographical reason, no doubt, as it lay straight in his way, but certainly not without a higher design.

**5. cometh ... to** — that is, as far as: for He remained at some distance from it.

**Sychar** — the “Shechem” of the Old Testament, about thirty-four miles from Jerusalem, afterwards called “Neapolis,” and now “Nablous.”

**6-8. wearied ... sat thus** — that is, “as you might fancy a weary man would”; an instance of the graphic style of St. John [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. In fact, this is perhaps the most *human* of all the scenes of our Lord’s earthly history. We seem to be beside Him, overhearing all that is here recorded, nor could any painting of the scene on canvas, however perfect, do other than lower the conception which this exquisite narrative conveys to the devout and intelligent reader. But with all that is *human*, how much also of the *divine* have we here, both blended in one glorious manifestation of the majesty, grace, pity, patience with which “the Lord” imparts light and life to this unlikeliest of strangers, standing midway between Jews and heathens.

**the sixth hour** — *noonday*, reckoning from six A.M. From So 1:7 we know, as from other sources, that the very flocks “rested at noon.” But Jesus, whose maxim was, “I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day” (<sup>430B</sup>John 9:4), seems to have denied Himself that repose, at least on this occasion, probably that He might reach this well when He knew the woman would be there. Once there, however, He accepts ... the grateful ease of a seat on the patriarchal stone. But what music is that which I hear from His lips, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (<sup>402B</sup>Matthew 11:28).

**7. Give me to drink** — for the heat of a noonday sun had parched His lips. But “in the last, that great day of the feast,” Jesus stood and cried, saying, “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and *drink*” (<sup>403B</sup>John 7:37).

**9-12. How is it that thou** — not altogether refusing, yet wondering at so unusual a request from a Jew, as His dress and dialect would at once discover Him to be, to a Samaritan.

**for**, etc. — It is this national antipathy that gives point to the parable of the good Samaritan (<sup>403B</sup>Luke 10:30-37), and the thankfulness of the Samaritan leper (<sup>427B</sup>Luke 17:16,18).

**10. If thou knewest**, etc. — that is, “In Me thou seest only a petitioner to thee but if thou knewest who that Petitioner is, and the Gift that God is giving to men, thou wouldst have changed places with Him, gladly suing of Him living water — nor shouldst thou have sued in vain” (gently reflecting on her for not immediately meeting His request).

**12. Art thou greater**, etc. — already perceiving in this Stranger a claim to some mysterious greatness.

**our father Jacob** — for when it went well with the Jews, they claimed kindred with them, as being descended from Joseph; but when misfortunes befell the Jews, they disowned all connection with them [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 9.14,3].

**13, 14. thirst again ... never thirst**, etc. — The contrast here is fundamental and all comprehensive. “This water” plainly means “this natural water and *all satisfactions of a like earthly and perishable nature.*” Coming to us *from without*, and reaching only the *superficial* parts of our nature, they are soon spent, and need to be anew supplied as much as if we had never experienced them before, while the deeper wants of our being are not reached by them at all; whereas the “water” that Christ gives — *spiritual life* — is struck out of the very depths of our being, making the soul not a *cistern*, for holding water *poured into it from without*, but a

*fountain* (the word had been better so rendered, to distinguish it from the word rendered “well” in <sup>ROM13</sup>John 4:11), springing, gushing, bubbling up and flowing forth *within* us, ever fresh, ever living. *The indwelling of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Christ* is the secret of this life with all its enduring energies and satisfactions, as is expressly said (<sup>ROM32</sup>John 7:37-39). “Never thirsting,” then, means simply that such souls have the supplies *at home*.

**into everlasting life** — carrying the thoughts up from the eternal freshness and vitality of these waters to the great ocean in which they have their confluence. “Thither may I arrive!” [BENGEL].

**15-18. give me this water**, etc. — This is not obtuseness — that is giving way — it expresses a wondering desire after she scarce knew what from this mysterious Stranger.

**16. call thy husband** — now proceeding to arouse her slumbering conscience by laying bare the guilty life she was leading, and by the minute details which that life furnished, not only bringing her sin vividly up before her, but preparing her to receive in His true character that wonderful Stranger to whom her whole life, in its minutest particulars, evidently lay open.

**19, 20. Sir, I perceive**, etc. — Seeing herself all revealed, does she now break down and ask what hopes there might be for one so guilty? Nay, her convictions have not reached that point yet. She ingeniously shifts the subject from a personal to a public question. It is not, “Alas, what a wicked life am I leading!” but “Lo, what a wonderful prophet I got into conversation with! He will be able to settle that interminable dispute between us and the Jews. Sir, you must know all about such matters — our fathers hold to this mountain here,” pointing to *Gerizim* in Samaria, “as the divinely consecrated place of worship, but ye Jews say that *Jerusalem* is the proper place — which of us is right?” How slowly does the human heart submit to *thorough* humiliation! (Compare the *prodigal*; see on <sup>ROM15</sup>Luke 15:15). Doubtless our Lord saw through the fetch; but does He say, “That question is not the point just now, but have you been living in the way described, yea or nay? Till this is disposed of I cannot be drawn into theological controversies.” The Prince of preachers takes another method: He humors the poor woman, letting her take her own way, allowing her to lead while He follows — but thus only the more effectually gaining His object. He answers her question, pours light into her mind on the *spirituality* of all true worship, as of its glorious Object, and so brings her insensibly to the point at which He could disclose to her wondering mind whom she was all the while speaking to.

**21-24. Woman**, etc. — Here are three weighty pieces of information:

- (1) The point raised will very soon cease to be of any moment, for a total change of dispensation is about to come over the Church.
- (2) The Samaritans are wrong, not only as to the *place*, but the whole *grounds* and *nature* of their worship, while in all these respects the truth lies with the Jews.
- (3) As God is a *Spirit*, so He both *invites* and *demand*s a *spiritual worship*, and already all is in preparation for a *spiritual economy*, more in harmony with the true nature of acceptable service than the ceremonial worship by consecrated *persons*, *place*, and *times*, which God for a time has seen meet to keep up till fullness of the time should come.

**neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem** — that is, *exclusively* (~~3011~~ Malachi 1:11 ~~5018~~ 1 Timothy 2:8).

**worship the Father** — She had talked simply of “worship”; our Lord brings up before her the great OBJECT of all acceptable worship — “THE FATHER.”

**22. Ye worship ye know not what** — without any *revealed authority*, and so very much in the dark. In this sense, the Jews *knew what they were about*. But the most glorious thing here is the reason assigned,

**for salvation is of the Jews** — intimating to her that *Salvation* was not a thing left to be reached by any one who might vaguely desire it of a God of mercy, but something that had been *revealed, prepared, deposited with a particular people*, and must be sought *in connection with, and as issuing from them*; and that people, “the Jews.”

**23. hour cometh, and now is** — evidently meaning her to understand that this new economy was in some sense being set up while He was talking to her, a sense which would in a few minutes so far appear, when He told her plainly He was *the Christ*.

**25, 26. I know Messias cometh ... when He is come**, etc. — If we take our Lord’s immediate disclosure of Himself, in answer to this, as the proper key to its meaning to *His ear*, we can hardly doubt that the woman was already *all but prepared for even this startling announcement*, which indeed she seems (from ~~8109~~ John 4:29) to have already begun to suspect by His revealing her to herself. Thus quickly, under so matchless a Teacher, was she brought up from her sunken condition to a frame of mind and heart capable of the noblest revelations.



**tell us all things** — an expectation founded probably on <sup>CHRIST</sup>Deuteronomy 18:15.

**26. I that speak ... am he** — He scarce ever said anything like this to His own people, the Jews. He had magnified them to the woman, and yet to themselves He is to the last far more reserved than to her — *proving* rather than plainly *telling* them He was the Christ. But what would not have been *safe* among them was safe enough with her, whose *simplicity* at this stage of the conversation appears from the sequel to have become perfect. What now will the woman say? We listen, the scene has changed, a new party arrives, the disciples have been to Sychar, at some distance, to buy bread, and on their return are astonished at the company their Lord has been holding in their absence.

**27. marvelled that he talked with the woman** — It never probably occurred to them to marvel that He talked with *themselves*; yet in His eye, as the sequel shows, He was quite as nobly employed. How poor, if not false, are many of our most plausible estimates!

**no man said ... What? ... Why?** — awed by the spectacle, and thinking there must be something under it.

**28-30. left her water-pot** — How exquisitely natural! The presence of strangers made her feel that it was time for her to withdraw, and He who knew what was in her heart, and what she was going to the city to do, let her go without exchanging a word with her in the hearing of others. Their interview was too sacred, and the effect on the woman too overpowering (not to speak of His own deep emotion) to allow of its being continued. But this one artless touch — that she “left her water-pot” — speaks volumes. The living water was already beginning to spring up within her; she found that man doth not live by bread nor by water only, and that there was a water of wondrous virtue that raised people above meat and drink, and the vessels that held them, and all human things. In short, she was transported, forgot everything but One, and her heart running over with the tale she had to tell, she hastens home and pours it out.

**29. is not this the Christ** — The *form* of the question (in the *Greek*) is a distant, modest way of only half *insinuating* what it seemed hardly fitting for her to *affirm*; nor does she refer to what He said of Himself, but solely to His disclosure to her of the particulars of her own life.

**30. Then they went out**, etc. — How different from the Jews! and richly was their openness to conviction rewarded.

**31-38. meantime** — that is, while the woman was away.

**Master, eat** — *Fatigue* and *thirst* we saw He felt; here is revealed another of our common infirmities to which the Lord was subject — *hunger*.

**32. meat ye know not of** — What spirituality of mind! “*I have been eating all the while, and such food as ye dream not of.*” What can that be? they ask each other; have any supplies been brought Him in our absence? He knows what they are saying though He hears it not.

**34. My meat is**, etc. — “A Servant here to fulfill a prescribed work, to *do* and to *finish*, that is ‘meat’ to Me; and of this, while you were away, I have had My fill.” And of what does He speak thus? Of the condescension, pity, patience, wisdom He had been laying out upon *one soul* — a very humble woman, and in some respects repulsive too! But He had gained her, and through her was going to gain more, and lay perhaps the foundations of a great work in the country of Samaria; and this filled His whole soul and raised Him above the sense of natural hunger (~~and~~ Matthew 4:4).

**35. yet four months, and then harvest** — that is, “In current speech, ye say thus at this season; but lift up your eyes and look upon those fields in the light of *another* husbandry, for lo! *in that sense*, they are even now white to harvest, ready for the sickle.” The simple beauty of this language is only surpassed by the glow of holy emotion in the Redeemer’s own soul which it expresses. It refers to the *ripeness* of these Sycharites for accession to Him, and the joy of this great Lord of the reapers over the anticipated ingathering. Oh, could we but *so*, “lift up our eyes and look” upon many fields abroad and at home, which to dull sense appear unpromising, as *He* beheld those of Samaria, what movements, as yet scarce in embryo, and accessions to Christ, as yet seemingly far distant, might we not discern as quite near at hand, and thus, amidst difficulties and discouragements too much for nature to sustain, be cheered — *as our Lord Himself was* in circumstances far more overwhelming — with “songs in the night!”

**36. he that reapeth**, etc. — As our Lord could not mean that the reaper only, and not the sower, received “wages,” in the sense of *personal reward* for his work, the “wages” here can be no other than the joy of having such a harvest to gather in — the joy of “gathering fruit unto life eternal.”

**rejoice together** — The blessed issue of the whole ingathering is the interest alike of the sower as of the reaper; it is no more the fruit of the last operation than of the first; and just as there can be no reaping without previous sowing, so have those servants of Christ, to whom is assigned the pleasant task of merely reaping the spiritual harvest, no work to do, and no joy to taste, that has not been prepared to their hand by the toilsome and often thankless work of their predecessors in the field. *The joy, therefore, of the great harvest festivity will be the common joy of all who have taken any*

*part in the work from the first operation to the last.* (See <sup>ⓓ</sup>Deuteronomy 16:11,14 <sup>ⓓ</sup>Psalm 126:6 <sup>ⓓ</sup>Isaiah 9:3). What encouragement is here for those “fishers of men” who “have toiled all the night” of their official life, and, to human appearance, “have taken nothing!”

**38. I sent you,** etc. — The *I* is emphatic — I, the Lord of the whole harvest: “sent you,” points to their *past* appointment to the apostleship, though it has reference only to their *future* discharge of it, for they had nothing to do with the present ingathering of the Sycharites.

**ye bestowed no labor** — meaning that much of their future success would arise from the *preparation already made* for them. (See on <sup>ⓓ</sup>John 4:42).

**others labored** — Referring to the Old Testament laborers, the Baptist, and *by implication* Himself, though He studiously keeps this in the background, *that the line of distinction between Himself and all His servants might not be lost sight of*. “Christ represents Himself as the Husbandman [rather the Lord of the laborers], who has the direction both of the sowing and of the harvest, who commissions *all* the agents — those of the Old Testament as well as of the New — and therefore does not stand on a level with either the sowers or the reapers” [OLSHAUSEN].

**39-42. many ... believed,** etc. — The truth of <sup>ⓓ</sup>John 4:35 begins to appear. These Samaritans were the foundation of the Church afterwards built up there. No miracle appears to have been wrought there (but unparalleled supernatural knowledge displayed): “*we have heard Him ourselves*” (<sup>ⓓ</sup>John 4:42) sufficed to raise their faith to a point never attained by the Jews, and hardly as yet by the disciples — that He was “the Savior of *the world*” [ALFORD]. “This incident is further remarkable as a rare instance of the Lord’s ministry producing *an awakening on a large scale*” [OLSHAUSEN].

**40. abode two days** — Two precious days, surely, to the Redeemer Himself! Unsought, He had come to His own, yet His own received Him not: now those who were not His own had come to Him, been won by Him, and invited Him to their town that others might share with them in the benefit of His wonderful ministry. Here, then, would He solace His already wounded spirit and have in this outfield village triumph of His grace, a sublime foretaste of the inbringing of the whole Gentile world into the Church.

~~ROM~~ **JOHN 4:43-54.**

**SECOND GALILEAN MIRACLE — HEALING OF THE COURTIER'S SON.**

**43, 44. after two days** — literally, the two days of His stay at Sychar.

**44. For Jesus testified**, etc. — This verse had occasioned much discussion. For it seems strange, if “His own country” here means *Nazareth*, which was in Galilee, that it should be said He came to Galilee *because* in one of its towns He expected no good reception. But all will be simple and natural if we fill up the statement thus: “He went into the region of Galilee, but not, as might have been expected, to that part of it called ‘His own country,’ Nazareth (see ~~MARK~~ Mark 6:4 ~~LUKE~~ Luke 4:24), *for* He acted on the maxim which He oft repeated, that ‘a prophet,’” etc.

**45. received** — welcomed Him.

**having seen ... at the feast** — proud, perhaps, of their Countryman’s wonderful works at Jerusalem, and possibly won by this circumstance to regard His claims as at least worthy of respectful investigation. Even this our Lord did not despise, for saving conversion often begins in less than this (so Zaccheus, ~~LUKE~~ Luke 19:3-10).

**for they also went** — that is, it was their practice to go up to the feast.

**46, 47. nobleman** — courtier, king’s servant, or one connected with a royal household; such as Chuza (~~LUKE~~ Luke 8:3), or Manaen (~~ACTS~~ Acts 13:1).

**heard that Jesus was come out of Judea** — “where he had doubtless seen or heard what things Jesus had done at Jerusalem” (~~JOHN~~ John 4:45), [BENGEL].

**come down** — for Capernaum was down on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

**48-54. Except ye see signs**, etc. — He *did* believe, both as his coming and his urgent entreaty show; but how imperfectly we shall see; and our Lord would deepen his faith by such a blunt and seemingly rough answer as He made to Nicodemus.

**49. come down ere my child die** — “While we talk, the case is at its crisis, and if Thou come not instantly, all is over.” This was faith, but partial, and our Lord would perfect it. The man cannot believe the cure could be wrought without the Physician coming to the patient — the thought of such

a thing evidently never occurred to him. But Jesus will in a moment bring him up to this.

**50. Go thy way; thy son liveth** — Both effects instantaneously followed: — “The man believed the word,” and the cure, shooting quicker than lightning from Cana to Capernaum, was felt by the dying youth. In token of faith, the father takes his leave of Christ — in the circumstances this evidenced full faith. The servants hasten to convey the joyful tidings to the anxious parents, whose faith now only wants one confirmation. “*When* began he to amend? ... Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him” — the very hour in which was uttered that great word, “Thy son liveth!” So “himself believed and his whole house.” He *had* believed before this, first very imperfectly; then with assured confidence of Christ’s word; but now with a faith crowned by “sight.” And the wave rolled from the head to the members of his household. “To-day is salvation come to this *house*” (~~☞~~ Luke 19:9); and no mean house this!

**second miracle Jesus did** — that is, in Cana; done “after He came out of Judea,” as the former before.

# CHAPTER 5

◀RE▶ **JOHN 5:1-47.**

## THE IMPOTENT MAN HEALED — DISCOURSE OCCASIONED BY THE PERSECUTION ARISING THEREUPON.

**1. a feast of the Jews** — *What feast?* No question has more divided the Harmonists of the Gospels, and the duration of our Lord's ministry may be said to hinge on it. For if, as the majority have thought (until of late years) it was a *Passover*, His ministry lasted three and a half years; if not, probably a year less. Those who are dissatisfied with the *Passover*-view all differ among themselves what other feast it was, and some of the most acute think there are no grounds for deciding. In our judgment the evidence is in favor of its being a *Passover*, but the reasons cannot be stated here.

2, 3. *sheep market* — The supplement should be (as in *Margin*) “sheep [gate],” mentioned in ◀KRE▶ Nehemiah 3:1,32.

**Bethesda** — that is, “house (place) of mercy,” from the cures wrought there.

**five porches** — for shelter to the patients.

**3. impotent** — infirm.

**4. an angel**, etc. — This miracle differed in two points from all other miracles recorded in Scripture:

(1) It was not one, but a succession of miracles periodically wrought:

(2) As it was only wrought “when the waters were troubled,” so only upon one patient at a time, and that the patient “who first stepped in after the troubling of the waters.” But this only the more undeniably fixed its miraculous character. We have heard of many waters having a medicinal virtue; but what water was ever known to cure *instantaneously* a single disease? And who ever heard of any water curing all, even the most diverse diseases — “blind, halt, withered” — alike? Above all, who ever heard of such a thing being done “only at a certain season,” and most singularly of all, doing it only to the first person who stepped in after the moving of the waters? Any of these

peculiarities — much more all taken together — must have proclaimed the supernatural character of the cures wrought. (If the text here be genuine, there can be no doubt of the miracle, as there were multitudes living when this Gospel was published who, from their own knowledge of Jerusalem, could have exposed the falsehood of the Evangelist, if no such cure had been known there. The want of ~~RRB~~ John 5:4 and part of ~~RRB~~ John 5:3 in some good manuscripts, and the use of some unusual words in the passage, are more easily accounted for than the evidence in their favor if they were not originally in the text. Indeed ~~RRB~~ John 5:7 is unintelligible without ~~RRB~~ John 5:4. The *internal* evidence brought against it is merely the *unlikelihood* of such a miracle — a principle which will carry us a great deal farther if we allow it to weigh against positive evidence).

**5-9. thirty and eight years** — but not all that time at the pool. This was probably the most pitiable of all the cases, and *therefore selected*.

**6. saw him lie, and knew**, etc. — As He doubtless visited the spot just to perform this cure, so He knows where to find His patient, and the whole previous history of his case (~~RRB~~ John 2:25).

**Wilt thou be made whole?** — Could anyone doubt that a sick man would like to be made whole, or that the patients came thither, and this man had returned again and again, just in hope of a cure? But our Lord asked the question.

(1) To fasten attention upon Himself;

(2) By making him detail his case to deepen in him the feeling of entire helplessness;

(3) By so singular a question to beget in his desponding heart the hope of a cure. (Compare ~~RRB~~ Mark 10:51).

**7. Sir, I have no man**, etc. — Instead of *saying* he wished to be cured, he just tells with piteous simplicity how fruitless had been all his efforts to obtain it, and how *helpless* and all but *hopeless* he was. Yet not quite. For here he is at the pool, waiting on. It seemed of no use; nay, only tantalizing,

**while I am coming, another steppeth down before me** — the fruit was snatched from his lips. Yet he will not go away. He may get nothing by staying, he may drop into his grave ere he get into the pool; but by going from the appointed, divine way of healing, he can get nothing. Wait therefore he will, wait he does, and when Christ comes to heal him, lo! he is waiting his turn. *What an attitude for a sinner* at Mercy's gate! The man's hopes seemed low enough ere Christ came to him. He might have

said, just before “Jesus passed by that way,” “This is no use; I shall never get in; let me die at home.” Then all had been lost. But he *held on*, and his perseverance was rewarded with a glorious cure. Probably some rays of hope darted into his heart as he told his tale before those Eyes whose glance measured his whole case. But the word of command consummates his preparation to receive the cure, and instantaneously works it.

**8. Rise, take up thy bed**, etc. — “Immediately” he did so. “He *spake* and it was *done*.” The slinging of his portable couch over his shoulders was designed to show the perfection of the cure.

**9. the same day was the sabbath** — Beyond all doubt this was intentional, as in so many other healings, in order that when opposition arose on this account men might be compelled to listen to His claims and His teaching.

**10-16. The Jews** — that is, *those in authority*. (See on <sup><B19></sup>John 1:19.)

**it is not lawful to carry thy bed** — a glorious testimony to the cure, as *instantaneous* and *complete*, from the lips of the most prejudiced! (And what a contrast does it, as all our Lord’s miracles, present to the bungling miracles of the Church of Rome!) In *ordinary* circumstances, the rulers had the law on their side

(<sup><A35></sup>Nehemiah 13:15 <sup><A72></sup>Jeremiah 17:21). But when the man referred them to “Him that had made him whole” (<sup><B11></sup>John 5:11) as his authority, the argument was resistless. Yet they ingeniously parried the thrust, asking him, not who had “made him whole” — that would have condemned themselves and defeated their purpose — but who had bidden him “take up his bed and walk,” in other words, who had dared to order a breach of the sabbath? It is time we were looking after Him — thus hoping to shake the man’s faith in his Healer.

**13. he that was healed wist not**, etc. — That some one, with unparalleled generosity, tenderness and power, had done it, the man knew well enough: but as he had never heard of Him before, so he disappeared too quickly for any inquiries.

**conveyed himself away** — slipped out of the crowd that had gathered, to avoid both hasty popularity and precipitate hatred (<sup><A24></sup>Matthew 12:14-19).

**14. findeth him in the temple** — saying, perhaps, “I will go into Thy house with burnt offerings, I will pay my vows which my lips have uttered and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble” (<sup><B63></sup>Psalms 66:13,14). Jesus, there Himself for His own ends, “findeth him there” — *not all accidentally*, be assured.



**sin no more**, etc. — a glimpse this of the reckless life he had probably led *before* his thirty-eight years' infirmity had come upon him, and which not improbably had brought on, in the just judgment of God, his chronic complaint. Fearful illustration this of "the severity of God," but glorious manifestation of our Lord's insight into "what was in man."

**15. The man departed, and told**, etc. — little thinking how unwelcome his grateful and eager testimony would be. "The darkness received not the light which was pouring its rays upon it" (~~ROM~~ John 1:5,11) [OLSHAUSEN].

**16. because he had done these things on the sabbath day** — What to these hypocritical religionists was the doing of the most glorious and beneficent miracles, compared with the atrocity of doing them on the sabbath day! Having given them this handle, on purpose to raise the first public controversy with them, and thus open a fitting opportunity of laying His claims before them, He rises at once to the whole height of them, in a statement which for grandeur and terseness exceeds almost anything that ever afterwards fell from Him, at least to His enemies.

**17, 18. My Father worketh hitherto and I work** — The "*I*" is emphatic; "The creative and conservative activity of My Father has known no sabbath-cessation from the beginning until now, *and that is the law of My working.*"

**18. God was his Father** — literally, "His own [or peculiar] Father," (as in ~~ROM~~ Romans 8:32). The addition is their own, but a very proper one.

**making himself equal with God** — rightly gathering this to be His meaning, not from the mere words "My Father," but from His claim of right to act as His Father did in the like high sphere, and by the same law of ceaseless activity in that sphere. And as, instead of instantly disclaiming any such meaning — as He must have done if it was false — He positively sets His seal to it in the following verses, merely explaining how consistent such claim was with the prerogatives of His Father, it is beyond all doubt that we have here an assumption of *peculiar personal Sonship*, or participation in the Father's essential nature.

**19, 20. the Son can do nothing of himself** — that is, *apart from* and *in rivalry of* the Father, as they supposed. The meaning is, "The Son can have no separate *interest* or *action* from the Father."

**for what things**, etc. — On the contrary, "whatever the Father doeth that same doeth the Son,"

**likewise** — “in the like manner.” What claim to absolute equality with the Father could exceed this: not only to do “the same things,” but to do them *as the Father does them?*

**20. Father loveth ... and showeth him all**, etc. — As love has no concealments, so it results from the perfect fellowship and mutual endearment of the Father and the Son (see on ~~ROB~~ John 1:1; ~~ROB~~ John 1:18), whose interests are one, even as their nature, that the Father communicates to the Son all His counsels, and what has been thus shown to the Son is by Him executed in His mediatorial character. “With the Father, *doing* is *willing*; it is only the Son who *acts in Time*” [ALFORD]. Three things here are clear:

- (1) The *personal distinctions* in the Godhead.
- (2) Unity of *action* among the Persons results from unity of *nature*.
- (3) Their oneness of interest is no unconscious or involuntary thing, but a thing of glorious *consciousness, will, and love*, of which the Persons themselves are the proper Objects.

**show him greater things**, etc. — referring to what He goes on to mention (~~ROB~~ John 5:21-31), comprised in two great words, LIFE and JUDGMENT, which STIER beautifully calls God’s *Regalia*. Yet these, Christ says, the Father and He do in common.

**21-23. raiseth the dead and quickeneth them** — one act in two stages. This is His absolute prerogative as God.

**so the Son quickeneth them** — that is, raiseth up and quickeneth.

**whom he will** — not only *doing the same divine act*, but doing it *as the result of His own will*, even as the Father does it. This statement is of immense importance in relation to the miracles of Christ, distinguishing them from similar miracles of prophets and apostles, who as *human instruments* were employed to perform super-natural actions, while Christ did all as the Father’s *commissioned Servant* indeed, but *in the exercise of His own absolute right of action*.

**22. For the Father judgeth no man**, etc. — rather, “For neither doth the Father judge any man,” implying that the same “thing was meant in the former verse of the quickening of the dead” — both acts being done, not by the Father *and* the Son, as though twice done, but by the Father *through* the Son as His voluntary Agent.

**all judgment** — judgment in its most comprehensive sense, or as we should say, all *administration*.

**23. honor the Son as ... the Father** — As he who believes that Christ in the foregoing verses has given a true account of His relation to the Father must of necessity hold Him entitled to the same *honor* as the Father, so He here adds that it was the Father's express intention in making over all judgment to the Son, that men *should* thus honor Him.

**honoureth not the Father** — does not do it in fact, whatever he may imagine, and will be held as not doing it by the Father Himself, who will accept no homage which is not accorded to His own Son.

**24. believeth on him that sent me** — that is, believeth in Him as having sent Me. I have spoken of the Son's right not only to heal the sick but to raise from the dead, and quicken whom He will: And now I say unto you, *That life-giving operation has already passed upon all who receive My words as the Sent of the Father* on the great errand of mercy.

**hath everlasting life** — immediately on his believing (compare <sup>GRB</sup>John 3:18 <sup>GRB</sup>1 John 5:12,13).

**is passed** — “hath passed over”

**from death unto life** — What a transition! (Compare <sup>GRB</sup>1 John 3:14).

**25-29. The hour cometh** — in its whole fullness, at Pentecost.

**and now is** — in its beginnings.

**the dead** — the *spiritually* dead, as is clear from <sup>GRB</sup>John 5:28. Here He rises from the calmer phrase “hearing *his word*” (<sup>GRB</sup>John 5:24), to the grander expression, “hearing *the voice of the Son of God*,” to signify that as it finds men in a *dead* condition, so it carries with it a *resurrection-power*.

**shall live** — in the sense of <sup>GRB</sup>John 5:24.

**26. given to the Son**, etc. — Does this refer to the essential life of the Son before all time (<sup>GRB</sup>John 1:4) (as most of the Fathers, and OLSHAUSEN, STIER, ALFORD, etc., among the moderns), or to the purpose of God that this essential life should reside in the Person of the Incarnate Son, and be manifested thus to the world? [CALVIN, LUCKE, LUTHARDT, etc.] The question is as difficult as the subject is high. But as all that Christ says of His *essential* relation to the Father is intended to explain and exalt His *mediatorial* functions, so the one seems in our Lord's own mind and language mainly the starting-point of the other.

**27. because he is the Son of man** — This seems to confirm the last remark, that what Christ had properly in view was the indwelling of the Son's essential life in *humanity* as the great *theater* and *medium* of divine display, in both the great departments of His work — *life-giving* and *judgment*. The appointment of a Judge in our *own nature* is one of the most beautiful arrangements of divine wisdom in redemption.

**28. Marvel not at this** — this committal of all judgment to *the Son of man*.

**for the hour is coming** — He adds not in this case (as in <sup>4155</sup>John 5:25), “and now is,” because this was not to be till the close of the whole dispensation of mercy.

**29. resurrection of life** — that is, to life everlasting (<sup>4156</sup>Matthew 25:46).

**of damnation** — It would have been harsh to say “the resurrection of death,” though that is meant, for sinners rise *from death to death* [BENGEL]. The resurrection of both classes is an exercise of *sovereign authority*; but in the one case it is an act of *grace*, in the other of *justice*. (Compare <sup>4157</sup>Daniel 12:2, from which the language is taken). How awfully grand are these unfoldings of His dignity and authority from the mouth of Christ Himself! And they are all in the *third person*; in what follows He resumes the *first person*.

**30-32. of mine own self do nothing** — that is, apart from the Father, or in any interest than My own. (See on <sup>4158</sup>John 5:19).

**as I hear** — that is, “My judgments are all *anticipated* in the bosom of My Father, to which I have immediate access, and by Me only *responded to* and *reflected*. They cannot therefore err, as I live for one end only, to carry into effect the will of Him that sent Me.”

**31. If I ... witness of myself** — standing alone, and setting up any separate interest.

**32. There is another** — that is, *the Father*, as is plain from the connection. How brightly the distinction of the Persons shines out here!

**and I know that the witness**, etc. — “This is the Son's testimony to the Father's truth (see <sup>4159</sup>John 7:28 8:26,55). It testifies to the full consciousness on the part of the Son, even in the days of His humiliation, of the righteousness of the Father” [ALFORD]. And thus He cheered His spirit under the cloud of human opposition which was already gathering over His head.

**33-35. Ye sent unto John** — (See <sup><4019></sup>John 1:19, etc.).

**receive not testimony ... from man** — that is, depend not on human testimony.

**but ... that ye might be saved** — “I refer to him merely to aid your salvation.”

**35. He was a burning and a shining light** — literally, “*the* burning and shining lamp” (or torch): — that is, “the great light of his day.” Christ is never called by the humble word here applied to John — a *light-bearer* — studiously used to distinguish him from his Master, but ever *the Light* in the most absolute sense. (See on <sup><4006></sup>John 1:6).

**willing for a season** — that is, till they saw that it pointed whither they were not prepared to go.

**to rejoice in his light** — There is a play of irony here, referring to the hollow delight with which his testimony tickled them.

**36-38. I have greater witness** — rather, “The witness which I have is greater.”

**the works ... bear witness of me** — not simply as *miracles* nor even as a miracle of *mercy*, but these miracles, *as He did them*, with a *will* and a *power*, a *majesty* and a *grace* manifestly *His own*.

**37. the Father himself ... hath borne witness of me** — not referring, probably, to the voice of His baptism, but (as seems from what follows) to the testimony of the Old Testament Scripture [CALVIN, LUCKE, MEYER, LUTHARDT, etc.].

**neither heard his voice**, etc. — never recognized Him in this character. The words are “designedly mysterious, like many others which our Lord uttered” [STIER].

**38. not his word abiding in you** — passing now from the *Witness* to the *testimony* borne by Him in “the lively oracles” (<sup><4078></sup>Acts 7:38): both were alike strangers to their breasts, as was evidenced by their rejecting Him to whom all that witness was borne.

**39-42. Search the scriptures**, etc. — “In the Scriptures ye find your charter of eternal life; go search them then, and you will find that I am the Great Burden of their testimony; yet ye will not come to Me for that life eternal which you profess to find there, and of which they tell you I am the appointed Dispenser.” (Compare <sup><4471></sup>Acts 17:11,12). How touching and gracious are these last words! Observe here

(1) The honor which Christ gives to the Scriptures, as a record which all *have a right and are bound* to search — the reverse of which the Church of Rome teaches;

(2) The opposite extreme is, resting in the mere *Book* without *the living Christ*, to direct the soul to whom is its main use and chiefest glory.

**41. I receive not honor from men** — contrasting His own end with theirs, which was to obtain *human applause*.

**42. not the love of God in you** — which would inspire you with a single desire to know His mind and will, and yield yourselves to it, in spite of prejudice and regardless of consequences.

**43-47. if another shall come**, etc. — How strikingly has this been verified in the history of the Jews! “From the time of the true Christ to our time, sixty-four false Christs have been reckoned by whom they have been deceived” [BENGEL].

**44. How can ye believe**, etc. — (See on <sup>43RD</sup> John 5:40,41). The “*will not*” of <sup>43RD</sup> John 5:40, and “*cannot*” here are just different features of the same awful state of the human heart.

**45. Do not think I will accuse you to the Father** — “My errand hither is not to collect evidence to condemn you at God’s bar.”

*one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, etc. — “Alas! that will be too well done by another, and him the object of all your religious boastings — Moses,” here put for “*the Law*,” the basis of the Old Testament Scriptures.

**46. he wrote of me** — “an important testimony to the subject of the whole Pentateuch — ‘of Me’” [ALFORD].

**47. If ye believe not** — (See <sup>47GR</sup> Luke 16:31).

**his writings ... my words** — a remarkable contrast, not *absolutely* exalting Old Testament Scripture above His own words, but pointing to the office of those venerable documents to *prepare* Christ’s way, to the necessity universally felt for *documentary* testimony in revealed religion, and perhaps (as STIER adds) to the relation which the comparative “*letter*” of the Old Testament holds to the more flowing “*words*” of “*spirit and life*” which characterize the New Testament.

# CHAPTER 6

## JOHN 6:1-13.

### FIVE THOUSAND MIRACULOUSLY FED.

(See on <sup><406></sup>Mark 6:31-44).

**3. a mountain** — somewhere in that hilly range which skirts the east side of the lake.

**4. passover ... was nigh** — but for the reason mentioned (<sup><400></sup>John 7:1), Jesus kept away from it, remaining in Galilee.

## JOHN 6:14-21.

### JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA.

(Also see on <sup><406></sup>Mark 6:45-56).

**14, 15. that prophet** — (See on <sup><401></sup>John 1:21).

**15. departed ... to a mountain himself alone** —

(1) to *rest*, which He came to this “desert place” on purpose to do before the miracle of the loaves, but could not for the multitude that followed Him (see <sup><406></sup>Mark 6:31); and

(2) “to pray” (<sup><402></sup>Matthew 14:23 <sup><406></sup>Mark 6:46). But from His mountain-top He kept watching the ship (see on <sup><408></sup>John 6:18), and doubtless prayed both for them, and with a view to the new manifestation which He was to give them of His glory.

**16, 17. when even was come** — (See on <sup><405></sup>Mark 6:35).

**entered into a ship** — “constrained” to do so by their Master (<sup><402></sup>Matthew 14:22 <sup><406></sup>Mark 6:45), in order to put an end to the misdirected excitement in His favor (<sup><405></sup>John 6:15), into which the disciples themselves may have been somewhat drawn. The word “constrained” implies reluctance on their part, perhaps from unwillingness to part with their Master and embark at night, leaving Him alone on the mountain.

**went** — rather, “were proceeding.”

**toward Capernaum** — Mark says (<sup><4165></sup>Mark 6:45), “unto Bethsaida,” meaning “Bethsaida of Galilee” (<sup><6121></sup>John 12:21), on the west side of the lake. The place they left was of the same name (see on <sup><4162></sup>Mark 6:32).

**Jesus was not come to them** — They probably lingered in hopes of His still joining them, and so let the darkness come on.

**18, 19. sea arose**, etc. — and they were “now in the midst of it” (<sup><4149></sup>Matthew 14:24). Mark adds the graphic and touching particular, “He saw them toiling in rowing” (<sup><4168></sup>Mark 6:48), putting forth all their strength to buffet the waves and bear on against a head wind, but to little effect. He *saw* this from His mountain-top, and through the darkness of the night, for His heart was all with them; yet would He not go to their relief till His own time came.

**19. they see Jesus** — “about the fourth watch of the night” (<sup><4145></sup>Matthew 14:25 <sup><4168></sup>Mark 6:48), or between three and six in the morning.

**walking on the sea** — What Job (<sup><4008></sup>Job 9:8) celebrates as the distinguishing prerogative of GOD, “WHO ALONE spreadeth out the heavens, and TREADETH UPON THE WAVES OF THE SEA” — What AGUR challenges as GOD’s unapproachable prerogative, to “GATHER THE WIND IN HIS FISTS, AND BIND THE WATERS IN A GARMENT” (<sup><4004></sup>Proverbs 30:4) — lo! this is here done *in flesh*, by “THE SON OF MAN.”

**drawing nigh to the ship** — yet as though He “*would have passed by them*,” <sup><4168></sup>Mark 6:48 (compare <sup><4208></sup>Luke 24:28 <sup><4188></sup>Genesis 18:3:5 32:24-26).

**they were afraid** — “cried out for fear” (<sup><4149></sup>Matthew 14:26), “supposing it had been a spirit” (<sup><4169></sup>Mark 6:49). He would appear to them at first like a dark moving speck upon the waters; then as a human figure, but — in the dark tempestuous sky, and not dreaming that it could be their Lord — they take it for a spirit. (How often thus we miscall our chiefest mercies — not only thinking them distant when they are near, but thinking the best the worst!)

**20. It is I; be not afraid** — Matthew (<sup><4147></sup>Matthew 14:27) and Mark (<sup><4169></sup>Mark 6:50) give before these exhilarating words, that to them well-known one, “Be of good cheer!”

**21. willingly received him into the ship** — their first fears being now converted into wonder and delight.



**and immediately the ship was at the land** — This additional miracle, for as such it is manifestly related, is recorded here alone. Yet all that is meant seems to be that as the storm was suddenly calmed, so the little bark — propelled by the secret power of the Lord of Nature now sailing in it — glided through the now unruffled waters, and while they were wrapt in wonder at what had happened, not heeding their rapid motion, *was found* at port, to their still further surprise.

## JOHN 6:22-71.

### JESUS FOLLOWED BY THE MULTITUDES TO CAPERNAUM, DISCOURSES TO THEM IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF THE BREAD OF LIFE — EFFECT OF THIS ON TWO CLASSES OF THE DISCIPLES.

**22-24.** These verses are a little involved, from the Evangelist's desire to mention every circumstance, however minute, that might call up the scene as vividly to the reader as it stood before his own view.

**The day following** — the miracle of the loaves, and the stormy night; the day on which they landed at Capernaum.

**the people which stood on the other side of the sea** — not the whole multitude that had been fed, but only such of them as remained over night about the shore, that is, on the *east* side of the lake; for we are supposed to have come, with Jesus and His disciples in the ship, to the *west* side, to Capernaum.

**saw that there was none other boat there**, etc. — The meaning is, the people had observed that there had been only one boat on the east side where they were; namely, the one in which the disciples had crossed at night to the other, the west side, and they had also observed that Jesus had not gone on board that boat, but His disciples had put off without Him:

**23. Howbeit**, etc. — “Howbeit,” adds the Evangelist, in a lively parenthesis, “there came other boats from Tiberias” (which lay near the southwest coast of the lake), whose passengers were part of the multitude that had followed Jesus to the east side, and been miraculously fed; these boats were fastened somewhere (says the Evangelist)

**nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks** — thus he refers to the glorious “miracle of the loaves” — and now they were put in requisition to convey the people back again to the

west side. For when “the people saw that Jesus was not there, neither His disciples, they also took shipping [in these boats] and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.”

**25. when they had found him on the other side** — at Capernaum.

**they said**, etc. — astonished at His *being* there, and wondering *how* He could have accomplished it, whether by land or water, and *when* He came; for being quite unaware of His having walked upon the sea and landed with the disciples in the ship, they could not see how, unless He had traveled all night round the head of the lake alone, He could have reached Capernaum, and even then, how He could have arrived before themselves.

**26. Ye seek me**, etc. — Jesus does not put them through their difficulty, says nothing of His treading on the waves of the sea, nor even notices their question, but takes advantage of the favorable moment for pointing out to them how forward, flippant, and superficial were their views, and how low their desires. “Ye seek Me not because ye saw the miracles” — literally, “the *signs*,” that is, supernatural tokens of a higher presence, and a divine commission, “but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled.” From this He proceeds at once to that *other Bread*, just as, with the woman of Samaria, to that *other Water* (<sup>400</sup>John 4:9-15). We should have supposed all that follows to have been delivered by the wayside, or wherever they happened first to meet. But from <sup>400</sup>John 6:59 we gather that they had probably met about the door of the synagogue — “for that was the day in which they assembled in their synagogues” [LIGHTFOOT] — and that on being asked, at the close of the service, if He had any word of exhortation to the people, He had taken the two breads, the *perishing* and the *living* bread, for the subject of His profound and extraordinary discourse.

**27. which the Son of man** — taking that title of Himself which denoted His incarnate life.

**shall give unto you** — in the sense of <sup>400</sup>John 6:51.

**him hath God the Father sealed** — marked out and authenticated for that transcendent office, to impart to the world the bread of an everlasting life, and this in the character of “the Son of *man*.”

**28-31. What shall we do ... the works of God** — such works as God will approve. Different answers may be given to such a question, according to the *spirit* which prompts the inquiry. (See <sup>400</sup>Hosea 6:6-8 <sup>400</sup>Luke 3:12-14). Here our Lord, knowing whom He had to deal with, shapes His reply accordingly.

**29. This is the work of God** — That lies at the threshold of all acceptable obedience, being not only the prerequisite to it, but the proper spring of it — in that sense, the work of works, emphatically “*the work of God.*”

**30. What sign showest thou**, etc. — But how could they ask “a sign,” when many of them scarce a day before had witnessed such a “sign” as had never till then been vouchsafed to men; when after witnessing it, they could hardly be restrained from making Him a king; when they followed Him from the one side of the lake to the other; and when, in the opening words of this very discourse, He had chided them for seeking Him, “not because they *saw the signs,*” but for the loaves? The truth seems to be that they were confounded by the *novel claims* which our Lord had just advanced. In proposing to make Him a king, it was for far other purposes than dispensing to the world the bread of an everlasting life; and when He seemed to raise His claims even higher still, by representing it as the grand “work of God,” that they should believe *on Himself* as His Sent One, they saw very clearly that He was making a demand upon them beyond anything they were prepared to accord to Him, and beyond all that man had ever before made. Hence their question, “What dost Thou *work?*”

**31. Our fathers did eat manna**, etc. — insinuating the inferiority of Christ’s miracle of the loaves to those of Moses: “When Moses claimed the confidence of the fathers, ‘he gave them bread from heaven to eat’ — not for a few thousands, but for millions, and not once only, but daily throughout their wilderness journey.”

**32, 33. Moses gave you not**, etc. — “It was not Moses that gave you the manna, and even it was but from the lower heavens; ‘but *My Father* giveth you *the true bread,*’ and that ‘*from heaven.*’”

**33. For the bread of God is he**, etc. — This verse is perhaps best left in its own transparent grandeur — holding up the Bread Itself as *divine*, *spiritual*, and *eternal*; its ordained Fountain and essential Substance, “*Him who came down from heaven to give it*” (that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us, <sup>ROM</sup>1 John 1:2); and its designed objects, “*the world.*”

**34. Lord, evermore give us this bread** — speaking now with a certain reverence (as at <sup>ROM</sup>John 6:25), the perpetuity of the manna floating perhaps in their minds, and much like the Samaritan woman, when her eyes were but half opened, “Sir, give Me this water,” etc. (<sup>ROM</sup>John 4:15).

**35. I am the bread of life** — Henceforth the discourse is all *in the first person*, “I,” “Me,” which occur in one form or other, as STIER reckons, thirty-five times.

**he that cometh to me** — to obtain what the soul craves, and as the only all-sufficient and ordained source of supply.

**hunger ... thirst** — shall have conscious and abiding satisfaction.

**36. But ... ye have seen me, and believe not** — seen Him not in His mere bodily presence, but in all the majesty of His life, His teaching, His works.

**37-40. All that**, etc. — This comprehensive and very grand passage is expressed with a peculiar artistic precision. The opening general statement (~~407~~ John 6:37) consists of two members:

(1) “ALL THAT THE FATHER GIVETH ME SHALL COME TO ME” — that is, “Though ye, as I told you, have no faith in Me, My errand into the world shall in no wise be defeated; for all that the Father giveth Me shall infallibly come to Me.” Observe, what is *given* Him by the Father is expressed in the *singular* number and *neuter* gender — literally, “everything”; while those who *come* to Him are put in the *masculine* gender and *singular* number — “every one.” The *whole mass*, so to speak, is gifted by the Father to the Son as a *unity*, which the Son evolves, one by one, in the execution of His trust. So ~~408~~ John 17:2, “that He should give eternal life to *all that which* Thou hast given Him” [BENGEL]. This “*shall*” expresses the glorious *certainty* of it, the Father being pledged to see to it that the gift be no empty mockery.

(2) “AND HIM THAT COMETH TO MEI WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT.” As the former was the *divine*, this is just the *human* side of the same thing. True, the “coming” ones of the second clause are just the “given” ones of the first. But had our Lord merely said, “*When those* that have been given Me of My Father shall come to Me, I will receive them” — besides being very flat, the impression conveyed would have been quite different, sounding as if there were *no other laws in operation*, in the movement of sinners to Christ, but such as are wholly *divine* and *inscrutable* to us; whereas, though He does speak of it as a sublime certainty which men’s *refusals* cannot frustrate, He speaks of that certainty as taking effect only by men’s *voluntary advances* to Him and acceptance of Him — “Him that cometh to Me,” “whosoever will,” throwing the door wide open. Only it is not the simply *willing*, but the actually *coming*, whom He will not cast out; for the word here employed usually denotes *arrival*, as distinguished from the ordinary word, which rather expresses the *act of coming* (see ~~409~~ John 8:42, *Greek*), [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. “In no wise” is an emphatic negative, to meet the fears of the timid (as in ~~410~~ Revelation 21:27, to meet the presumption of the hardened). These, then, being the two

members of the general opening statement, what follows is meant to take in both,

**38. For I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will** — to play an independent part.

**but** — in respect to both the foregoing things, the *divine* and the *human* side of salvation.

**the will of Him that sent Me** — What this twofold will of Him that sent Him is, we are next sublimely told (<sup>Ⓡ169</sup>John 6:39,40):

**39. And this** — in the *first* place.

**is the will of Him that sent me, that of all** — everything.

**which He hath given Me** — (taking up the identical words of <sup>Ⓡ167</sup>John 6:37).

**I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day** — The meaning is not, of course, that He is charged to keep the objects entrusted to Him *as He received them*, so as they should merely suffer nothing in His hands. For as they were just “perishing” *sinner*s of Adam’s family, to let “nothing” of such “be lost,” but “raise them up at the last day,” must involve, *first*, giving His flesh for them (<sup>Ⓡ161</sup>John 6:51), that they “might not perish, but have everlasting life”; and *then*, after “keeping them from falling,” raising their sleeping dust in incorruption and glory, and presenting them, body and soul, perfect and entire, wanting nothing, to Him who gave them to Him, saying, “Behold I and the children which God hath given Me.” So much for the *first* will of Him that sent Him, the *divine* side of man’s salvation, whose every stage and movement is inscrutable to us, but infallibly certain.

**40. And this** — in the *second* place.

**is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him** — seeing the Son believeth on Him.

**may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day** — This is the *human* side of the same thing as in the foregoing verse, and answering to “*Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out*”; that is, I have it expressly in charge that everyone that so “beholdeth” (so vieweth) the Son as to believe on Him shall have everlasting life; and, that *none* of Him be lost, “I will raise him up at the last day.” (See on <sup>Ⓡ164</sup>John 6:54).

**41-46. Jews murmured** — muttered, not in our Lord’s hearing, but He knew it (<sup>Ⓡ168</sup>John 6:43 <sup>Ⓡ125</sup>John 2:25).

**he said, I am the bread**, etc. — Missing the sense and glory of this, and having no relish for such sublimities, they harp upon the “Bread from heaven.” “What can this mean? Do we not know all about Him — where, when, and of whom He was born? And yet He says He came down from heaven!”

**43, 44. Murmur not ... No man** — that is, Be not either startled or stumbled at these sayings; for it needs divine teaching to understand them, divine drawing to submit to them.

**44. can come to me** — in the sense of <sup><166></sup>John 6:35.

**except the Father which hath sent me** — that is, the Father *as the Sender of Me* and *to carry out the design of My mission*.

**draw him** — by an *internal* and *efficacious* operation; though by all the means of rational conviction, and in a way altogether consonant to their moral nature (<sup><200></sup>Song of Solomon 1:4 <sup><213></sup>Jeremiah 31:3 <sup><210></sup>Hosea 11:3,4).

**raise him up**, etc. — (See on <sup><166></sup>John 6:54).

**45. written in the prophets** — in <sup><254></sup>Isaiah 54:13 <sup><213></sup>Jeremiah 31:33,34; other similar passages may also have been in view. Our Lord thus falls back upon Scripture authority for this seemingly hard saying.

**all taught of God** — not by *external* revelation merely, but by *internal illumination*, corresponding to the “drawing” of <sup><166></sup>John 6:44.

**Every man therefore**, etc. — that is, who hath been thus efficaciously taught of Him.

**cometh unto me** — *with absolute certainty*, yet in the sense above given of “drawing”; that is, “As none can come to Me but as divinely drawn, so none thus drawn shall fail to come.”

**46. Not that any man hath seen**, etc. — Lest they should confound that “hearing and learning of the Father,” to which believers are admitted by divine *teaching*, with His own immediate access to Him, He here throws in a parenthetical explanation; stating, as explicitly as words could do it, how totally different the two cases were, and that only He who is “from God” hath this naked, immediate access to the Father. (See <sup><101></sup>John 1:18).

**47-51. He that believeth**, etc. — (See on <sup><166></sup>John 3:36; <sup><161></sup>John 5:24).

**48. I am the bread of life** — “As he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life, so I am Myself the everlasting *Sustenance* of that life.” (Repeated from <sup><166></sup>John 6:35).

**49. Your fathers** — of whom ye spake (<sup><46></sup>John 6:31); not “*ours*,” by which He would hint that *He* had a higher descent, of which they dreamt not [BENGEL].

**did eat manna ... and are dead** — recurring to their own point about the manna, as one of the noblest of the *ordained* preparatory illustrations of His own office: “Your fathers, ye say, ate manna in the wilderness; and ye say well, for so they did, *but they are dead* — even they whose carcasses fell in the wilderness did eat of that bread; the Bread whereof I speak cometh down from heaven, which the manna never did, that men, eating of it, may *live for ever*.”

**51. I am**, etc. — Understand, it is of MYSELF I now speak as the Bread from heaven; of ME if a man eat he shall live for ever; and “THE BREAD WHICH I WILL GIVE IS MY FLESH, WHICH I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.” Here, for the first time in this high discourse, our Lord explicitly introduces His sacrificial *death* — for only rationalists can doubt this not only as that which constitutes Him the Bread of life to men, but as THAT very element IN HIM WHICH POSSESSES THE LIFE-GIVING VIRTUE. — “From this time we hear no more (in this discourse) of “Bread”; this figure is dropped, and the reality takes its place” [STIER]. The words “I will *give*” may be compared with the words of institution at the Supper, “This is My body which is *given* for you” (<sup><42></sup>Luke 22:19), or in Paul’s report of it, “*broken* for you” (<sup><41></sup>1 Corinthians 11:24).

**52. Jews strove among themselves** — arguing the point together.

**How can**, etc. — that is, Give us His flesh to eat? Absurd.

**53-58. Except ye eat the flesh ... and drink the blood ... no life**, etc. — The harshest word He had yet uttered in their ears. They asked how it was *possible* to eat His flesh. He answers, with great solemnity, “It is *indispensable*.” Yet even here a thoughtful hearer might find something to temper the harshness. He says they must not only “eat His *flesh*” but “drink His *blood*,” which could not but suggest the idea of His *death* — implied in the separation of one’s flesh from his blood. And as He had already hinted that it was to be something very different from a *natural* death, saying, “My flesh I will give for the life of the world” (<sup><46></sup>John 6:51), it must have been pretty plain to candid hearers that He meant something above the gross idea which the bare terms expressed. And farther, when He added that they “had no *life* in them unless they thus ate and drank,” it was impossible they should think He meant that the *temporal* life they were then living was dependent on their eating and drinking, in this gross sense, His flesh and blood. Yet the whole statement was certainly confounding, and beyond doubt was meant to be so. Our Lord had told



them that in spite of all they had “seen” in Him, they “did not believe” (~~406~~ John 6:36). For *their* conviction therefore he does not here lay Himself out; but having the ear not only of them but of the more *candid and thoughtful* in the crowded synagogue, and the miracle of the loaves having led up to the most exalted of all views of His Person and Office, He takes advantage of their very difficulties and objections to announce, for all time, those most profound truths which are here expressed, regardless of the disgust of the unteachable, and the prejudices even of the most sincere, which His language would seem only designed to deepen. The *truth* really conveyed here is no other than that expressed in ~~416~~ John 6:51, though in more emphatic terms — that He Himself, in the virtue of His sacrificial death, is the spiritual and eternal life of men; and that unless men voluntarily appropriate to themselves this death, in its sacrificial virtue, so as to become the very life and nourishment of their inner man, they have no spiritual and eternal life at all. Not as if His death were the *only* thing of value, but it is what gives all else in Christ’s Incarnate Person, Life, and Office, their whole value *to us sinners*.

**54. Whoso eateth ... hath,** etc. — The former verse said that *unless* they partook of Him they had no life; this adds, that *whoever* does so “hath eternal life.”

**and I will raise him up at the last day** — For the *fourth* time this is repeated (see ~~406~~ John 6:39,40,44) — showing most clearly that the “eternal life” which such a man “hath” cannot be the same with the *future* resurrection life from which it is carefully distinguished each time, but a life communicated *here below* immediately on believing (~~416~~ John 3:36 5:24,25); and giving to *the resurrection of the body* as that which consummates the redemption of *the entire man*, a prominence which in the current theology, it is to be feared, it has seldom had. (See ~~412~~ Romans 8:23 ~~451~~ 1 Corinthians 15:1-58, throughout).

**56. He that eateth ... dwelleth in me and I in him** — As our food becomes incorporated with ourselves, so Christ and those who eat His flesh and drink His blood become spiritually *one life*, though *personally* distinct.

**57. As the living Father hath sent me** — to communicate His own life.

**and I live by the Father** — literally, “because of the Father”; My life and His being one, but Mine that of a *Son*, whose it is to be “*of the Father*.” (See ~~408~~ John 1:18 5:26).

**he that eateth me, ... shall live by me** — literally, “because of Me.” So that though *one spiritual life* with Him, “the Head of every man is Christ, as the head of Christ is God” (~~418~~ 1 Corinthians 11:3 3:23).



**58. This is that bread**, etc. — a sort of summing up of the whole discourse, on which let this one further remark suffice — that as our Lord, instead of softening down His figurative sublimities, or even putting them in naked phraseology, leaves the great truths of His Person and Office, and our participation of Him and it, enshrined for all time in those glorious forms of speech, so when we attempt to strip the truth of these figures, figures though they be, it goes away from us, like water when the vessel is broken, and our wisdom lies in raising our own spirit, and attuning our own ear, to our Lord's chosen modes of expression. (It should be added that although this discourse has nothing to do with the Sacrament of the Supper, the Sacrament has everything to do with it, as *the visible embodiment* of these figures, and, to the believing partaker, a *real*, yea, and the most lively and affecting participation of His flesh and blood, and nourishment thereby of the spiritual and eternal life, here below).

**59. These things said he in the synagogue** — which seems to imply that what follows took place after the congregation had broken up.

**60-65. Many ... of his disciples** — His pretty constant followers, though an outer circle of them.

**hard saying** — not merely harsh, but insufferable, as the word often means in the Old Testament.

**who can hear** — submit to listen to it.

**61, 62. Doth this offend ... What and if, etc.** — that is, “If ye are stumbled at what I have said, how will ye bear what I *now* say?” Not that His ascension itself would stumble them more than His death, but that after recoiling from the *mention* of the one, they would not be in a state of mind to take in the other.

**63. the flesh profiteth nothing** — Much of His discourse was *about* “flesh”; but flesh as such, mere flesh, could profit nothing, much less impart that *life* which the Holy Spirit alone communicates to the soul.

**the words that I speak ... are spirit and ... life** — The whole burden of the discourse is “*spirit*,” not mere flesh, and “*life*” in its highest, not its lowest sense, and the words I have employed are to be interpreted solely in that sense.

**64. But there are some**, etc. — that is, “But it matters little to some of you in what sense I speak, for ye believe not.” This was said, adds the Evangelist, not merely of the outer but of the inner circle of His disciples; for He knew the traitor, though it was not yet time to expose him.

**65. Therefore said I**, etc. — that is, “That was why I spoke to you of the necessity of divine teaching which some of you are strangers to.”

**except it were given him** — plainly showing that by the Father’s “drawing” (~~John~~ John 6:44) was meant an *internal* and *efficacious* operation, for in recalling the statement here He says, it must be “*given* to a man to come” to Christ.

**66-71. From that time, etc.** — or, in consequence of this. Those last words of our Lord seemed to have given them the finishing stroke — they could not stand it any longer.

**walked no more** — Many a journey, it may be, they had taken with Him, but now they gave Him up finally!

**67. the twelve** — the first time they are thus mentioned in this Gospel.

**Will ye also go away?** — Affecting appeal! Evidently Christ *felt* the desertion of Him even by those miserable men who could not abide His statements; and seeing a disturbance even of the *wheat* by the violence of the wind which blew away the *chaff* (not yet visibly showing itself, but open to His eyes of fire), He would *nip it in the bud* by this home question.

**68. Then Simon Peter** — whose forwardness in this case was noble, and to the wounded spirit of His Lord doubtless very grateful.

**Lord, to whom**, etc. — that is, “We cannot deny that *we* have been staggered as well as they, and seeing so many go away who, as we thought, might have been retained by teaching a little less hard to take in, our own endurance has been severely tried, nor have we been able to stop short of the question, Shall *we* follow the rest, and give it up? But when it came to this, our light returned, and our hearts were reassured. For as soon as we thought of going away, there arose upon us that awful question, ‘To WHOM shall we go?’ To the lifeless formalism and wretched traditions of the elders? to the gods many and lords many of the heathen around us? or to blank unbelief? Nay, Lord, we are shut up. *They* have none of that ‘ETERNAL LIFE’ to offer us whereof Thou hast been discoursing, in words rich and ravishing as well as in words staggering to human wisdom. That life we cannot want; that life we have learnt to crave as a necessity of the deeper nature which Thou hast awakened: ‘*the words* of that eternal life’ (the authority to *reveal* it and the power to confer it). Thou hast: Therefore will we stay with Thee — *we must*.”

**69. And we believe**, — (See on ~~John~~ Matthew 16:16). Peter seems to have added this not merely — probably not so much — as an assurance *to his Lord* of his heart’s belief in Him, as for the purpose of fortifying *himself*

and his faithful brethren against that *recoil* from his Lord's harsh statements which he was probably struggling against with difficulty at that moment. *Note.* — There are seasons when one's faith is tried to the utmost, particularly by speculative difficulties; the spiritual eye then swims, and all truth seems ready to depart from us. At such seasons, a clear perception that to abandon the faith of Christ is *to face black desolation, ruin and death*; and on recoiling from this, to be able to fall back, not merely on *first principles and immovable foundations*, but on *personal experience of a Living Lord in whom all truth is wrapt up and made flesh for our very benefit* — this is a relief unspeakable. Under that blessed Wing taking shelter, until we are again fit to grapple with the questions that have staggered us, we at length either find our way through them, or attain to a calm satisfaction in the discovery that they lie beyond the limits of present apprehension.

**70. Have not I chosen ... and one of you is a devil:** — “Well said, Simon-Barjonas, but that ‘we’ embraces not so wide a circle as in the simplicity of thine heart thou thinkest; for though I have chosen you but twelve, one even of these is a ‘devil’” (the temple, the tool of that wicked one).

# CHAPTER 7

## JOHN 7:1-53.

### CHRIST AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

**1, 2. After these things** — that is, *all that is recorded after* <sup><618></sup>John 5:18.

**walked in Galilee** — continuing His labors there, instead of going to Judea, as might have been expected.

**sought to kill him** — referring back to <sup><618></sup>John 5:18. *Hence it appears that our Lord did not attend the Passover mentioned in* <sup><618></sup>John 6:4 — being the *third* since His ministry began, if the feast mentioned in <sup><618></sup>John 5:1 was a Passover.

**2. feast of tabernacles ... at hand** — This was the last of the three annual festivals, celebrated on the fifteenth of the seventh month (September). (See <sup><623></sup>Leviticus 23:33, etc. <sup><613></sup>Deuteronomy 16:13, etc. <sup><614></sup>Nehemiah 8:14-18).

**3-5. His brethren said** — (See on <sup><615></sup>Matthew 13:54-56).

**Depart ... into Judea**, etc. — In <sup><615></sup>John 7:5 this speech is ascribed to their *unbelief*. But as they were in the “upper room” among the one hundred and twenty disciples who waited for the descent of the Spirit after the Lord’s ascension (<sup><614></sup>Acts 1:14), they seem to have had their prejudices removed, perhaps after His resurrection. Indeed here their language is more that of strong prejudice and suspicion (*such as near relatives, even the best, too frequently show in such cases*), than from unbelief. There was also, probably, a tincture of *vanity* in it. “Thou hast many disciples in Judea; here in Galilee they are fast dropping off; it is not like one who advances the claims Thou dost to linger so long here, away from the city of our solemnities, where surely ‘the kingdom of our father David’ is to be set up: ‘seeking,’ as Thou dost, ‘to be known openly,’ those miracles of Thine ought not to be confined to this distant corner, but submitted at headquarters to the inspection of ‘the world.’” (See <sup><618></sup>Psalm 69:8, “I am become a stranger to *my brethren*, an alien unto *my mother’s children*.”)

**6-10. My time is not yet come** — that is, for showing Himself to the world.

**your time is always ready** — that is “It matters little when we go up, for ye have no great plans in life, and nothing hangs upon your movements. With Me it is otherwise; on every movement of Mine there hangs what ye know not. The world has no quarrel with you, for ye bear no testimony against it, and so draw down upon yourselves none of its wrath; but I am here to lift up My voice against its hypocrisy, and denounce its abominations; therefore it cannot endure Me, and one false step might precipitate its fury on its Victim’s head before the time. Away, therefore, to the feast as soon as it suits you; I follow at the fitting moment, but ‘My time is not yet full come.’”

**10. then went he ... not openly** — not “in the (caravan) company” [MEYER]. See on ~~4014~~ Luke 2:44.

**as it were in secret** — rather, “in a manner secretly”; perhaps by some other route, and in a way not to attract notice.

**11-13. Jews** — the rulers.

**sought him** — for no good end.

**Where is He?** — He had not been at Jerusalem for probably *a year and a half*.

**12. much murmuring** — buzzing.

**among the people** — the multitudes; the natural expression of a Jewish writer, indicating without design the crowded state of Jerusalem at this festival [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**a good man ... Nay ... deceiveth the people** — the two opposite views of His claims, that they were *honest*, and that they were an *imposture*.

**13. none spake openly of him** — that is, in His favor, “for fear of the [ruling] Jews.”

**14, 15. about the midst of the feast** — the fourth or fifth day of the eight, during which it lasted.

**went up into the temple and taught** — The word denotes *formal* and *continuous teaching*, as *distinguished* from mere casual sayings. This was probably *the first time* that He did so thus openly in Jerusalem. He had kept back till the feast was half through, to let the stir about Him subside, and entering the city unexpectedly, had begun His “teaching” at the temple, and created a certain awe, before the wrath of the rulers had time to break it.

**15. How knoweth ... letters** — learning (~~4015~~ Acts 26:24).

**having never learned** — at any rabbinical school, as Paul under Gamaliel. These rulers knew well enough that He had not *studied* under any human teacher — an important admission against ancient and modern attempts to trace our Lord's wisdom to human sources [MEYER]. Probably His teaching on this occasion was *expository*, manifesting that unrivalled faculty and depth which in the Sermon on the Mount had excited the astonishment of all.

**16-18. doctrine ... not mine**, etc. — that is, from Myself unauthorized; I am here by commission.

**17. If any man will do his will**, etc. — “is willing,” or “wishes to do.”

**whether ... of God, or ... of myself** — from above or from beneath; is divine or an imposture of Mine. A principle of immense importance, showing, on the one hand, that *singleness of desire to please God is the grand inlet to light on all questions vitally affecting one's eternal interests*, and on the other, that *the want of his*, whether perceived or not, *is the chief cause of infidelity amidst the light of revealed religion*.

**18. seeketh his own glory** — (See on ~~RB~~ John 5:41-44).

**19, 20. Did not Moses**, etc. — that is, In opposing Me ye pretend zeal for Moses, but to the spirit and end of that law which he gave ye are total strangers, and in “going about to kill Me” ye are its greatest enemies.

**20. The people answered, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?** — This was said by *the multitude*, who as yet had no bad feeling to Jesus, and were not in the secret of the plot hatching, as our Lord knew, against Him.

**21-24. I have done one work**, etc. — Taking no notice of the popular appeal, as there were those there who knew well enough what He meant, He recalls His cure of the impotent man, and the murderous rage it had kindled (~~RB~~ John 5:9,16,18). It may seem strange that He should refer to an event a year and a half old, as if but newly done. But their present attempt “to kill Him” brought up the past scene vividly, not only to Him, but without doubt to them, too, if indeed they had ever forgotten it; and by this fearless reference to it, exposing their hypocrisy and dark designs, He gave His position great moral strength.

**22. Moses ... gave unto you circumcision**, etc. — Though servile work was forbidden on the sabbath, the circumcision of males on that day (which certainly was a servile work) was counted no infringement of the Law. How much less ought fault to be found with One who had made a man “every whit whole” — or rather, “a man's entire body whole” — on the

sabbath-day? What a testimony to the reality of the miracle, none daring to meet the bold appeal.

**24. Judge not**, etc. — that is, Rise above the *letter* into the *spirit* of the law.

**25-27. some of them of Jerusalem** — the citizens, who, knowing the long-formed purpose of the rulers to put Jesus to death, wondered that they were now letting Him teach openly.

**26. Do the rulers know**, etc. — Have they got some new light in favor of His claims?

**27. Howbeit we know this man**, etc. — This seems to refer to some current opinion that Messiah's origin would be mysterious (not *altogether* wrong), from which they concluded that Jesus could not be He, since they knew all about His family at Nazareth.

**28, 29. cried Jesus** — in a louder tone, and more solemn, witnessing style than usual.

**Ye both**, etc. — that is, “Yes, ye know both Myself and My local parentage, and (yet) I am not come of Myself.”

**but he that sent me is true**, etc. — Probably the meaning is, “He that sent Me is the only *real* Sender of any one.”

**30-32. sought to take ... none laid hands** — their *impotence* being equal to their *malignty*.

**31. When Christ cometh, will he**, etc. — that is, If this be not the Christ, what can the Christ do, when He does come, which has not been anticipated and eclipsed by this man? This was evidently the language of friendly persons, overborne by their spiteful superiors, but unable to keep quite silent.

**32. heard that the people murmured** — that mutterings to this effect were going about, and thought it high time to stop Him if He was not to be allowed to carry away the people.

**33, 34. Yet a little while**, etc. — that is, “Your desire to be rid of Me will be for you all too soon fulfilled. Yet a little while and we part company — for ever; for I go whither ye cannot come: nor, even when ye at length seek Him whom ye now despise, shall ye be able to find Him” — referring not to any penitential, but to purely selfish cries in their time of desperation.

**35, 36. Whither will he go,** etc. — They cannot comprehend Him, but seem awed by the solemn grandeur of His warning. He takes no notice, however, of their questions.

**37-39. the last day, that great day of the feast** — the eighth (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>Leviticus 23:39). It was a sabbath, the last feast day of the year, and distinguished by very remarkable ceremonies. “The generally joyous character of this feast broke out on this day into loud jubilation, particularly at the solemn moment when the priest, as was done on every day of this festival, brought forth, in golden vessels, water from the stream of Siloah, which flowed under the temple-mountain, and solemnly poured it upon the altar. Then the words of <sup>Ⓢ</sup>Isaiah 12:3 were sung, *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of Salvation*, and thus the symbolical reference of this act, intimated in <sup>Ⓢ</sup>John 7:39, was expressed” [OLSHAUSEN]. So ecstatic was the joy with which this ceremony was performed — accompanied with sound of trumpets — that it used to be said, “Whoever had not witnessed it had never seen rejoicing at all” [LIGHTFOOT].

**Jesus stood** — On this high occasion, then, He who had already drawn all eyes upon Him by His supernatural power and unrivalled teaching — “JESUS stood,” probably in some elevated position.

**and cried** — as if making proclamation in the audience of all the people.

**If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink!** — What an offer! The deepest cravings of the human spirit are here, as in the Old Testament, expressed by the figure of “*thirst*,” and the eternal satisfaction of them by “*drinking*.” To the woman of Samaria He had said almost the same thing, and in the same terms (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>John 4:13,14). But what to her was simply affirmed to her as a *fact*, is here turned into a world-wide *proclamation*; and whereas there, the *gift* by Him of the living water is the most prominent idea — in contrast with her hesitation to give Him the perishable water of Jacob’s well — here, the prominence is given to *Himself* as the Well spring of all satisfaction. He had in Galilee invited all the WEARY AND HEAVY-LADEN of the human family to come under His wing and they should find REST (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>Matthew 11:28), which is just the same deep want, and the same profound relief of it, under another and equally grateful figure. He had in the synagogue of Capernaum (<sup>Ⓢ</sup>John 6:36) announced Himself, in every variety of form, as “the BREAD of Life,” and as both able and authorized to appease the “HUNGER,” and quench the “THIRST,” of all that apply to Him. There is, and there can be, nothing beyond that here. But what was on all those occasions uttered in private, or addressed to a provincial audience, is here sounded forth in the streets of the great religious metropolis, and in language of surpassing majesty, simplicity, and grace. *It is just Jehovah’s*



*ancient proclamation now sounding forth through human flesh*, “HO, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH, COME YE TO THE WATERS, AND HE THAT HATH NO MONEY!” etc. (<sup><2814></sup>Isaiah 55:1). In this light we have but two alternatives; either to say with Caiaphas of Him that uttered such words, “*He is guilty of death*,” or falling down before Him to exclaim with Thomas, “MY LORD AND MY GOD!”

**38. as the scripture hath said** — These words belong to what follows, “Out of his belly, as the scripture hath said, shall flow,” etc. referring not to any particular passage, but to such as <sup><2814></sup>Isaiah 58:11 <sup><2813></sup>Joel 3:18 <sup><3848></sup>Zechariah 14:8 <sup><3608></sup>Ezekiel 47:1-12; in most of which the idea is that of waters issuing from beneath the temple, to which our Lord compares Himself and those who believe in Him.

**out of his belly** — that is, his inner man, his soul, as in <sup><1017></sup>Proverbs 20:27.

**rivers of living water** — (See on <sup><4043></sup>John 4:13). It refers primarily to the *copiousness*, but indirectly also to the *diffusiveness*, of this living water to the good of others.

**39. this spake he of the Spirit** — who, by His direct personal agency, opens up this spring of living waters in the human spirit (<sup><4016></sup>John 3:6), and by His indwelling in the renewed soul ensures their *unfailing flow*.

**they that believe**, etc. — As the Holy Ghost is, in the redemption of man, entirely *at the service of Christ*, as His Agent, so it is *only in believing connection with Christ* that any one “receives” the Spirit.

**for the Holy Ghost was not yet given** — Beyond all doubt the word “given,” or some similar word, is the right supplement. In <sup><4017></sup>John 16:7 the Holy Ghost is represented not only as the *gift of Christ*, but a gift the communication of which was *dependent upon His own departure to the Father*. Now as Christ was *not yet gone*, so the Holy Ghost *was not yet given*.

**Jesus not yet glorified** — The word “*glorified*” is here used advisedly, to teach the reader not only that the *departure* of Christ to the Father was *indispensable* to the giving of the Spirit, but that this illustrious Gift, direct from the hands of the ascended Savior, was God’s intimation to the world that He whom it had cast out, crucified, and slain, was “His Elect, in whom His soul delighted,” and that it was through the smiting of that Rock that the waters of the Spirit — for which the Church was waiting, and with pomp at the feast of tabernacles proclaiming its expectation — had gushed forth upon a thirsty world.

**40-43. Many ... when they heard this ... said, Of a truth,** etc. — The only wonder is they did not all say it. “But their minds were blinded.”

**41. Others said, This is the Christ** — (See on ~~4023~~ John 1:21).

**Shall Christ come out of Galilee?**

**42. scripture said ... of the seed of David, and out of ... Bethlehem,** etc. — We accept this spontaneous testimony to our David-descended, Bethlehem-born Savior. Had those who gave it made the inquiry which the case demanded, they would have found that Jesus “came out of Galilee” (~~4074~~ John 7:41) and “out of Bethlehem” both, alike in fulfillment of prophecy as in point of fact. (~~4023~~ Matthew 2:23 4:13-16).

**44-49. would have taken him; but,** etc. — (See on ~~4074~~ John 7:30).

**45. Then came the officers** — “sent to take him” (~~4075~~ John 7:32).

**Why ... not brought him?** — already thirsting for their Victim, and thinking it an easy matter to seize and bring Him.

**46. Never man spake like this man** — Noble testimony of unsophisticated men! Doubtless they were strangers to the profound intent of Christ’s teaching, but there was that in it which by its mysterious grandeur and transparent purity and grace, held them spellbound. No doubt it was of God that they should so feel, that their arm might be paralyzed, as Christ’s hour was not yet come; but even in human teaching there has sometimes been felt such a divine power, that men who came to kill them (for example, ROWLAND HISS) have confessed to all that they were unmanned.

**47. ye also deceived** — In their own servants this seemed intolerable.

**48. any of the rulers or ... Pharisees believed** — “Many of them” did, including Nicodemus and Joseph, but not one of these had openly “confessed Him” (~~4023~~ John 12:42), and this appeal must have stung such of them as heard it to the quick.

**49. But this people** — literally, “multitude,” meaning the *ignorant rabble*. (Pity these important distinctions, so marked in the original of this Gospel, should not be also in our version.)

**knoweth not the law** — that is, by school learning, which only subverted it by human traditions.

**are cursed** — a cursed set (a kind of swearing at them, out of mingled rage and scorn).

**50-53. Nicodemus** — reappearing to us after nearly three years' absence from the history, as a member of the council, probably then sitting.

**51. Doth our law**, etc. — a very proper, but all too tame rejoinder, and evidently more from pressure of conscience than any design to pronounce *positively* in the case. "The feebleness of his defense of Jesus has a strong contrast in the fierceness of the rejoinders of the Pharisees" [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**52. thou of Galilee** — in this taunt expressing their scorn of the party. Even a word of caution, or the gentlest proposal to inquire before condemning, was with them equivalent to an espousal of the hated One.

**Search ... out of Galilee ... no prophet** — Strange! For had not *Jonah* (of Gath-hepher) and even *Elijah* (of Thisbe) arisen out of Galilee? And there it may be more, of whom we have no record. But rage is blind, and deep prejudice distorts all facts. Yet it looks as if they were afraid of losing Nicodemus, when they take the trouble to reason the point at all. It was just *because* he had "searched," as they advised him, that he went the length even that he did.

**53. every man went unto his own home** — *finding their plot could not at that time be carried into effect*. Is your rage thus impotent, ye chief priests?

# CHAPTER 8

## JOHN 8:1-11.

### THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

**1, 2. Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives** — This should have formed the last verse of the foregoing chapter. “The return of the people to the inert quiet and security of their *dwellings* (<sup><4073></sup>John 7:53), at the close of the feast, is designedly contrasted with our Lord’s *homeless* way, so to speak, of spending the short night, who is early in the morning on the scene again. One cannot well see why what is recorded in <sup><42137></sup>Luke 21:37,38 may not even thus early have taken place; it might have been the Lord’s ordinary custom from the beginning to leave the brilliant misery of the city every night, that so He might compose His sorrowful and interceding heart, and collect His energies for new labors of love; preferring for His resting-place Bethany, and the *Mount of Olives*, the scene thus consecrated by many preparatory prayers for His final humiliation and exaltation” [STIER].

**3-6. scribes and Pharisees** — foiled in their yesterday’s attempt, and hoping to succeed better in this.

**4, 5. woman ... in adultery ... Moses ... commanded ... should be stoned** — simply put to death (<sup><48222></sup>Deuteronomy 22:22), but in aggravated cases, at least in later times, this was probably by stoning (<sup><43640></sup>Ezekiel 16:40).

**but what sayest thou** — hoping, whatever He might answer, to put Him in the wrong: — if He said, Stone her, that would seem a stepping out of His province; if He forbade it, that would hold Him up as a relaxer of the public morals. But these cunning hypocrites were overmatched.

**6. stooped down** — It will be observed He was *sitting* when they came to Him.

**with his finger wrote on the ground** — The words of our translators in italics (“as though He heard them not”) have hardly improved the sense, for it is scarcely probable He could wish that to be thought. Rather He wished to show them His aversion to enter on the subject. But as this did not suit them, they “continue asking Him,” pressing for an answer. At last, raising Himself He said.

**7. He that is without sin** — not meaning sinless altogether; nor yet, guiltless of a literal breach of the Seventh Commandment; but probably, he whose conscience acquits him of *any such* sin.

**cast a stone** — “*the* stone,” meaning the first one (<sup><B7A></sup>Deuteronomy 17:7).

**8. again he stooped down and wrote** — The design of this second stooping and writing on the ground was evidently to give her accusers an opportunity to slink away unobserved *by Him*, and so avoid an exposure to His eye which they could ill have stood. Accordingly it is added.

**9. they ... convicted ... went out one by one ... Jesus was left alone** — that is, without one of her accusers remaining; for it is added.

**the woman in the midst** — that is, of the remaining audience. While the trap failed to catch Him for whom it was laid, it caught those who laid it. Stunned by the unexpected home thrust, they immediately made off — which makes the impudence of those impure hypocrites in dragging such a case before the public eye the more disgusting.

**10. Woman**, etc. — What inimitable tenderness and grace! Conscious of her own guilt, and till now in the hands of men who had talked of stoning her, wondering at the *skill* with which her accusers had been dispersed, and the *grace* of the few words addressed to herself, she would be disposed to listen, with a reverence and teachableness before unknown, to our Lord’s admonition. “And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.” He pronounces no pardon upon the woman (such as, “Thy sins are forgiven thee” [compare <sup><B7B></sup>Luke 5:28 7:48] — “Go in peace” [compare <sup><B7C></sup>Mark 5:34 <sup><B7D></sup>Luke 7:50 8:48]), much less does He say that she had done nothing condemnable; He simply leaves the matter where it was. He meddles not with the magistrate’s office, nor acts the *Judge* in any sense (<sup><B7E></sup>John 12:47). But in saying, “Go and sin no more,” which had been before said to one who undoubtedly believed (<sup><B7F></sup>John 5:14), more is probably implied than expressed. If brought suddenly to conviction of sin, admiration of her Deliverer, and a willingness to be admonished and guided by Him, this call to begin a new life may have carried with it what would ensure and naturally bring about a permanent change. (This whole narrative is wanting in some of the earliest and most valuable manuscripts, and those which have it vary to some extent. The internal evidence in its favor is almost overpowering. It is easy to account for its *omission*, though genuine; but if not so, it is next to impossible to account for its *insertion*).

## JOHN 8:12-59.

### FURTHER DISCOURSES OF JESUS — ATTEMPT TO STONE HIM.

**12. I am the light of the world** — As the former references to *water* (~~JOHN~~ John 4:13,14 7:37-39) and to *bread* (~~JOHN~~ John 6:35) were occasioned by outward occurrences, so this one to *light*. In “the treasury” where it was spoken (see on ~~JOHN~~ John 8:20) stood two colossal golden lamp-stands, on which hung a multitude of lamps, lighted after the evening sacrifice (probably every evening during the feast of tabernacles), diffusing their brilliancy, it is said, over all the city. Around these the people danced with great rejoicing. Now, as amidst the festivities of the *water* from Siloam Jesus cried, saying, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink,” so now amidst the blaze and the joyousness of this illumination, He proclaims, “I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD” — plainly in the most *absolute* sense. For though He gives His disciples the same title, they are only “light in the Lord” (~~EPH~~ Ephesians 5:8); and though He calls the Baptist “the burning and shining light” (or “*lamp*” of his day, ~~JOHN~~ John 5:35), yet “he was *not that Light*, but was sent to bear witness of that Light: that was THE TRUE LIGHT which, coming into the world, *lighteth every man*” (~~JOHN~~ John 1:8,9). Under this magnificent title Messiah was promised of old (~~ISAIAH~~ Isaiah 42:6 ~~MALACHI~~ Malachi 4:2, etc.).

**he that followeth me** — as one does a light going before him, and as the Israelites did the pillar of bright cloud in the wilderness.

**but shall have the light of life** — the light, as of a new world, a newly awakened spiritual and eternal life.

**13-19. bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true** — How does He meet this specious cavil? Not by disputing the wholesome human maxim that “self-praise is no praise,” but by affirming that He was *an exception to the rule*, or rather, that *it had no application to Him*.

**14. for I know whence I came, and whither I go**, etc. — (See on ~~JOHN~~ John 7:28).

**15. Ye judge after the flesh** — with no spiritual apprehension.

**I judge no man.**

**16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true**, etc. — Ye not only *form* your carnal and warped judgments of Me, but are bent on carrying them into effect; I, though I form and utter My judgment of you, am not here to

carry this into execution — that is reserved to a future day; yet the judgment I now pronounce and the witness I now bear is not Mine only as ye suppose, but His also that sent Me. (See on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 5:31,32). And these are the two witnesses to any fact which your law requires.

**20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury** — a division, so called, of the fore court of the temple, part of the court of the women [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 19.6.2, etc.], which may confirm the genuineness of <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 8:2-11, as the place where the woman was brought.

**no man laid hands on him**, etc. — (See on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 7:30). In the dialogue that follows, the conflict waxes sharper on both sides, till rising to its climax, they take up stones to stone him.

**21-25. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way**, etc. — (See on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 7:33).

**22. Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself?** — seeing something more in His words than before (<sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 7:35), but their question more malignant and scornful.

**23. Ye are from beneath; I am from above** — contrasting Himself, not as in <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 3:31, simply with *earthborn messengers of God*, but with *men sprung from and breathing an opposite element* from His, which rendered it impossible that He and they should have any present fellowship, or dwell eternally together. (Again see on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 7:33; also see on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 8:44).

**24. if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins** — They knew well enough what He meant (<sup>Ⓜ</sup>Mark 13:6, *Greek*; compare <sup>Ⓜ</sup>Matthew 24:5). But He would not, by speaking it out, give them the materials for a charge for which they were watching. At the same time, one is irresistibly reminded by such language, so far transcending what is becoming in *men*, of those ancient declarations of the God of Israel, “I AM HE” (<sup>Ⓜ</sup>Deuteronomy 32:39 <sup>Ⓜ</sup>Isaiah 43:10,13 46:4 48:12). See on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 6:20.

**25. Who art thou?** — hoping thus to extort an explicit answer; but they are disappointed.

**26, 27. I have many things to say and to judge of you; but he that sent me is true**, etc. — that is, I could, and at the fitting time, will say and judge many things of you (referring perhaps to the work of the Spirit which is for *judgment* as well as *salvation*, <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 16:8), but what I do say is just the message My Father hath given Me to deliver.

**28-30. When ye have lifted up the Son of man** — The plainest intimation He had yet given in *public* of *the manner and the authors* of His death.

then shall ye know that I am *he*, etc. — that is, *find out*, or have sufficient evidence, how true was all He said, though they would be far from owning it.

**29. the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him**, etc. — that is, To you, who gnash upon Me with your teeth, and frown down all open appearance for Me, I seem to stand uncoun tenanced and alone; but I have a sympathy and support transcending all human applause; I came hither to do My Father's will, and in the doing of it have not ceased to please Him; therefore is He ever by Me with His approving smile, His cheering words, His supporting arm.

**30. As he spake these words, many believed on him** — Instead of wondering at this, the wonder would be if words of such unearthly, surpassing grandeur *could* be uttered without captivating *some* that heard them. And just as "all that sat in the council" to try Stephen "*saw his face*" — though expecting nothing but death — "*as it had been the face of an angel*" (<sup>4165</sup>Acts 6:15), so may we suppose that, full of the sweet supporting sense of His Father's presence, amidst the rage and scorn of the rulers, a divine benignity beamed from His countenance, irradiated the words that fell from Him, and won over the candid "many" of His audience.

**31-33. Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed**, etc. — The impression produced by the last words of our Lord may have become visible by some decisive movement, and here He takes advantage of it to press on them "*continuance*" in the faith, since then only were they His real disciples (compare <sup>4183</sup>John 15:3-8), and then should they *experimentally* "know the truth," and "by the truth be made (*spiritually*) free."

**33. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man**, etc. — Who said this? Not surely the very class just spoken of as won over by His divine words, and exhorted to continue in them. Most interpreters seem to think so; but it is hard to ascribe such a petulant speech to the newly gained disciples, even in the lowest sense, much less persons *so* gained as they were. It came, probably, from persons mixed up with them in the same part of the crowd, but of a very different spirit. The *pride* of the Jewish nation, even now after centuries of humiliation, is the most striking feature of their character. "Talk of freedom to *us*? Pray when or to whom were we ever in bondage?" This bluster sounds almost ludicrous from such a nation. Had they forgotten their long and bitter bondage in Egypt? their dreary captivity in Babylon? their present



bondage to the Roman yoke, and their restless eagerness to throw it off? But probably they saw that our Lord pointed to something else — freedom, perhaps, from the leaders of sects or parties — and were not willing to allow their subjection even to these. Our Lord, therefore, though He knew what slaves they were in this sense, drives the ploughshare somewhat deeper than this, to a bondage they little dreamt of.

**34, 35. Whosoever committeth sin** — that is, *liveth in the commission* of it — (Compare <sup><408></sup>1 John 3:8 <sup><407></sup>Matthew 7:23).

**is the servant of sin** — that is, the *bond-servant*, or *slave* of it; for the question is not about free service, but who are in *bondage*. (Compare <sup><409></sup>2 Peter 2:19 <sup><416></sup>Revelation 6:16). The great truth here expressed was not unknown to heathen moralists; but it was applied only to vice, for they were total strangers to what in revealed religion is called *sin*. The thought of *slaves* and *freemen* in the house suggests to our Lord a wider idea.

**35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever** — that is, “And if your connection with the family of God be that of BOND-SERVANTS, ye have no *natural tie* to the house; your tie is essentially *uncertain and precarious*. But the SON’S relationship to the FATHER is a *natural and essential* one; it is an indefeasible tie; His abode in it is *perpetual* and *of right*: That is My relationship, My tie: If, then, ye would have your connection with God’s family made *real, rightful, permanent*, ye must by the Son be *manumitted* and *adopted* as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.” In this sublime statement there is no doubt a *subordinate* allusion to <sup><421></sup>Genesis 21:10, “*Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac.*” (Compare <sup><402></sup>Galatians 4:22-30).

**37-41. ye seek to kill me** — He had said this to their face before: He now repeats it, and they do not deny it; yet are they held back, as by some marvellous spell — it was the awe which His combined dignity, courage, and benignity struck into them.

**because my word hath no place in you** — When did ever *human prophet* so speak of His words? They tell us of “the word of the Lord” coming to them. But here is One who holds up “His word” as that which ought to find entrance and abiding room for itself in the souls of all who hear it.

**38. my Father ... your father** — (See on <sup><418></sup>John 8:23).

**39. If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham** — He had just said He “knew they were Abraham’s children,”

that is, according to the *flesh*; but the children of his *faith and holiness* they were not, but the reverse.

**40. this did not Abraham** — In so doing ye act in direct opposition to him.

**41. We be not born of fornication ... we have one Father, God** — meaning, as is generally allowed, that they were not an illegitimate race in point of *religion*, pretending only to be God's people, but were descended from His own chosen Abraham.

**42, 43. If God were your Father, ye would love me** — “If ye had anything of His moral image, as children have their father's likeness, ye would love Me, for I am immediately of Him and directly from Him.” But “My speech” (meaning His peculiar style of expressing Himself on these subjects) is unintelligible to you because ye cannot take in the truth which it conveys.

**44. Ye are of your father the devil** — “This is one of the most decisive testimonies to the *objective* (outward) *personality* of the devil. It is quite impossible to suppose an accommodation to Jewish views, or a metaphorical form of speech, in so solemn an assertion as this” [ALFORD].

**the lusts of your father** — his impure, malignant, ungodly propensities, inclinations, desires.

**ye will do** — are willing to do; not of any *blind necessity of nature*, but of *pure natural inclination*.

**He was a murderer from the beginning** — The reference is not to *Cain* (as LOCKE, DE WETTE, ALFORD, etc.), but to *Adam* [GROTIUS, CALVIN, MEYER, LUTHARDT, etc.]. The death of the human race, in its widest sense, is ascribed to the murderous seducer of our race.

**and abode not in the truth** — As, strictly speaking, the word means “abideth,” it has been denied that the *fall* of Satan from a former holy state is here expressed [LOCKE, etc.], and some superior interpreters think it only *implied* [OLSHAUSEN, etc.]. But though the *form* of the thought is present — not past — this is to express the important idea, that his whole character and activity are just *a continual aberration from his own original truth or rectitude*; and thus his fall is not only the *implied basis* of the thought, but *part of the statement itself*, properly interpreted and brought out.

**no truth in him** — void of all that holy, transparent rectitude which, as His creature, he originally possessed.

**When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own** — perhaps his own resources, treasures (<sup>4125</sup>Matthew 12:35) [ALFORD]. (The word is *plural*). It means that he has no temptation to it *from without*; it is purely *self-begotten*, springing from a nature which is nothing but obliquity.

**the father of it** — that is, of lying: all the falsehood in the world owes its existence to him. What a verse is this! It holds up the devil

(1) as the murderer of the human race; but as this is meant here in the more profound sense of *spiritual* death, it holds him up,

(2) as the spiritual parent of this fallen human family, communicating to his offspring his own evil passions and universal obliquity, and stimulating these into active exercise. But as there is “a stronger than he,” who comes upon him and overcomes him (<sup>4112</sup>Luke 11:21,22), it is only such as “love the darkness,” who are addressed as children of the devil (<sup>4138</sup>Matthew 13:38 <sup>4138</sup>1 John 3:8-10).

**45-47. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not** — not *although*, but just *because* He did so, for the reason given in the former verse. Had He been *less* true they would have hailed Him more readily.

**46. Which of you convinceth me of sin** — “Convicteth,” bringeth home a charge of sin. Glorious dilemma! “Convict Me of sin, and reject Me: If not, why stand ye out against My claims?” Of course, they could only be supposed to impeach His *life*; but in One who had already passed through unparalleled complications, and had continually to deal with friends and foes of every sort and degree, such a challenge thrown wide among His bitterest enemies, can amount to nothing short of a claim to *absolute sinlessness*.

**48-51. Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?** — What intense and virulent scorn! (See <sup>4818</sup>Hebrews 12:3). The “say we not well” refers to <sup>4812</sup>John 7:20. “A Samaritan” means more than “no Israelite at all”; it means one who *pretended, but had no manner of claim* to the title — retorting perhaps, this denial of their *true* descent from Abraham.

**49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil** — What calm dignity is here! Verily, “when reviled, He reviled not again” (<sup>4123</sup>1 Peter 2:23). Compare Paul (<sup>4065</sup>Acts 26:25), “I am not mad,” etc. He adds not, “Nor am I a Samaritan,” that He might not even seem to partake of their contempt for a race that had already welcomed Him as the Christ, and began to be blessed by Him.

**I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me** — the language of *wounded feeling*. But the *interior* of His soul at such moments is only to be seen in

such prophetic utterances as these, “For thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face; I am become a *stranger* unto my brethren, an alien unto my mother’s children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and *the reproaches of them that* reproached thee are fallen upon me” (<sup>490</sup>Psalm 69:7-9).

**50. I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh** — that is, evidently, “*that seeketh My glory*”; *requiring* “all men to honor the Son even as they honor the Father”; judicially *treating* him “who honoreth not the Son as honoring not the Father that hath sent Him” (<sup>483</sup>John 5:23; and compare <sup>476</sup>Matthew 17:5); but giving to Him (<sup>485</sup>John 6:37) such as will yet cast their crowns before His throne, in whom He “shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied” (<sup>481</sup>Isaiah 53:11).

**51. If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death** — Partly thus vindicating His lofty claims as Lord of the kingdom of life everlasting, and, at the same time, holding out even to His revilers the scepter of grace. The word “*keep*” is in harmony with <sup>488</sup>John 8:31, “If ye *continue* in My word,” expressing the permanency, as a living and paramount principle, of that faith to which He referred: “*never see death*,” though virtually uttered before (<sup>484</sup>John 5:24 6:40,47,51), is the strongest and most naked statement of a very glorious truth yet given. (In <sup>482</sup>John 11:26 it is repeated in nearly identical terms).

**52, 53. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil**, etc. — “Thou art now self-convicted; only a demoniac could speak so; the most illustrious of our fathers are dead, and Thou promisest exemption from death to anyone who will keep *Thy saying!* pray, who art Thou?”

**54-56. If I honor myself, my honor is nothing**, etc. — (See on <sup>488</sup>John 5:31, etc.).

**55. I shall be a liar like unto you** — now rising to the summit of holy, naked severity, thereby to draw this long dialogue to a head.

**56. Abraham rejoiced to see my day**, etc. — exulted, or exceedingly rejoiced that he should see, he exulted to see it, that is, by *anticipation*. Nay,

he saw *it*, and *was* glad — he *actually* beheld it, to his joy. If this mean no more than that he had a prophetic foresight of the gospel-day — the second clause just repeating the first — how could the Jews understand our Lord to mean that He “had seen Abraham?” And if it mean that Abraham was *then beholding*, in his disembodied spirit, the incarnate Messiah [STIER, ALFORD, etc.], the words seem very unsuitable to express it. It expresses

something *past* — “he *saw* My day, and *was* glad,” that is, surely *while he lived*. He seems to refer to the familiar intercourse which Abraham had with *God*, who is once and again in the history called “*the Angel of the Lord*,” and whom Christ here identifies with Himself. On those occasions, Abraham “saw ME” (OLSHAUSEN, though he thinks the reference is to some unrecorded scene). If this be the meaning, all that follows is quite natural.

**57-59. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old** — “No inference can be drawn from this as to the age of our Lord at the time as man. Fifty years was with the Jews the completion of manhood” [ALFORD].

**and hast thou seen Abraham?** — He had said Abraham saw *Him*, as being his peculiar privilege. They give the opposite turn to it — “Hast Thou seen *Abraham*?” as an honor too great for Him to pretend to.

**58. Before Abraham was, I am** — The words rendered “was” and “am” are quite different. The one clause means, “Abraham was *brought into being*”; the other, “*I exist*.” The statement therefore is not that *Christ came into existence before Abraham did* (as Arians affirm is the meaning), but that He never *came* into being at all, but *existed* before Abraham had a being; in other words, existed before *creation*, or *eternally* (as ~~CHRIST~~ John 1:1). *In that sense the Jews plainly understood Him*, since “then took they up stones to cast at Him,” *just as they had before done when they saw that He made Himself equal with God* (~~CHRIST~~ John 5:18).

**hid himself** — (See on ~~CHRIST~~ Luke 4:30).

# CHAPTER 9

## JOHN 9:1-41.

### THE OPENING OF THE EYES OF ONE BORN BLIND, AND WHAT FOLLOWED ON IT.

- 1-5. as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from birth** — and who “sat begging” (~~RB~~ John 9:8).
- 2. who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind** — not in a former state of existence, in which, as respects the wicked, the Jews did not believe; but, perhaps, expressing loosely that sin *somewhere* had surely been the cause of this calamity.
- 3. Neither ... this man**, etc. — The cause was neither in himself nor his parents, but, in order to the manifestation of “the works of God,” in his cure.
- 4. I must work the works of him that sent me**, etc. — a most interesting statement from the mouth of Christ; intimating,
- (1) that He had a precise work to do upon earth, with every particular of it arranged and laid out to Him;
  - (2) that all He did upon earth was just “the works of God” — particularly “going about *doing good*,” though not exclusively by miracles;
  - (3) that each work had its precise *time* and *place* in His programme of instructions, so to speak; hence,
  - (4) that as His period for work had definite termination, so by letting any one service pass by its allotted time, the whole would be disarranged, marred, and driven beyond its destined period for completion;
  - (5) that He acted ever under the impulse of these considerations, as man — “the night cometh when no man (or no one) can work.” What lessons are here for others, and what encouragement from such Example!

**5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world** — not as if He would cease, after that, to be so; but that He must make full proof of His fidelity while His earthly career lasted by displaying His glory. “As before the raising of Lazarus (<sup>41125</sup>John 11:25), He announces Himself as *the Resurrection and the Life*, so now He sets Himself forth as the source of the archetypal spiritual light, of which the natural, now about to be conferred, is only a derivation and symbol” [ALFORD].

**6, 7. he spat on the ground, and made clay ... and he anointed the eyes of the blind man** — These operations were not so incongruous in their nature as might appear, though it were absurd to imagine that they contributed in the least degree to the effect which followed. (See <sup>41063</sup>Mark 6:13 and see on <sup>41733</sup>John 7:33.)

**7. Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, ... Sent**, etc. — (See <sup>41502</sup>2 Kings 5:10,14). As the prescribed action was purely symbolical in its design, so in connection with it the Evangelist notices the symbolical name of the pool as in this case bearing testimony to him who was *sent* to do what it only *symbolized*. (See <sup>42186</sup>Isaiah 8:6, where this same pool is used figuratively to denote “the streams that make glad the city of God,” and which, humble though they be, betoken *a present God of Israel*.)

**8-15. The neighbors therefore ... said, Is not this he that sat and begged** — Here are a number of details to identify the newly seeing with the long-known blind beggar.

**13. They brought to the Pharisees** — sitting probably in council, and chiefly of that sect (<sup>41747</sup>John 7:47,48).

**16, 17. This man is not of God**, etc. — (See on <sup>41819</sup>John 5:9; <sup>41816</sup>John 5:16).

**Others said**, etc. — such as Nicodemus and Joseph.

**17. the blind man ... said, He is a prophet** — rightly viewing the miracle as but a “sign” of His prophetic commission.

**18-23. the Jews did not believe ... he had been born blind ... till they called the parents of him that had received his sight** — Foiled by the testimony of the young man himself, they hope to throw doubt on the fact by close questioning his parents, who, perceiving the snare laid for them, ingeniously escape it by testifying simply to the identity of their son, and his birth-blindness, leaving it to himself, as a competent witness, to speak as to the cure. They prevaricated, however, in saying they “knew not who had opened his eyes,” for “they feared the Jews,” who had come to an understanding (probably after what is recorded, <sup>41851</sup>John 7:50, etc. but by

this time well known), that whoever owned Him as the Christ would be put out of the synagogue — that is, not simply *excluded*, but *excommunicated*.

**24-34. Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner** — not wishing him to own, even to the praise of God, that a miracle had been wrought upon him, but to show more regard to the honor of God than ascribe any such act to one who was a sinner.

**25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, etc.** — Not that the man meant to insinuate any doubt in his own mind on the point of His being “a sinner,” but as his *opinion* on such a point would be of no consequence to others, he would speak only to what he *knew* as *fact* in his *own case*.

**26. Then said they ... again, What did he to thee?** etc. — hoping by repeated questions to ensnare him, but the youth is more than a match for them.

**27. I have told you already ... will ye also be his disciples?** — In a vein of keen irony he treats their questions as those of anxious inquirers, almost ready for discipleship! Stung by this, they retort upon *him* as the disciple (and here they plainly were not wrong); for themselves, they fall back upon Moses; about *him* there could be no doubt; but who knew about this upstart?

**30. The man answered, Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes** — He had no need to say another word; but waxing bolder in defense of his Benefactor, and his views brightening by the very courage which it demanded, he puts it to them how they could pretend inability to tell whether one who opened the eyes of a man born blind was “of God” or “a sinner” — from above or from beneath — and proceeds to argue the case with remarkable power. So irresistible was his argument that their rage burst forth in a speech of intense Pharisaism, “Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?” — *thou*, a base-born, uneducated, impudent youth, teach *us*, the trained, constituted, recognized guides of the people in the things of God! Out upon thee!

**31. they cast him out** — judicially, no doubt, as well in fact. The allusion to his being “born in sins” seems a tacit admission of his being blind from birth — the very thing they had been so unwilling to own. But rage and enmity to truth are seldom consistent in their outbreaks. The friends of this excommunicated youth, crowding around him with their sympathy, would probably express surprise that One who could work such a cure should be unable to protect his patient from the persecution it had raised against him,



or should possess the power without using it. Nor would it be strange if such thoughts should arise in the youth's own mind. But if they did, it is certain, from what follows, that they made no lodgment there, conscious as he was that "whereas he was blind, now he saw," and satisfied that if his Benefactor "were not of God, He could do nothing" (<sup><183></sup>John 9:33). There was a word for him too, which, if whispered in his ear from the oracles of God, would seem expressly designed to describe his case, and prepare him for the coming interview with his gracious Friend. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word. *Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; BUT HE SHALL APPEAR TO YOUR JOY, and they shall be ashamed*" (<sup><216></sup>Isaiah 66:5). But how was He engaged to whom such noble testimony had been given, and for whom such persecution had been borne? Uttering, perhaps, in secret, "with strong crying and tears," the words of the prophetic psalm, "Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let none that seek Thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel; because for Thy sake I have borne reproach ... and the reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen upon me" (<sup><199></sup>Psalms 69:6,7,9).

**35-38. Jesus heard** — that is, by intelligence brought Him.

**that they had cast him out; and when he had found him** — by accident? Not very likely. Sympathy in that breast could not long keep aloof from its object.

**he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?** — A question stretching purposely beyond his present attainments, in order the more quickly to lead him — in his present teachable frame — into the highest truth.

**36. He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?** — "His reply is affirmative, and believing by anticipation, promising faith as soon as Jesus shall say who He is" [STIER].

**37. Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him** — the new sense of sight having at that moment its highest exercise, in gazing upon "the Light of the world."

**38. he said, Lord, I believe: and he worshipped him** — a *faith* and a *worship*, beyond doubt, meant to express far more than he would think proper to any human "prophet" (<sup><197></sup>John 9:17) — the unstudied, resistless expression, probably of SUPREME faith and adoration, though without the full understanding of what that implied.

**39-41. Jesus said** — perhaps at the same time, but after a crowd, including some of the skeptical and scornful rulers, had, on seeing Jesus talking with the healed youth, hastened to the spot.

**that they which see not might see**, etc. — rising to that *sight* of which the natural vision communicated to the youth was but the symbol. (See on ~~John~~ John 9:5, and compare ~~Luke~~ Luke 4:18).

**that they which see might be made blind** — judicially incapable of apprehending and receiving the truth, to which they have wilfully shut their eyes.

**40. Are we blind also?** — We, the constituted, recognized guides of the people in spiritual things? pride and rage prompting the question.

**41. If ye were blind** — wanted light to discern My claims, and only waited to receive it.

**ye should have no sin** — none of the guilt of shutting out the light.

**ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth** — Your claim to possess light, while rejecting Me, is that which seals you up in the guilt of unbelief.

# CHAPTER 10

## JOHN 10:1-21.

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

This discourse seems plainly to be a continuation of the closing verses of the ninth chapter. The figure was familiar to the Jewish ear (from <sup><220></sup>Jeremiah 23:1-40 <sup><240></sup>Ezekiel 34:1-31 <sup><300></sup>Zechariah 11:1-17, etc.). “This simple creature [the sheep] has this special note among all animals, that it quickly hears the voice of the shepherd, follows no one else, depends entirely on him, and seeks help from him alone — cannot help itself, but is shut up to another’s aid” [LUTHER in STIER].

**1, 2. He that entereth not by the door** — the legitimate way (without saying what that was, as yet).

**into the sheepfold** — the sacred enclosure of God’s true people.

**climbeth up some other way** — not referring to the assumption of ecclesiastical office without an external call, for those Jewish rulers, specially aimed at, had this (<sup><400></sup>Matthew 23:2), but to the want of a true spiritual commission, the seal of heaven going along with the outward authority; it is the assumption of the spiritual guidance of the people *without this* that is meant.

**2. he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep** — a true, divinely recognized shepherd.

**3. To him the porter openeth** — that is, *right of free access* is given, by order of Him to whom the sheep belong; for it is better not to give the allusion a more specific interpretation [CALVIN, MEYER, LUTHARDT].

**and the sheep hear his voice** — This and all that follows, though it admits of important *application* to every faithful shepherd of God’s flock, is in its direct and highest sense true only of “the great Shepherd of the sheep,” who in the first five verses seems plainly, under the simple character of a true shepherd, to be drawing His own portrait [LAMPE, STIER, etc.].

**7-14. I am the door of the sheep** — that is, *the way in* to the fold, with all blessed privileges, both for shepherds and sheep (compare <sup><540></sup>John 14:6 <sup><600></sup>Ephesians 2:18).

**8. All that ever came before me** — the false prophets; not as claiming the prerogatives of Messiah, but as perversers of the people from the way of life, all pointing to Him [OLSHAUSEN].

**the sheep did not hear them** — the instinct of their divinely taught hearts preserving them from seducers, and attaching them to the heaven-sent prophets, of whom it is said that “the Spirit of Christ was in them” (ⲁⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Peter 1:11).

**9. by me if any man enter in** — whether shepherd or sheep.

**shall be saved** — the great object of the pastoral office, as of all the divine arrangements towards mankind.

**and shall go in and out and find pasture** — *in*, as to a place of *safety* and *repose*; *out*, as to “green pastures and still waters” (ⲉⲣⲓⲡⲥ Psalm 23:2) for nourishment and refreshing, and all this only transferred to another clime, and enjoyed in another manner, at the close of this earthly scene (ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Revelation 7:17).

**10. I am come that they might have life, and ... more abundantly** — not merely to *preserve* but *impart* LIFE, and communicate it in rich and unfailing exuberance. What a claim! Yet it is only an echo of all His teaching; and He who uttered these and like words must be either a blasphemer, all worthy of the death He died, or “God with us” — there can be no middle course.

**11. I am the good shepherd** — emphatically, and, in the sense intended, exclusively so (ⲉⲥⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁ Isaiah 40:11 ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Ezekiel 34:23 37:24 ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Zechariah 13:7).

**the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep** — Though this may be said of literal shepherds, who, even for their brute flock, have, like David, encountered “the lion and the bear” at the risk of their own lives, and still more of faithful pastors who, like the early bishops of Rome, have been the foremost to brave the fury of their enemies against the flock committed to their care; yet here, beyond doubt, it points to the struggle which was to issue in the willing surrender of the Redeemer’s own life, to save His sheep from destruction.

**12. an hireling ... whose own the sheep are not** — who has no *property*, in them. By this He points to His own peculiar relation to the sheep, the same as His Father’s, the great Proprietor and Lord of the flock, who styles Him “My Shepherd, *the Man that is My Fellow*” (ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Zechariah 13:7), and though faithful under-shepherds are so in their Master’s interest, that they feel a measure of His own concern for their charge, the language is strictly applicable only to “the Son over His own house” (ⲉⲙⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ Hebrews 3:6).

**seeth the wolf coming** — not *the devil* distinctively, as some take it [STIER, ALFORD, etc.], but generally whoever comes upon the flock with hostile intent, in whatever form: though the wicked one, no doubt, is *at the bottom* of such movements [LUTHARDT].

**14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep** — in the peculiar sense of <sup>4129</sup>2 Timothy 2:19.

**am known of mine** — the soul's response to the voice that has inwardly and efficaciously called it; for of this mutual loving acquaintance ours is the *effect* of His. "The Redeemer's knowledge of us is the *active* element, penetrating us with His power and life; that of believers is the *passive* principle, the reception of His life and light. In this reception, however, an assimilation of the soul to the sublime object of its knowledge and love takes place; and thus an activity, though a derived one, is unfolded, which shows itself in obedience to His commands" [OLSHAUSEN]. From this mutual knowledge Jesus rises to another and loftier reciprocity of knowledge.

**15-18. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father** — What claim to absolute equality with the Father could exceed this? (See on <sup>4127</sup>Matthew 11:27).

**and I lay down my life for the sheep** — How sublime this, immediately following the lofty claim of the preceding clause! It is the riches and the poverty of "the Word made flesh" — one glorious Person reaching at once up to the Throne and down even to the dust of death, "that we might live through Him." A candid interpretation of the words, "*for the sheep*," ought to go far to establish the special relation of the vicarious death of Christ to the Church.

**16. other sheep I have ... not of this fold: them also I must bring** — He means the perishing Gentiles, *already His "sheep"* in the love of His heart and the purpose of His grace to "*bring them*" in due time.

**they shall hear my voice** — *This is not the language of mere foresight that they would believe, but the expression of a purpose to draw them to Himself by an inward and efficacious call, which would infallibly issue in their spontaneous accession to Him.*

**and there shall be one fold** — rather "one flock" (for the word for "fold," as in the foregoing verses, is quite different).

**17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life**, etc. — As the highest act of the Son's love to the Father was the laying down of His life for the sheep at His "commandment," so the Father's love to Him

as His *incarnate* Son reaches its consummation, and finds its highest justification, in that sublimest and most affecting of all acts.

**that I might take it again** — His resurrection-life being indispensable to the accomplishment of the fruit of His death.

**18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again** — It is impossible for language more plainly and emphatically to express the *absolute voluntariness* of Christ's death, such a voluntariness as it would be manifest presumption in any mere *creature* to affirm of his own death. It is beyond all doubt the language of One who was conscious that *His life was His own* (which no creature's is), and therefore His to surrender or retain *at will*. Here lay the glory of His sacrifice, that it was *purely* voluntary. The claim of "power to take it again" is no less important, as showing that His resurrection, though ascribed to the Father, in the sense we shall presently see, was nevertheless *His own assertion of His own right to life* as soon as the purposes of His voluntary death were accomplished.

**This commandment** — to "lay down His — life, that He might take it again."

**have I received of my Father** — So that Christ died at once by "command" of His Father, and by such a voluntary obedience to that command as has made Him (so to speak) infinitely dear to the Father. The *necessity* of Christ's death, in the light of these profound sayings, must be manifest to all but the superficial student.

**19-21. There was a division ... again among the Jews for these sayings** — the light and the darkness revealing themselves with increasing clearness in the separation of the teachable from the obstinately prejudiced. The one saw in Him only "a devil and a madman"; the other revolted at the thought that *such words* could come from one possessed, and sight be given to the blind by a demoniac; showing clearly that a deeper impression had been made upon them than their words expressed.

## JOHN 10:22-42.

### DISCOURSE AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION — FROM THE FURY OF HIS ENEMIES JESUS ESCAPES BEYOND JORDAN, WHERE MANY BELIEVE ON HIM.

**22, 23. it was ... the feast of the dedication** — celebrated rather more than *two months* after the feast of tabernacles, during which intermediate period our Lord seems to have remained in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. It was instituted by Jude Maccabeus, to commemorate the purification of the temple from the profanations to which it had been subjected by Antiochus Epiphanes 165 B.C., and kept for eight days, from the twenty-fifth Chisleu (December), the day on which Judas began the first joyous celebration of it (I Maccabees 4:52,56,59; and JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 7.7.7).

**it was winter** — implying some *inclemency*. Therefore,

**23. Jesus walked ... in Solomon's porch** — for shelter. This portico was on the east side of the temple, and JOSEPHUS says it was part of the original structure of Solomon [*Antiquities*, 20.9.7].

**24. Then came the Jews** — *the rulers*. (See on R1B John 1:19).

**How long dost thou make us to doubt?** — “hold us in suspense” (*Margin*).

**If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly** — But when the plainest *evidence* of it was resisted, what weight could a mere *assertion* of it have?

**25, 26. Jesus answered them, I told you** — that is, in substance, what I am (for example R1B John 7:37,38 8:12,35,36,58).

**26. ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said** — referring to the whole strain of the Parable of the Sheep, (R1B John 10:1, etc.).

**27-30. My sheep hear my voice**, etc. — (See on R1B John 10:8).

**28. I give unto them eternal life** — not “will give them”; for it is a present gift. (See on R1B John 3:36; R1B John 5:24). It is a very grand utterance, couched in the language of majestic authority.

**29. My Father, which gave them me** — (See on R1B John 6:37-39).

**is greater than all** — with whom no adverse power can contend. It is a general expression of an admitted truth, and what follows shows for what purpose it was uttered, “and none is able to pluck them out of My Father’s

hand.” The impossibility of true believers being lost, in the midst of all the temptations which they may encounter, does not consist in their fidelity and decision, but is founded upon the *power of God*. Here the doctrine of predestination is presented in its sublime and sacred aspect; there is a predestination of the holy, which is taught from one end of the Scriptures to the other; not, indeed, of such a nature that an “irresistible grace” *compels* the opposing will of man (of course not), but so that that will of man which receives and loves the commands of God is *produced* only by God’s grace (OLSHAUSEN — a testimony all the more valuable, being given in spite of *Lutheran* prejudice).

**30. I and my Father are one** — Our language admits not of the precision of the original in this great saying. “*Are*” is in the *masculine* gender — “we (two persons) are”; while “*one*” is *neuter* — “*one thing*.” Perhaps “*one interest*” expresses, as nearly as may be, the purport of the saying. There seemed to be some contradiction between His saying they had been given by His Father into *His own* hands, out of which they could not be plucked, and then saying that none could pluck them out of *His Father’s* hands, as if they had not been given out of them. “*Neither have they*,” says He; “though He has given them to Me, they are as much in His own almighty hands as ever — they *cannot be*, and when given to Me they are not, given away from Himself; for HE AND I HAVE ALL IN COMMON.” Thus it will be seen, that, though *oneness of essence* is not the precise thing here affirmed, that truth is *the basis of what is affirmed*, without which it would not be true. And AUGUSTINE was right in saying the “*We are*” condemns the *Sabellians* (who denied the *distinction of Persons* in the Godhead), while the “*one*” (as explained) condemns the *Arians* (who denied the unity of their essence).

**31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him** — and for precisely the same thing as before (⚡ John 8:58,59).

**32. Many good works have I showed you** — that is, works of pure benevolence (as in ⚡ Acts 10:38, “Who went about doing good,” etc.; see ⚡ Mark 7:37).

**from my Father** — not so much by His power, but as directly *commissioned by Him to do them*. This He says to meet the imputation of unwarrantable assumption of the divine prerogatives [LUTHARDT].

**for which of those works do ye stone me?** — “are ye stoning (that is, going to stone) me?”

**33. for a blasphemy** — whose legal punishment was stoning (⚡ Leviticus 24:11-16).



**thou, being a man** — that is, a man only.

**makest thyself God** — Twice before they understood Him to advance the same claim, and both times they prepared themselves to avenge what they took to be the insulted honor of God, as here, in the way directed by their law (<sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 5:18 8:59).

**34-36. Is it not written in your law** — in <sup>Ⓜ</sup>Psalm 82:6, respecting judges or magistrates.

**Ye are gods** — being the *official representatives* and *commissioned agents* of God.

**35, 36. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came ... Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest** — The whole force of this reasoning, which has been but in part seized by the commentators, lies in what is said of the two parties compared. The *comparison* of Himself with mere men, divinely commissioned, is intended to show (as NEANDER well expresses it) that the idea of a communication of the Divine Majesty to human nature was by no means foreign to the revelations of the Old Testament; but there is also a *contrast* between Himself and all merely human representatives of God — the one “*sanctified by the Father and sent into the world*”; the other, “*to whom the word of God (merely) came*,” which is expressly designed to prevent His being massed up with them as only one of many human officials of God. *It is never said of Christ* that “the word of the Lord came to Him”; whereas this is the well-known formula by which the divine commission, even to the highest of *mere men*, is expressed, as John the Baptist (<sup>Ⓜ</sup>Luke 3:2). The reason is that given by the Baptist himself (see on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 3:31). The contrast is between those “to whom the word of God came” — men of the earth, earthy, who were merely privileged to get a *divine message* to utter (if prophets), or a *divine office* to discharge (if judges) — and “Him whom (not being of the earth at all) *the Father sanctified* (or set apart), and *sent into the world*,” an expression *never used of any merely human messenger of God, and used only of Himself*.

**because, I said, I am the Son of God** — It is worthy of special notice that our Lord *had not said*, in so many words, that He was the Son of God, on this occasion. But He had said what beyond doubt amounted to it — namely, that He gave His sheep eternal life, and none could pluck them out of His hand; that He had got them from His Father, in whose hands, though given to Him, they still remained, and out of whose hand none could pluck them; and that they were *the indefeasible property of both*, inasmuch as “He and His Father were one.” Our Lord considers all this as just saying of Himself, “I am the Son of God” — *one nature* with Him,

yet mysteriously *of Him*. The parenthesis (~~40B~~ John 10:35), “and the Scripture cannot be broken,” referring to the terms used of magistrates in the eighty-second Psalm, has an important bearing on the *authority* of the living oracles. “The Scripture, as the expressed will of the unchangeable God, is itself unchangeable and indissoluble” [OLSHAUSEN]. (Compare ~~40B~~ Matthew 5:17).

**37-39. though ye believe not me, believe the works** — There was in Christ’s words, independently of any miracles, a self-evidencing truth, majesty and grace, which those who had any spiritual susceptibility were unable to resist (~~40B~~ John 7:46 8:30). But, for those who wanted this, “the works” were a mighty help. When these failed, the case was desperate indeed.

**that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him** — thus reiterating His claim to essential *oneness with the Father*, which He had only *seemed* to soften down, that He might calm their rage and get their ear again for a moment.

**39. Therefore they sought again to take him** — true to their original understanding of His words, for they saw perfectly well that He *meant* to “make Himself God” throughout all this dialogue.

**he escaped out of their hand** — (See on ~~40B~~ Luke 4:30; ~~40B~~ John 8:59).

**40-42. went away again beyond Jordan ... the place where John at first baptized** — (See on ~~40B~~ John 1:28).

**41. many resorted to him** — on whom the ministry of the Baptist had left permanent impressions.

**John did no miracle, but all things John spake of this man were true** — what they now heard and saw in Jesus only confirming in their minds the divinity of His forerunner’s mission, though unaccompanied by any of His Master’s miracles. And thus, “many believed on Him there.”

# CHAPTER 11

JOHN 11:1-46.

## LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD — THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS.

**1. of Bethany** — at the east side of Mount Olivet.

**the town of Mary and her sister Martha** — thus distinguishing it from the other Bethany, “beyond Jordan.” (See on ~~JOHN~~ John 1:28; ~~JOHN~~ John 10:40).

**2. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment**, etc. — This, though not recorded by our Evangelist till ~~JOHN~~ John 12:3, was so well known in the teaching of all the churches, according to our Lord’s prediction (~~MATTHEW~~ Matthew 26:13), that it is here alluded to by anticipation, as the most natural way of identifying her; and she is first named, though the younger, as the more distinguished of the two. She “anointed THE LORD,” says the Evangelist — led doubtless to the use of this term here, as he was about to exhibit Him illustriously as the *Lord of Life*.

**3-5. his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick** — a most womanly appeal, yet how reverential, to the known affection of her Lord for the patient. (See ~~JOHN~~ John 11:5,11). “Those whom Christ loves are no more exempt than others from their share of earthly trouble and anguish: rather are they bound over to it more surely” [TRENCH].

**4. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death** — to *result* in death.

**but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby** — that is, by this glory of God. (See *Greek*.) Remarkable language this, which from creature lips would have been intolerable. It means that the glory of GOD manifested in the resurrection of dead Lazarus would be shown to be the glory, *personally* and immediately, of THE SON.

**5. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus** — what a picture! — one that in every age has attracted the admiration of the whole Christian Church. No wonder that those miserable skeptics who have carped at the ethical system of the Gospel, as not embracing private friendships in the list

of its virtues, have been referred to the Savior's peculiar regard for this family as a triumphant refutation, if such were needed.

**6. When he heard he was sick, he abode two days still ... where he was** — at least twenty-five miles off. Beyond all doubt this was just to let things come to their worst, in order to display His glory. But how trying, meantime, to the faith of his friends, and how unlike the way in which love to a dying friend usually shows itself, on which it is plain that Mary reckoned. But the ways of *divine* are not as the ways of *human* love. Often they are the reverse. When His people are sick, in body or spirit; when their case is waxing more and more desperate every day; when all hope of recovery is about to expire — just then and therefore it is that “*He abides two days still in the same place where He is.*” Can they still hope against hope? Often they do not; but “this is their infirmity.” For it is His chosen style of acting. We have been well taught it, and should not *now* have the lesson to learn. From the days of Moses was it given sublimely forth as the character of His grandest interpositions, that “the Lord will judge His people and repent Himself for His servants” — *when He seeth that their power is gone* (~~4526~~ Deuteronomy 32:36).

**7-10. Let us go into Judea again** — He was now in Perea, “beyond Jordan.”

8. *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought, etc. — literally, “were (just) now seeking” “to stone thee” (~~4816~~ John 10:31).

**goest thou thither again?** — *to certain death*, as ~~4816~~ John 11:16 shows they thought.

**9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?** — (See on ~~4804~~ John 9:4). Our Lord's day had now reached its eleventh hour, and having till now “walked in the day,” He would not *mistime* the remaining and more critical part of His work, which would be as fatal, He says, as omitting it altogether; for “if a *man* (so He speaks, putting Himself under the same great law of duty as all other men — if a man) walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.”

**11-16. Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may wake him out of sleep** — Illustrious title! “*Our friend Lazarus.*” To *Abraham only* is it accorded in the Old Testament, and not till *after his death*, (~~4407~~ 2 Chronicles 20:7 ~~2408~~ Isaiah 41:8), to which our attention is called in the New Testament (~~3123~~ James 2:23). When Jesus came in the flesh, His forerunner applied this name, in a certain sense, to himself (~~4829~~ John 3:29); and into the same fellowship the Lord's chosen disciples are declared to have come (~~4853~~ John 15:13-15). “The phrase here employed, “our friend Lazarus,” means more

than “he whom *Thou* lovest” in <sup><610B></sup>John 11:3, for it implies that Christ’s affection was *reciprocated* by Lazarus” [LAMPE]. Our Lord had been told only that Lazarus was “sick.” But the change which his two days’ delay had produced is here tenderly alluded to. Doubtless, His spirit was all the while with His dying, and now dead “friend.” The symbol of “sleep” for *death* is common to all languages, and familiar to us in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, however, a higher meaning is put into it, in relation to believers in Jesus (see on <sup><5044></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:14), a sense hinted at, and clearly, in <sup><5175></sup>Psalms 17:15 [LUTHARDT]; and the “awaking out of sleep” acquires a corresponding sense far transcending bare resuscitation.

**12. if he sleep, he shall do well** — literally, “be preserved”; that is, recover. “Why then go to Judea?”

**14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead** — Says BENGEL beautifully, “Sleep is the death of the saints, in the language of heaven; but this language the disciples here understood not; incomparable is the generosity of the divine manner of discoursing, but such is the slowness of men’s apprehension that Scripture often has to descend to the more miserable style of human discourse; compare <sup><0161></sup>Matthew 16:11.”

**15. I am glad for your sakes I was not there** — This certainly implies that if He had been present, Lazarus would not have died; not because He could not have resisted the importunities of the sisters, but because, in presence of the personal Life, death could not have reached His friend [LUTHARDT]. “It is beautifully congruous to the divine decorum that in presence of the Prince of Life no one is ever said to have died” [BENGEL].

**that ye may believe** — This is added to explain His “gladness” at not having been present. His friend’s death, as such, could not have been to Him “joyous”; the sequel shows it was “grievous”; but *for them* it was safe (<sup><5181></sup>Philippians 3:1).

**16. Thomas, ... called Didymus** — or “the twin.”

**Let us also go, that we may die with him** — lovely spirit, though tinged with some sadness, such as reappears at <sup><6145></sup>John 14:5, showing the tendency of this disciple to take the *dark* view of things. On a memorable occasion this tendency opened the door to downright, though but momentary, unbelief (<sup><6185></sup>John 20:25). Here, however, though alleged by many interpreters there is nothing of the sort. He perceives clearly how this journey to Judea will end, as respects his Master, and not only sees in it peril to themselves, as they all did, but feels as if he could not and cared not to survive his Master’s sacrifice to the fury of His enemies. It was that kind

of affection which, living only in the light of its Object, cannot contemplate, or has no heart for life, without it.

**17-19. when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days** — If he died on the day the tidings came of his illness — and was, according to the Jewish custom, buried the same day (see JAHN'S *Archaeology*, and <sup><4113></sup>John 11:39 <sup><4115></sup>Acts 5:5,6,10) — and if Jesus, after two days' further stay in Perea, set out on the day following for Bethany, some ten hours' journey, that would make out the four days; the first and last being incomplete [MEYER].

**18. Bethany was nigh Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs** — rather less than two miles; mentioned to explain the visits of sympathy noticed in the following words, which the proximity of the two places facilitated.

**19. many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them** — Thus were provided, in a most natural way, so many witnesses of the glorious miracle that was to follow, as to put the fact beyond possible question.

**20-22. Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him** — true to the *energy* and *activity* of her character, as seen in <sup><4108></sup>Luke 10:38-42. (See on <sup><4108></sup>Luke 10:38-42).

**but Mary sat ... in the house** — equally true to her *placid* character. These undesigned touches not only charmingly illustrate the minute *historic fidelity* of both narratives, but their *inner harmony*.

**21. Then said Martha ... Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died** — As Mary afterwards said the same thing (<sup><4112></sup>John 11:32), it is plain they had made this very natural remark to each other, perhaps many times during these four sad days, and not without having their confidence in His love at times overclouded. Such trials of faith, however, are not peculiar to them.

**22. But I know that even now**, etc. — Energetic characters are usually sanguine, the rainbow of hope peering through the drenching cloud.

**whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee** — that is “even to the restoration of my dead brother to life,” for that plainly is her meaning, as the sequel shows.

**23-27. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again** — purposely expressing Himself in general terms, to draw her out.

**24. Martha said, ... I know that he shall rise again ... at the last day** — “But are we never to see him in life till then?”

**25. Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life** — “*The whole power to restore, impart, and maintain life, resides in Me.*” (See on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 1:4; <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 5:21). What higher claim to supreme divinity than this grand saying can be conceived?

**he that believeth in me, though ... dead ... shall he live** — that is, The believer’s death shall be swallowed up in life, and his life shall never sink into death. As death comes by sin, it is His to dissolve it; and as life flows through His righteousness, it is His to communicate and eternally maintain it (<sup>Ⓜ</sup>Romans 5:21). The temporary separation of soul and body is here regarded as not even interrupting, much less impairing, the new and everlasting life imparted by Jesus to His believing people.

**Believest thou this?** — Canst thou take this in?

**27. Yea, ... I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God**, etc. — that is, And having *such* faith in Thee, I can believe all which that comprehends. While she had a glimmering perception that Resurrection, in every sense of the word, belonged to the Messianic office and Sonship of Jesus, she means, by this way of expressing herself, to cover much that she felt her ignorance of — as no doubt belonging to Him.

**28-32. The Master is come and calleth for thee** — The narrative does not give us this interesting detail, but Martha’s words do.

**29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly** — affection for her Lord, assurance of His sympathy, and His hope of interposition, putting a spring into her distressed spirit.

**31. The Jews ... followed her ... to the grave** — Thus *casually* were provided witnesses of the glorious miracle that followed, *not prejudiced*, certainly, *in favor* of Him who wrought it.

**to weep there** — according to Jewish practice, for some days after burial.

**fell at his feet** — more impassioned than her sister, though her words were fewer. (See on <sup>Ⓜ</sup>John 11:21).

**33-38. When Jesus ... saw her weeping, and the Jews ... weeping ... he groaned in the spirit** — the tears of Mary and her friends acting sympathetically upon Jesus, and drawing forth His emotions. What a vivid and beautiful outcoming of His “real” humanity! The word here rendered “groaned” does not mean “sighed” or “grieved,” but rather “powerfully



checked his emotion” — made a visible effort to restrain those tears which were ready to gush from His eyes.

**and was troubled** — rather, “troubled himself” (*Margin*); referring probably to this visible difficulty of repressing His emotions.

**34. Where have ye laid him? ... Lord, come and see** — Perhaps it was to retain composure enough to ask this question, and on receiving the answer to proceed with them to the spot, that He checked Himself.

**35. Jesus wept** — This beautifully conveys the sublime brevity of the two original words; else “*shed tears*” might have better conveyed the difference between the word here used and that twice employed in <sup><613></sup>John 11:33, and there properly rendered “weeping,” denoting the loud wail for the dead, while that of Jesus consisted of *silent tears*. Is it for nothing that the Evangelist, some *sixty years* after it occurred, holds up to all ages with such touching brevity the sublime spectacle of *the Son of God in tears*? What a seal of His perfect oneness with us in the most redeeming feature of our stricken humanity! But was there nothing in those tears beyond sorrow for human suffering and death? Could these *effects* move Him without suggesting the *cause*? Who can doubt that in His ear every feature of the scene proclaimed that stern law of the Kingdom, “*The wages of sin is death*” (<sup><612></sup>Romans 6:23), and that this element in His visible emotion underlay all the rest?

**36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!** — We thank you, O ye visitors from Jerusalem, for this spontaneous testimony to the *human* tenderness of the Son of God.

**37. And** — rather, “But.”

**some ... said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man should not have died?** — The former exclamation came from the better-feeling portion of the spectators; this betokens a measure of suspicion. It hardly goes the length of attesting the miracle on the blind man; but “if (as everybody says) He did that, why could He not also have kept Lazarus alive?” As to the restoration of the dead man to life, they never so much as thought of it. But *this disposition to dictate to divine power, and almost to peril our confidence in it upon its doing our bidding, is not confined to men of no faith.*

**38. Jesus again groaning in himself** — that is, as at <sup><613></sup>John 11:33, checked or repressed His rising feelings, in the former instance, of sorrow, here of righteous indignation at their unreasonable unbelief; (compare <sup><612></sup>Mark 3:5) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. But here, too, struggling emotion



was deeper, now that His eye was about to rest on the spot where lay, in the still horrors of death, His “friend.”

**a cave** — the cavity, natural or artificial, of a rock. This, with the number of condoling visitors from Jerusalem, and the costly ointment with which Mary afterwards anointed Jesus at Bethany, all go to show that the family was in good circumstances.

**39-44. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone** — spoken to the attendants of Martha and Mary; for it was a work of no little labor [GROTIUS]. According to the Talmudists, it was forbidden to open a grave after the stone was placed upon it. Besides other dangers, they were apprehensive of legal impurity by contact with the dead. Hence they avoided coming nearer a grave than four cubits [MAIMONIDES in LAMPE]. But He who touched the leper, and the bier of the widow of Nain’s son, rises here also above these Judaic memorials of evils, every one of which He had come to roll away. *Observe here what our Lord did Himself, and what He made others do.* As Elijah himself repaired the altar on Carmel, arranged the wood, cut the victim, and placed the pieces on the fuel, but made the by-standers fill the surrounding trench with water, that no suspicion might arise of fire having been secretly applied to the pile (<sup><B180></sup>1 Kings 18:30-35); so our Lord would let the most skeptical see that, without laying a hand on the stone that covered His friend, He could recall him to life. But what could be done by human hand He orders to be done, reserving only to Himself what transcended the ability of all creatures.

**Martha, the sister of ... the dead** — and as such the proper guardian of the precious remains; the relationship being *here* mentioned to account for her venturing gently to remonstrate against their exposure, in a state of decomposition, to eyes that had loved him so tenderly in life.

**Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days** — (See on <sup><B117></sup>John 11:17). It is wrong to suppose from this (as LAMPE and others do) that, like the by-standers, she had not thought of his restoration to life. But the glimmerings of hope which she cherished from the first (<sup><B122></sup>John 11:22), and which had been brightened by what Jesus said to her (<sup><B123></sup>John 11:23-27), had suffered a momentary eclipse on the proposal to expose the now sightless corpse. *To such fluctuations all real faith is subject in dark hours.* (See, for example, the case of Job).

**40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?** — He had not said those very words, but this was the scope of all that He had uttered to her about His life-giving power (<sup><B123></sup>John 11:23,25,26); a gentle yet emphatic and most instructive rebuke: “Why doth the restoration of life, even to a

decomposing corpse, seem hopeless in the presence of the Resurrection and the Life? Hast thou yet to learn that ‘if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth?’“ (<sup><41923></sup>Mark 9:23).

**41. Jesus lifted up his eyes** — an expression marking His calm solemnity. (Compare <sup><670></sup>John 17:1).

**Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me** — rather, “hearest Me,” referring to a specific prayer offered by Him, probably on intelligence of the case reaching Him (<sup><6113></sup>John 11:3,4); for His living and loving oneness with the Father was maintained and manifested in the flesh, not merely by the spontaneous and uninterrupted outgoing of Each to Each in spirit, but by specific actings of faith and exercises of prayer about each successive case as it emerged. He prayed (says LUTHARDT well) not for what He wanted, but for the manifestation of what He had; and having the bright consciousness of the answer in the felt liberty to ask it, and the assurance that it was at hand, He gives thanks for this with a grand simplicity before performing the act.

**42. And** — rather, “Yet.”

**I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they might believe that thou hast sent me** — Instead of praying now, He simply gives thanks for answer to prayer offered ere He left Perea, and adds that His doing even this, in the audience of the people, was not from any doubt of the prevalency of His prayers in any case, but to show the people that *He did nothing without His Father, but all by direct communication with Him.*

**43, 44. and when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice** — On one other occasion only did He this — on the *cross*. His last utterance was a “loud cry” (<sup><4270></sup>Matthew 27:50). “He shall not cry,” said the prophet, nor, in His ministry, did He. What a sublime contrast is this “loud cry” to the magical “whisperings” and “mutterings” of which we read in <sup><2189></sup>Isaiah 8:19 29:4 (as GROTIUS remarks)! It is second only to the grandeur of that voice which shall raise all the dead (<sup><633></sup>John 5:28,29 <sup><5046></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**44. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go** — Jesus will no more do this Himself than roll away the stone. The one was the necessary *preparation* for resurrection, the other the necessary *sequel* to it. THE LIFE-GIVING ACT ALONE HE RESERVES TO HIMSELF. So *in the quickening of the dead to spiritual life, human instrumentality is employed first to prepare the way, and then to turn it to account.*

**45, 46. many ... which ... had seen ... believed ... But some ... went ... to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done** — the two classes which continually reappear in the Gospel history; nor is there ever any great work of God which does not produce both. “It is remarkable that on each of the three occasions on which our Lord raised the dead, a large number of persons was assembled. In two instances, the resurrection of the widow’s son and of Lazarus, these were all witnesses of the miracle; in the third (of Jairus’ daughter) they were necessarily cognizant of it. Yet this important circumstance is in each case only incidentally noticed by the historians, not put forward or appealed to as a proof of their veracity. In regard to this miracle, we observe a greater degree of preparation, both in the provident arrangement of events, and in our Lord’s actions and words than in any other. The preceding miracle (cure of the man born blind) is distinguished from all others by the open and formal investigation of its facts. And both these miracles, the most public and best attested of all, are related by John, who wrote long after the other Evangelists” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**47-54. What do we? for this man doeth many miracles** — “While we trifle, ‘this man,’ by His ‘many miracles,’ will carry all before Him; the popular enthusiasm will bring on a revolution, which will precipitate the Romans upon us, and our all will go down in one common ruin.” What a testimony to the reality of our Lord’s miracles, and their resistless effect, from His bitterest enemies!

**51. Caiaphas ... prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation** — He meant nothing more than that the way to prevent the apprehended ruin of the nation was to make a sacrifice of the Disturber of their peace. But in giving utterance to this suggestion of political expediency, he was so guided as to give forth a divine prediction of deep significance; and God so ordered it that it should come from the lips of the high priest for that memorable year, the recognized head of God’s visible people, whose ancient office, symbolized by the Urim and Thummim, was to decide in the last resort, all vital questions as the oracle of the divine will.

**52. and not for that nation only**, etc. — These are the Evangelist’s words, not Caiaphas’.

**53. they took council together to put him to death** — Caiaphas but expressed what the party was secretly wishing, but afraid to propose.

**Jesus ... walked no more openly among the Jews** — How could He, unless He had wished to die before His time?

**near to the wilderness** — of Judea.

**a city called Ephraim** — between Jerusalem and Jericho.

**55-57. passover ... at hand ... many went ... up ... before the passover, to purify themselves** — from any legal uncleanness which would have disqualified them from keeping the feast. This is mentioned to introduce the graphic statement which follows.

**56. sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple** — giving forth the various conjectures and speculations about the probability of His coming to the feast.

**that he will not come** — The form of this question implies the opinion that He *would* come.

**57. chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any knew where he were, he should show it, that they might take him** — This is mentioned to account for the conjectures whether He would come, in spite of this determination to seize Him.

# CHAPTER 12

## JOHN 12:1-11.

### THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY.

(See on <sup><106></sup>Matthew 26:6-13).

**1-8. six days before the passover** — that is, on the sixth day before it; probably after sunset on *Friday* evening, or the commencement of the Jewish *sabbath* preceding the passover.

**2. Martha served** — This, with what is afterwards said of Mary's way of honoring her Lord, is so true to the character in which those two women appear in <sup><108></sup>Luke 10:38-42, as to constitute one of the strongest and most delightful confirmations of the truth of both narratives. (See also on <sup><112></sup>John 11:20).

**Lazarus ... sat at the table** — “*Between the raised Lazarus and the healed leper* (Simon, <sup><148></sup>Mark 14:3), *the Lord probably sits as between two trophies of His glory*” [STIER].

**3. spikenard** — or pure *nard*, a celebrated aromatic (<sup><212></sup>Song of Solomon 1:12).

**anointed the feet of Jesus** — and “poured it on His head” (<sup><106></sup>Matthew 26:7 <sup><148></sup>Mark 14:3). The only use of this was to refresh and exhilarate — a grateful compliment in the East, amidst the closeness of a heated atmosphere, with many guests at a feast. Such was the form in which Mary's love to Christ, at so much cost to herself, poured itself out.

**4. Judas ... who should betray him** — For the reason why this is here mentioned, see on <sup><148></sup>Mark 14:11.

**5. three hundred pence** — about \$50.

**6. had the bag** — the purse.

**bare what was put therein** — not, bare it off by theft, though that he did; but simply, had charge of its contents, was treasurer to Jesus and the Twelve. How worthy of notice is this arrangement, by which an avaricious and dishonest person was not only taken into the number of the Twelve, but entrusted with the custody of their little property! The purposes which this

served are obvious enough; but it is further noticeable, that the remotest hint was never given to the eleven of His true character, nor did the disciples most favored with the intimacy of Jesus ever suspect him, till a few minutes before he voluntarily separated himself from their company — for ever!

**7. said Jesus, Let her alone, against the day of my burying hath she done this** — not that she thought of His burial, much less reserved any of her nard to anoint her dead Lord. But as the time was so near at hand when that office would have to be performed, *and she was not to have that privilege even alter the spices were brought for the purpose* (~~AKB~~ Mark 16:1), He lovingly regards it as done now.

**8. the poor always ... with you** — referring to ~~RSI~~ Deuteronomy 15:11.

**but me ... not always** — a gentle hint of His approaching departure. He adds (~~AKB~~ Mark 14:8), “*She hath done what she could,*” a noble testimony, embodying a principle of immense importance. “Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her” (~~AKB~~ Matthew 26:13 ~~AKB~~ Mark 14:9). “In the act of love done to Him she had erected to herself an eternal monument, as lasting as the Gospel, the eternal word of God. From generation to generation this remarkable prophecy of the Lord has been fulfilled; and even we, in explaining this saying of the Redeemer, of necessity contribute to its accomplishment” [OLSHAUSEN]. “Who but Himself had the power to ensure to any work of man, even if resounding in his own time through the whole earth, an imperishable remembrance in the stream of history? Behold once more here, the majesty of His royal judicial supremacy in the government of the world, in this, Verily I say unto you” [STIER]. Beautiful are the lessons here:

**(1) Love to Christ transfigures the humblest services.** All, indeed, who have themselves a heart value its least outgoings beyond the most costly mechanical performances; but how does it endear the Savior to us to find Him endorsing the principle as His own standard in judging of character and deeds!

What though in poor and humble guise Thou here didst sojourn, cottage-born,  
Yet from Thy glory in the skies Our earthly gold Thou didst not scorn.  
For Love delights to bring her best, And where Love is, that offering evermore is blest.  
Love on the Savior’s dying head Her spikenard drops unblam’d may pour,  
May mount His cross, and wrap Him dead In spices from the golden shore. KEBLE.

(2) Works of *utility* should never be set in opposition to the promptings of self-sacrificing *love*, and the sincerity of those who do so is to be suspected. Under the mask of concern for the poor at home, how many excuse themselves from all care of the perishing heathen abroad.

(3) Amidst conflicting duties, that which our “hand (*presently*) findeth to do” is to be preferred, and even a less duty *only to be done now* to a greater *that can be done at any time*.

(4) “If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (◀182▶ 2 Corinthians 8:12). — “She hath done what she could” (◀148▶ Mark 14:8).

(5) As Jesus beheld in spirit the universal diffusion of His Gospel, while His lowest depth of humiliation was only approaching, so He regards *the facts of His earthly history* as constituting *the substance of this Gospel*, and the relation of them as just the “preaching of this Gospel.” Not that preachers are to confine themselves to a bare narration of these facts, but that they are to make their whole preaching turn upon them as its grand center, and derive from them its proper vitality; all that goes before this in the Bible being but the *preparation* for them, and all that follows but the *sequel*.

**9-11.** Crowds of the Jerusalem Jews hastened to Bethany, not so much to see Jesus, whom they knew to be there, as to see dead Lazarus alive; and this, issuing in their accession to Christ, led to a plot against the life of Lazarus also, as the only means of arresting the triumphs of Jesus (see ▶129▶ John 12:19) — to such a pitch had these chief priests come of diabolical determination to shut out the light from themselves, and quench it from the earth!

## ◀122▶ JOHN 12:12-19.

### CHRIST'S TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

(See on ▶100▶ Matthew 21:1-9; and ▶109▶ Luke 19:29-36).

**12. On the next day** — the Lord's day, or Sunday (see on ▶171▶ John 12:1); the tenth day of the Jewish month Nisan, on which the paschal lamb was set apart to be “kept up until the fourteenth day of the same month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel were to kill it in the evening” (▶173▶ Exodus 12:3,6). Even so, from the day of this solemn entry

into Jerusalem, “Christ our Passover” was virtually set apart to be “sacrificed for us” (~~1~~1 Corinthians 5:7).

**16. when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him**, etc. — The Spirit, descending on them from the glorified Savior at Pentecost, opened their eyes suddenly to the true sense of the Old Testament, brought vividly to their recollection this and other Messianic predictions, and to their unspeakable astonishment showed them that they, and all the actors in these scenes, had been unconsciously fulfilling those predictions.

## ~~12~~JOHN 12:20-36.

### SOME GREEKS DESIRE TO SEE JESUS — THE DISCOURSE AND SCENE THEREUPON.

**20-22. Greeks** — Not Grecian Jews, but Greek proselytes to the Jewish faith, who were wont to attend the annual festivals, particularly this primary one, the Passover.

**The same came therefore to Philip ... of Bethsaida** — possibly as being from the same quarter.

**saying, Sir, we would see Jesus** — certainly in a far better sense than Zaccheus (~~19~~19 Luke 19:3). Perhaps He was then in that part of the temple court to which Gentile proselytes had no access. “These men from the *west* represent, at the end of Christ’s life, what the wise men from the *east* represented at its beginning; but those come to the cross of the King, even as these to His manger” [STIER].

**22. Philip ... telleth Andrew** — As follow townsmen of Bethsaida (~~14~~14 John 1:44), these two seem to have drawn to each other.

**Andrew and Philip tell Jesus** — The minuteness of these details, while they add to the graphic force of the narrative, serves to prepare us for something important to come out of this introduction.

**23-26. Jesus answered them, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified** — that is, They would see Jesus, would they? Yet a little moment, and they shall see Him so as now they dream not of. The middle wall of partition that keeps them out from the commonwealth of Israel is on the eve of breaking down, “and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men unto Me”; I see them “flying as a cloud, and as doves to their cotes” — a glorious event that will be for the Son of man, by



which this is to be brought about. It is His *death* He thus sublimely and delicately alluded to. Lost in the scenes of triumph which this desire of the Greeks to see Him called up before His view, He gives no direct answer to their petition for an interview, but sees the cross which was to bring them gilded with glory.

**24. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit** — The *necessity* of His death is here brightly expressed, and its proper operation and fruit — *life springing forth out of death* — imaged forth by a beautiful and deeply significant law of the vegetable kingdom. For a double reason, no doubt, this was uttered — to explain what he had said of His death, as the hour of His own glorification, and to sustain His own Spirit under the agitation which was mysteriously coming over it in the view of that death.

**25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal** — (See on <sup>4123</sup>Luke 9:24). Did our Lord mean to exclude Himself from the operation of the great principle here expressed — *self-renunciation, the law of self-preservation*; and its converse, *self-preservation, the law of self-destruction*? On the contrary, as He became Man to exemplify this fundamental law of the Kingdom of God in its most sublime form, so the very utterance of it on this occasion served to sustain His own Spirit in the double prospect to which He had just alluded.

**26. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: If any man serve me, him will my Father honor** — *Jesus here claims the same absolute subjection to Himself, as the law of men's exaltation to honor, as He yielded to the Father.*

**27, 28. Now is my soul troubled** — He means at the prospect of His death, just alluded to. Strange view of the Cross this, immediately after representing it as the hour of His glory! (<sup>4123</sup>John 12:23). But the two views naturally meet, and blend into one. It was the Greeks, one might say, that troubled Him. Ah! they shall see Jesus, but *to Him* it shall be a costly sight.

**and what shall I say?** — He is in a strait betwixt two. The death of the cross was, and could not but be, appalling to His spirit. But to shrink from absolute subjection to the Father, was worse still. In asking Himself, "What shall I say?" He seems as if thinking aloud, feeling His way between two dread alternatives, looking both of them sternly in the face, measuring, weighing them, in order that the choice actually made might be seen, *and even by himself the more vividly felt*, to be a profound, deliberate, spontaneous election.

**Father, save me from this hour** — To take this as a question — “Shall I say, Father, save me,” etc. — as some eminent editors and interpreters do, is unnatural and jejune. It is a real petition, like that in Gethsemane, “Let this cup pass from Me”; only whereas *there* He prefaces the prayer with an “If it be possible,” *here* He follows it up with what is tantamount to that — “Nevertheless for this cause came I unto this hour.” The sentiment conveyed, then, by the prayer, in both cases, is twofold:

(1) that only one thing could reconcile Him to the death of the cross — its being His Father’s will He should endure it — and

(2) that in this view of it He yielded Himself freely to it. *What He recoils from is not subjection to His Father’s will: but to show how tremendous a self-sacrifice that obedience involved*, He first asks the Father to save Him from it, and then signifies how perfectly He knows that He is there for the very purpose of enduring it. Only by letting these mysterious words speak their full meaning do they become intelligible and consistent. As for those who see *no bitter elements in the death of Christ* — nothing beyond mere dying — what can they make of such a scene? and when they place it over against the feelings with which thousands of His adoring followers have welcomed death for His sake, how can they hold Him up to the admiration of men?

**28. Father, glorify thy name** — by a present testimony.

**I have both glorified it** — referring specially to the voice from heaven at His *baptism*, and again at His *transfiguration*.

**and will glorify it again** — that is, in the yet future scenes of His still deeper necessity; although this promise was a present and sublime testimony, which would irradiate the clouded spirit of the Son of man.

**29-33. The people therefore that stood by, said, It thundered; others, An angel spake to him** — some hearing only a sound, others an articulate, but to them unintelligible voice.

**30. Jesus ... said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes** — that is, probably, to correct the unfavorable impressions which His momentary agitation and mysterious prayer for deliverance may have produced on the by-standers.

**31. Now is the judgment of this world** — the world that “crucified the Lord of glory” (~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 2:8), considered as a vast and complicated kingdom of Satan, breathing his spirit, doing his work, and involved in his doom, which Christ’s death by its hands irrevocably sealed.

**now shall the prince of this world be cast out** — How differently is that fast-approaching “hour” regarded in the kingdoms of darkness and of light! “The hour of relief; from the dread Troubler of our peace — how near it is! Yet a little moment, and the day is ours!” So it was calculated and felt in the one region. “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out,” is a somewhat different view of the same event. We know who was right. Though yet under a veil, He sees the triumphs of the Cross in unclouded and transporting light.

**32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me** — The “I” here is emphatic — I, taking the place of the world’s ejected prince. “If lifted up,” means not only *after that I have been lifted up*, but, *through the virtue of that uplifting*. And truly, the death of the Cross, in all its significance, revealed in the light, and borne in upon the heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost, possesses an attraction over the wide world — to civilized and savage, learned and illiterate, alike — which breaks down all opposition, assimilates all to itself, and forms out of the most heterogeneous and discordant materials a kingdom of surpassing glory, whose uniting principle is adoring subjection “to Him that loved them.” “Will draw all men ‘UNTO ME,’” says He. What lips could venture to utter such a word but His, which “dropt as an honeycomb,” whose manner of speaking was evermore in the same spirit of conscious equality with the Father?

**33. This he said, signifying what death he should die** — that is, “by being lifted up from the earth” on “the accursed tree” (~~John~~ John 3:14 8:28).

**34. We have heard out of the law** — the scriptures of the Old Testament (referring to such places as ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 89:28,29 110:4 ~~Daniel~~ Daniel 2:44 7:13,14).

**that Christ** — the Christ “endureth for ever.”

**and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up**, etc. — How can that consist with this “uplifting?” They saw very well both that He was holding Himself up as *the Christ* and *a Christ to die a violent death*; and as that ran counter to all their ideas of the Messianic prophecies, they were glad to get this seeming advantage to justify their unyielding attitude.

**35, 36. Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light**, etc. — Instead of answering their question, He warns them, with mingled majesty and tenderness, against trifling with their last brief opportunity, and entreats them to let in the Light while they have it in the midst of them, that they themselves might be “light in the Lord.” In this case, all the clouds which hung around His Person and Mission would

speedily be dispelled, while if they continued to hate the light, bootless were all His answers to their merely speculative or captious questions. (See on <sup><D133></sup>Luke 13:23).

**36. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them** — He who spake as never man spake, and immediately after words fraught with unspeakable dignity and love, had to “hide Himself” from His auditors! What then must *they* have been? He retired, probably to Bethany. (The parallels are: <sup><D117></sup>Matthew 21:17 <sup><D137></sup>Luke 21:37).

**37-41.** It is the manner of this Evangelist alone to record his own reflections on the scenes he describes; but here, having arrived at what was virtually the close of our Lord’s public ministry, he casts an affecting glance over the fruitlessness of His whole ministry on the bulk of the now doomed people.

**though he had done so many miracles** — The word used suggests their *nature* as well as *number*.

**38. That the saying of Esaias ... might be fulfilled** — This unbelief did not at all set aside the purposes of God, but, on the contrary, fulfilled them.

**39-40. Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, that they should not see,** etc. — That this expresses *a positive divine act*, by which those who wilfully close their eyes and harden their hearts against the truth are judicially *shut up* in their unbelief and impenitence, is admitted by all candid critics [as OLSHAUSEN], though many of them think it necessary to contend that this is in no way inconsistent with the liberty of the human will, which of course it is not.

**41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him** — a key of immense importance to the opening of Isaiah’s vision (<sup><2000></sup>Isaiah 6:1-13), and all similar Old Testament representations. “THE SON is the King Jehovah who rules in the Old Testament and appears to the elect, as in the New Testament THE SPIRIT, the invisible Minister of the Son, is the Director of the Church and the Revealer in the sanctuary of the heart” [OLSHAUSEN].

**42, 43. among the chief rulers also** — rather, “even of the rulers”; such as Nicodemus and Joseph.

**because of the Pharisees** — that is, the *leaders* of the sects; for they were of it themselves.

**put out of the synagogue** — See <sup><4102></sup>John 9:22,34.

**43. they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God** — “a severe remark, considering that several at least of these persons afterwards boldly confessed Christ. It indicates the displeasure with which God regarded their conduct at this time, and with which He continues to regard similar conduct” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**44-50. Jesus cried** — in a loud tone, and with peculiar solemnity. (Compare <sup>ⓇⓞⓈⓔ</sup> John 7:37).

**and said, He that believeth on me,** etc. — This seems to be a supplementary record of some weighty proclamations, for which there had been found no natural place before, and introduced here as a sort of *summary and winding up* of His whole testimony.

# CHAPTER 13

## JOHN 13:1-20.

### AT THE LAST SUPPER JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET — THE DISCOURSE ARISING THEREUPON.

**1. when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father** — On these beautiful euphemisms, see on ~~LUKE~~ Luke 9:31; ~~LUKE~~ Luke 9:51.

**having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end** — The meaning is, that on the very edge of His last sufferings, when it might have been supposed that He would be absorbed in His own awful prospects, He was so far from forgetting “His own,” who were to be left struggling “in the world” after He had “departed out of it to the Father” (~~JOHN~~ John 17:11), that in His care for them He seemed scarce to think of Himself save in connection with them: “Herein is love,” not only “enduring to the end,” but most affectingly manifested when, judging by a human standard, least to be expected.

**2. supper being ended** — rather, “being prepared,” “being served,” or, “going on”; for that it was not “ended” is plain from ~~JOHN~~ John 13:26.

**the devil having now** — or, “already.”

**put into the heart of Judas ... to betray him** — referring to the agreement he had *already* made with the chief priests (~~LUKE~~ Luke 22:3-6).

**3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,** etc. — This verse is very sublime, and as a preface to what follows, were we not familiar with it, would fill us with inexpressible surprise. An unclouded perception of His relation to the Father, the commission He held from Him, and His approaching return to Him, possessed His soul.

**4, 5. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments** — outer garments which would have impeded the operation of washing.

**and took a towel and girded himself** — assuming a servant’s dress.


**5. began to wash** — proceeded to wash. *Beyond all doubt the feet of Judas were washed,* as of all the rest.

**6-11. Peter saith ... Lord, dost thou wash my feet?** — Our language cannot bring out the intensely vivid contrast between the “*Thou*” and the “*my*,” which, by bringing them together, the original expresses, for it is not good English to say, “Lord, *Thou my* feet dost wash?” But *every word* of this question is emphatic. Thus far, and in the question itself, there was nothing but the most profound and beautiful astonishment at a condescension to him quite incomprehensible. Accordingly, though there can be no doubt that already Peter’s heart rebelled against it as a thing not to be tolerated, Jesus ministers no rebuke as yet, but only bids him wait a little, and he should understand it all.

**7. Jesus answered and said ... What I do thou knowest not now** — that is, Such condescension *does* need explanation; it *is* fitted to astonish.

**but thou shall know hereafter** — afterwards, meaning *presently*; though viewed as a general maxim, applicable to all dark sayings in God’s Word, and dark doings in God’s providence, these words are full of consolation.

**8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash,** etc. — more emphatically, “Never shalt Thou wash my feet”: that is, “That is an incongruity to which I can never submit.” How like the man!

**If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me** — What Peter could not submit to was, that the Master should serve His servant. But *the whole saving work of Christ was one continued series of such services, ending with and consummated by the most self-sacrificing and transcendent of all services: THE SON OF MAN CAME not to be ministered unto, but TO MINISTER, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.* (See on  Mark 10:45). If Peter then could not submit to let his Master go down so low as to wash his feet, *how should he suffer himself to be served by Him at all?* This is couched under the one pregnant word “wash,” which though applicable to the *lower* operation which Peter resisted, is the familiar scriptural symbol of that *higher* cleansing, which Peter little thought he was at the same time virtually putting from him. *It is not humility to refuse what the Lord deigns to do for us, or to deny what He has done,* but it is self-willed presumption — *not rare, however, in those inner circles of lofty religious profession and traditional spirituality, which are found wherever Christian truth has enjoyed long and undisturbed possession.* The truest humility is to receive reverentially, and thankfully to own, the gifts of grace.

**9. Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head** — that is, “To be severed from Thee, Lord, is death to me: If that be the meaning of my speech, I tread upon it; and if to be washed of Thee have such significance, then not my feet only, but hands, head, and all, be washed!” This artless expression of clinging, life-and-death attachment to Jesus, and

felt dependence upon Him for his whole spiritual well-being, compared with the similar saying in ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲃ~~ John 6:68,69 (see on ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲃ~~ John 6:68,69), furnishes such evidence of *historic verity* such as no thoroughly honest mind can resist.

**10. He that is washed** — in this *thorough* sense, to express which the word is carefully changed to one meaning to wash *as in a bath*.

**needeth not** — to be so washed any more.

**save to wash his feet** — needeth to do no more than wash his feet (and here the former word is resumed, meaning to wash *the hands or feet*).

**but is clean every whit** — as a whole. This sentence is singularly instructive. Of the *two cleansings*, the one points to that which takes place at the *commencement* of the Christian life, embracing *complete absolution from sin as a guilty state*, and *entire deliverance from it as a polluted life* (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲃ~~ Revelation 1:5 ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲃ~~ 1 Corinthians 6:11) — or, in the language of theology, *Justification* and *Regeneration*. This cleansing is effected *once for all*, and is never repeated. The other cleansing, described as that of “the feet,” is *such as one walking from a bath quite cleansed still needs, in consequence of his contact with the earth*. (Compare ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲃ~~ Exodus 30:18,19). It is the *daily* cleansing which we are taught to seek, when in the spirit of adoption we say, “Our Father which art in heaven ... *forgive us our debts*” (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲃ~~ Matthew 6:9,12); and, when burdened with the sense of manifold shortcomings — as what tender spirit of a Christian is not? — is it not a relief to be permitted thus to wash our feet after a day’s contact with the earth? This is not to call in question the completeness of our past justification. Our Lord, while graciously insisting on washing Peter’s feet, refuses to extend the cleansing farther, that the symbolical instruction intended to be conveyed might not be marred.

**and ye are clean** — in the first and *whole* sense. but not all-important, as showing that Judas, instead of being as true-hearted a disciple as the rest at first, and merely *falling away* afterwards — as many represent it — *never experienced that cleansing at all which made the others what they were*.

**12-15. Know ye what I have done?** — that is, its intent. The question, however, was put merely to summon their attention to His own answer.

**13. Ye call me Master** — Teacher.

**and Lord** — *learning* of Him in the one capacity, *obeying* Him in the other.



**and ye say well, for so I am** — The conscious dignity with which this claim is made is remarkable, following immediately on His laying aside the towel of service. Yet what is this whole history but a succession of such astonishing contrast from first to last?

**14. If I then** — the Lord.

**have washed your feet** — the servants’.

**ye** — but fellow servants.

**ought to wash one another’s feet** — not in the narrow sense of a literal washing, profanely caricatured by popes and emperors, but by the very humblest *real* services one to another.

**16, 17. The servant is not greater than his lord**, etc. — an oft-repeated saying (<sup><100B></sup>Matthew 10:24, etc.).

**If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them** — a hint that even among real Christians the *doing* of such things would come lamentably short of the *knowing*.

**18, 19. I speak not of you all** — the “happy *are* ye,” of <sup><100B></sup>John 13:17, being on no supposition applicable to Judas.

**I know whom I have chosen** — in the *higher* sense.

**But that the scripture may be fulfilled** — that is, one has been added to your number, by no accident or mistake, who is none of Mine, but just that he might fulfill his predicted destiny.

**He that eateth bread with me** — “did eat of *my bread*” (<sup><100B></sup>Psalm 41:9), as one of My family; admitted to the nearest familiarity of discipleship and of social life.

**hath lifted up his heel against me** — turned upon Me, adding *insult* to injury. (Compare <sup><100B></sup>Hebrews 10:29). In the Psalm the immediate reference is to Ahithophel’s treachery against David (<sup><100B></sup>2 Samuel 17:1-23), one of those scenes in which the parallel of his story with that of His great Antitype is exceedingly striking. “The eating bread derives a fearful meaning from the participation in the sacramental supper, a meaning which must be applied for ever to all unworthy communicants, as well as to all betrayers of Christ who eat the bread of His Church” (STIER, with whom, and others, we agree in thinking that Judas partook of the Lord’s Supper).

**19. I tell you before ... that when it comes to pass, ye may believe** — and it came to pass when they deeply needed such confirmation.

**20. He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me**, etc. — (See on <sup><100></sup>Matthew 10:40). The connection here seems to be that despite the dishonor done to Him by Judas, and similar treatment awaiting themselves, they were to be cheered by the assurance that their office, even as His own, was divine.

## <sup><100></sup>JOHN 13:21-30.

### THE TRAITOR INDICATED — HE LEAVES THE SUPPER ROOM.

**21. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, One of you shall betray me** — The announcement of <sup><100></sup>John 13:18 seems not to have been plain enough to be quite apprehended, save by the traitor himself. He will therefore speak it out in terms not to be misunderstood. But how much it cost Him to do this, appears from the “trouble” that came over His “spirit” — visible emotion, no doubt — before He got it uttered. What wounded susceptibility does this disclose, and what exquisite delicacy in His social intercourse with the Twelve, to whom He cannot, without an effort, break the subject!

**22. the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake** — Further intensely interesting particulars are given in the other Gospels:

(1) “They were exceeding sorrowful” (<sup><100></sup>Matthew 26:22).

(2) “They began to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing” (<sup><100></sup>Luke 22:23).

(3) “They began to say unto Him one by one, Is it I, and another, Is it I?” (<sup><100></sup>Mark 14:19). Generous, simple hearts! They abhorred the thought, but, instead of putting it on others, each was only anxious to purge *himself* and know if *he* could be the wretch. Their putting it at once to Jesus Himself, as knowing doubtless who was to do it, was the best, as it certainly was the most spontaneous and artless evidence of their innocence.

(4) Jesus, apparently while this questioning was going on, added, “The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born” (<sup><100></sup>Matthew 26:24).

(5) “Judas,” *last of all*, “answered and said, *Lord, is it I?*” evidently feeling that when all were saying this, if he held his peace, that of itself

would draw suspicion upon him. To prevent this the question is wrung out of him, but perhaps, amidst the stir and excitement at the table, in a half-suppressed tone as we are inclined to think the answer also was — “Thou hast said” (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 26:25), or possibly by little more than a sign; for from <sup><4138></sup>John 13:28 it is evident that till the moment when he went out, he was not openly discovered.

**23-26. there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved** — Thus modestly does our Evangelist denote himself, as reclining next to Jesus at the table.

**Peter ... beckoned to him to ask who it should be of whom he spake** — reclining probably at the corresponding place on the other side of Jesus.

**25. He then lying** — rather leaning over on Jesus’ bosom.


**saith** — *in a whisper*, “Lord, who is it?”

**26. Jesus answered** — *also inaudibly*, the answer being communicated to Peter perhaps from behind.

**He ... to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it** — a piece of the bread soaked in the wine or the sauce of the dish; one of the ancient ways of testifying peculiar regard; compare <sup><4138></sup>John 13:18, “*he that eateth bread with Me.*”

**And when he had dipped ... he gave it to Judas**, etc. — Thus the sign of Judas’ treachery was an affecting expression, and the last, of the Savior’s wounded love!

**27-30. after the sop Satan entered into him** — Very solemn are these brief hints of the successive steps by which Judas reached the climax of his guilt. “The devil had already put it into his heart to betray his Lord.” Yet who can tell what struggles he went through ere he brought himself to carry that suggestion into effect? Even after this, however, his compunctions were not at an end. With the thirty pieces of silver already in his possession, he seems still to have quailed — and can we wonder? When Jesus stooped to wash his feet, it may be the last struggle was reaching its crisis. But that word of the Psalm, about “one that ate of his bread who would lift up his heel against Him” (<sup><49109></sup>Psalm 41:9) probably all but turned the dread scale, and the still more explicit announcement, that one of those sitting with Him at the table should betray Him, would beget the thought, “I am detected; it is now too late to draw back.” At that moment the sop is given; offer of friendship is once more made — and how affectingly! But already “Satan has *entered into him*,” and though the Savior’s act might seem enough to recall him even yet, hell is now in his bosom, and he says within himself,

“The die is cast; now let me go through with it”; fear, begone!” (See on  Matthew 12:43).

**Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly** — that is, Why linger here? Thy presence is a restraint, and thy work stands still; thou hast the wages of iniquity, go work for it!


**28, 29. no man ... knew for what intent he spake this unto him ... some thought ... Jesus ... said ... But what we need ... or, ... give ... to the poor** — a very important statement, as showing how carefully. Jesus had kept the secret, and Judas his hypocrisy, to the last.

**30. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out** — severing himself *for ever* from that holy society with which he never had any spiritual sympathy.

**and it was night** — but far blacker night in the soul of Judas than in the sky over his head.

## JOHN 13:31-38.

### DISCOURSE AFTER THE TRAITOR’S DEPARTURE — PETER’S SELF-CONFIDENCE — HIS FALL PREDICTED.

**31. when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified** — These remarkable words plainly imply that up to this moment our Lord had spoken *under a painful restraint*, the presence of a traitor within the little circle of His holiest fellowship on earth preventing the free and full outpouring of His heart; as is evident, indeed, from those oft-recurring clauses, “Ye are not all clean,” “I speak not of you all,” etc. “Now” the restraint is removed, and the embankment which kept in the mighty volume of living waters having broken down, they burst forth in a torrent which only ceases on His leaving the supper room and entering on the next stage of His great work — the scene in the Garden. But with what words is the silence first broken on the departure of Judas? By no reflections on the traitor, and, what is still more wonderful, by no reference to the dread character of His own approaching sufferings. He does not even name them, save by announcing, as with a burst of triumph, that the hour of His *glory* has arrived! And what is very remarkable, in five brief clauses He repeats this word “glorify” *five times*, as if to His view a coruscation of glories played at that moment about the Cross. (See on  John 12:23).

**God is glorified in him** — the glory of Each reaching its zenith in the Death of the Cross!

**32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also** — in return and reward of this highest of all services ever rendered to Him, or capable of being rendered.

**glorify him in himself, and ... straightway glorify him** — referring now to the Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ *after* this service was over, including all the honor and glory then put upon Him, and that will for ever encircle Him as Head of the new creation.

**33-35. Little children** — From the height of His own glory He now descends, with sweet pity, to His “little children,” *all now His own*. This term of endearment, nowhere else used in the Gospels, and once only employed by Paul (<sup><4049></sup>Galatians 4:19), is appropriated by the beloved disciple himself, who no fewer than seven times employs it in his first Epistle.

**Ye shall seek me** — feel the want of Me.

**as I said to the Jews** — (<sup><4038></sup>John 7:34 8:21). But oh in what a different sense!

**34. a new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another** — This was the *new* feature of it. Christ’s love to His people in giving His life a ransom for them was altogether new, and consequently as a Model and Standard for theirs to one another. It is not, however, something transcending the great moral law, which is “the *old* commandment” (<sup><4011></sup>1 John 2:7, and see on <sup><4128></sup>Mark 12:28-33), but that law *in a new and peculiar form*. Hence it is said to be both *new* and *old* (<sup><4017></sup>1 John 2:7,8).

**35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples** — the disciples of Him who laid down His life for those He loved.

**if ye have love one to another** — for My sake, and as one in Me; for to *such* love men outside the circle of believers know right well they are entire strangers. Alas, how little of it there is even within this circle!

**36-38. Peter said** — seeing plainly in these directions how to behave themselves, that He was indeed going from them.

**Lord, whither guest thou?** — having hardly a glimmer of the real truth.

**Jesus answered, ... thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards** — How different from what He said to the Jews: “Whither I go ye *cannot come*” (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ John 8:21).

**37. why not ... now? I will lay down my life for thy sake** — He seems now to see that it was *death* Christ referred to as what would sever Him from them, but is not staggered at following Him thither. Jesus answered,

**38. Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?** — In this repetition of Peter’s words there is deep though affectionate irony, and this Peter himself would feel for many a day after his recovery, as he retraced the painful particulars.

**Verily ... The cock,** etc. — See on ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Luke 22:31-34.

# CHAPTER 14

JOHN 14:1-31.

## DISCOURSE AT THE TABLE, AFTER SUPPER.

We now come to that portion of the evangelical history which we may with propriety call its *Holy of Holies*. Our Evangelist, like a consecrated priest, alone opens up to us the view into this sanctuary. It is the record of the last moments spent by the Lord in the midst of His disciples before His passion, when words full of heavenly thought flowed from His sacred lips. All that His heart, glowing with love, had still to say to His friends, was compressed into this short season. At first (from ~~John~~ John 13:31) the intercourse took the form of conversation; sitting at table, they talked familiarly together. But when (~~John~~ John 14:31) the repast was finished, the language of Christ assumed a loftier strain; the disciples, assembled around their Master, listened to the words of life, and seldom spoke a word (only ~~John~~ John 16:17,29). “At length, in the Redeemer’s sublime intercessory prayer, His full soul was poured forth in express petitions to His heavenly Father on behalf of those who were His own. It is a peculiarity of these last chapters, that they treat almost exclusively of the most profound relations — as that of the Son to the Father, and of both to the Spirit, that of Christ to the Church, of the Church to the world, and so forth. Moreover, a considerable portion of these sublime communications surpassed the point of view to which the disciples had at that time attained; hence the Redeemer frequently repeats the same sentiments in order to impress them more deeply upon their minds, and, because of what they still did not understand, points them to the Holy Spirit, who would remind them of all His sayings, and lead them into all truth (~~John~~ John 14:26)” [OLSHAUSEN].

**1. Let not your heart be troubled**, etc. — What myriads of souls have not these opening words cheered, in deepest gloom, since first they were uttered!

**ye believe in God** — absolutely.

**believe also in me** — that is, Have the *same trust* in Me. What less, and what else, can these words mean? And if so, what a demand to make by one sitting familiarly with them at the supper table! Compare the saying in ~~John~~ John 5:17, for which the Jews took up stones to stone Him, as “making

himself equal with God” (<sup><B></sup>John 14:18). But it is no *transfer of our trust from its proper Object*; it is but *the concentration of our trust in the Unseen and Impalpable One upon His Own Incarnate Son*, by which that trust, instead of the distant, unsteady, and too often cold and scarce real thing it otherwise is, acquires a conscious reality, warmth, and power, which makes all things new. *This is Christianity in brief.*

**2. In my Father’s house are many mansions** — and so room for all, and a place for each.

**if not, I would have told you** — that is, I would tell you so at once; I would not deceive you.

**I go to prepare a place for you** — to obtain for you a right to be there, and to possess your “place.”

**3. I will come again and receive you unto myself** — *strictly*, at His Personal appearing; but in a secondary and comforting sense, to each individually. Mark again the claim made: — to come again to receive His people *to Himself*, that where *He* is there they may be also. *He thinks it ought to be enough to be assured that they shall be where He is and in His keeping.*

**4-7. whither I go ye know ... Thomas saith, Lord, we know not whither thou guest ... Jesus saith, I am the way**, etc. — By saying this, He meant rather to draw out their inquiries and reply to them. Christ is “THE WAY” to the Father — “no man cometh unto the Father but by Me”; He is “THE TRUTH” of all we find in the Father when we get to Him, “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (<sup><B></sup>Colossians 2:9), and He is all “THE LIFE” that shall ever flow to us and bless us from the Godhead thus approached and thus manifested in Him — “this is the true God and eternal life” (<sup><B></sup>1 John 5:20).

**7. from henceforth** — now, or from this time, understand.

**8-12.** The substance of this passage is that the Son is the ordained and perfect manifestation of the Father, that His own word for this ought to His disciples to be enough; that if any doubts remained His works ought to remove them (see on <sup><B></sup>John 10:37); but yet that these works of His were designed merely to aid weak faith, and would be repeated, nay exceeded, by His disciples, in virtue of the power He would confer on them after His departure. His miracles the apostles wrought, though wholly in His name and by His power, and the “greater” works — not in degree but in kind — were the conversion of thousands in a day, by His Spirit accompanying them.



**13, 14. whatsoever ye ... ask in my name** — as Mediator.

**that will I do** — as Head and Lord of the kingdom of God. This comprehensive promise is emphatically repeated in ~~¶144~~ John 14:14.

**15-17. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father**, etc. — This connection seems designed to teach that the proper temple for the indwelling Spirit of Jesus is a heart filled with that love to Him which lives actively for Him, and so this was the fitting preparation for the promised gift.

**he shall give you another Comforter** — a word used only by John; in his *Gospel* with reference to the Holy Spirit, in his *First Epistle* (~~¶100~~ 1 John 2:1), with reference to Christ Himself. Its proper sense is an “advocate,” “patron,” “helper.” In this sense it is plainly meant of Christ (~~¶100~~ 1 John 2:1), and in this sense it comprehends all the *comfort* as well as *aid* of the Spirit’s work. The Spirit is here promised as One who would *supply Christ’s own place* in His absence.

**that he may abide with you for ever** — never go away, as Jesus was going to do in the body.

**17. whom the world cannot receive**, etc. — (See ~~¶104~~ 1 Corinthians 2:14).

**he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you** — Though the proper fullness of both these was yet future, our Lord, by using both the present and the future, seems plainly to say that they *already* had the germ of this great blessing.

**18-20. I will not leave you comfortless** — in a bereaved and desolate condition; or (as in *Margin*) “orphans.”

**I will come to you** — “I come” or “am coming” to you; that is, plainly *by the Spirit*, since it was to make His departure to be *no bereavement*.

**19. world seeth** — beholdeth.

**me no more, but ye see** — behold.

**me** — His bodily presence, being all the sight of Him which “the world” ever had, or was capable of, it “beheld Him no more” after His departure to the Father; but by the coming of the Spirit, the presence of Christ was not only *continued* to His spiritually enlightened disciples, but rendered *far more efficacious and blissful* than His bodily presence had been before the Spirit’s coming.

**because I live** — not “*shall* live,” only when raised from the dead; for it is His unextinguishable, divine life of which He speaks, in view of which His *death and resurrection* were but as shadows passing over the sun’s glorious disk. (Compare <sup><2418></sup>Luke 24:5 <sup><6018></sup>Revelation 1:18, “the Living One”). And this grand saying Jesus uttered *with death immediately in view*. What a brightness does this throw over the next clause, “ye shall live also!” “Knowest thou not,” said LUTHER to the King of Terrors, “that thou didst devour the Lord Christ, but wert obliged to give Him back, and wert devoured of Him? So thou must leave me undevoured because I abide in Him, and live and suffer for His name’s sake. Men may hunt me out of the world — that I care not for — but I shall not on that account abide in death. I shall live with my Lord Christ, since I know and believe that *He liveth!*” (quoted in STIER).

**20. At that day** — of the Spirit’s coming.

**ye shall know that I am in my Father, ye in me, I in you** — (See on <sup><6172></sup>John 17:22,23).

**21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them**, etc. — (See on <sup><6145></sup>John 14:15).

**my Father and I will love him** — Mark the sharp line of distinction here, not only between the Divine Persons but the actings of love in Each respectively, towards true disciples.

**22. Judas saith ... not Iscariot** — Beautiful parenthesis this! The traitor being no longer present, we needed not to be told that this question came not from *him*. But it is as if the Evangelist had said, “A very different Judas from the traitor, and a very different question from any that he would have put. Indeed [as one in STIER says], we never read of Iscariot that he entered in any way into his Master’s words, or ever put a question even of rash curiosity (though it may be he did, but that nothing from *him* was deemed fit for immortality in the Gospels but his name and treason).”

**how ... manifest thyself to us, and not to the world** — a most natural and proper question, founded on <sup><6149></sup>John 14:19, though interpreters speak against it as *Jewish*.

**23. we will come and make our abode with him** — Astonishing statement! In the Father’s “coming” He “refers to the revelation of Him *as a Father* to the soul, which does not take place till the Spirit comes into the heart, teaching it to cry, *Abba, Father*” [OLSHAUSEN]. The “abode” means a permanent, eternal stay! (Compare <sup><6311></sup>Leviticus 26:11,12 <sup><6576></sup>Ezekiel 37:26,27 <sup><6162></sup>2 Corinthians 6:16; and *contrast* <sup><2448></sup>Jeremiah 14:8).

**25, 26. he shall teach you all things, and bring all to ... remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you** — (See on <sup>6415</sup>John 14:15; <sup>6417</sup>John 14:17). As the Son came in *the Father's* name, so the Father shall send the Spirit *in My name*, says Jesus, that is, with like divine *power* and *authority* to reproduce in their souls what Christ taught them, “bringing to living consciousness what lay like slumbering germs in their minds” [OLSHAUSEN]. *On this rests the credibility and ultimate divine authority of THE GOSPEL HISTORY.* The whole of what is here said of THE SPIRIT is decisive of His divine *personality*. “He who can regard all the *personal* expressions, applied to the Spirit in these three chapters (‘teaching,’ ‘reminding,’ ‘testifying,’ ‘coming,’ ‘convincing,’ ‘guiding,’ ‘speaking,’ ‘hearing,’ ‘prophesying,’ ‘taking’) as being no other than a long drawn-out figure, deserves not to be recognized even as an interpreter of intelligible words, much less an expositor of Holy Scripture” [STIER].

**27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you** — If <sup>6425</sup>John 14:25,26 sounded like a note of preparation for drawing the discourse to a close, this would sound like a farewell. But oh, how different from ordinary adieus! It is a parting word, but of richest import, the customary “peace” of a parting friend sublimed and transfigured. As “the Prince of Peace” (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 9:6) He brought it into flesh, carried it about in His Own Person (“My peace”) died to make it ours, left it as the heritage of His disciples upon earth, implants and maintains it by His Spirit in their hearts. Many a legacy is “left” that is never “given” to the legatee, many a gift destined that never reaches its proper object. But Christ is the Executor of His own Testament; the peace He “*leaves*” He “*gives*”; Thus all is secure.

**not as the world giveth** — in contrast with the world, He gives *sincerely, substantially, eternally.*

**28. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I** — These words, which Arians and Socinians perpetually quote as triumphant evidence against the proper Divinity of Christ, really yield no intelligible sense on their principles. Were a holy *man* on his deathbed, beholding his friends in tears at the prospect of losing him, to say, “Ye ought rather to joy than weep for me, and would if ye really loved me, “the speech would be quite natural. But if they should ask him, *why* joy at his departure was more suitable than sorrow, would they not start back with astonishment, if not horror, were he to reply, “*Because my Father is greater than I?*” Does not this strange speech from Christ’s lips, then, *presuppose such teaching* on His part as would make it extremely difficult for them to think He could gain anything by departing to the Father, and make it necessary for Him to say expressly that there was a sense in which He *could* do so? Thus, this startling explanation seems

plainly intended to correct such misapprehensions as might arise from the emphatic and reiterated teaching of *His proper equality with the Father* — as if so Exalted a Person were incapable of any accession by transition from this dismal scene to a cloudless heaven and the very bosom of the Father — and by assuring them that this was *not* the case, to make them forget their own sorrow in His approaching joy.

**30, 31. Hereafter I will not talk much with you** — “I have a little more to say, but My work hastens apace, and the approach of the adversary will cut it short.”

**for the prince of this world** — (See on <sup><6123></sup>John 12:31).

**cometh** — with hostile intent, for a last grand attack, having failed in His first formidable assault (<sup><6101></sup>Luke 4:1-13) from which he “departed [only] *for a season*” (<sup><6143></sup>John 14:13).

**and hath nothing in me** — *nothing of His own — nothing to fasten on.* Glorious saying! The *truth* of it is, that which makes the Person and Work of Christ the life of the world (<sup><8104></sup>Hebrews 9:14 <sup><6185></sup>1 John 3:5 <sup><6152></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21).

**31. But that the world may know that I love the Father**, etc. — The sense must be completed thus: “But to the Prince of the world, though he has nothing in Me, I shall yield Myself up even unto death, that the world may know that I love and obey the Father, whose commandment it is that I give My life a ransom for many.”

**Arise, let us go hence** — Did they then, at this stage of the discourse, leave the supper room, as some able interpreters conclude? If so, we think our Evangelist would have mentioned it: see <sup><6101></sup>John 18:1, which seems clearly to intimate that they then only left the upper room. But what do the words mean if not this? We think it was the dictate of that saying of earlier date, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and *how am I straitened till it be accomplished!*” — a spontaneous and irrepressible expression of the deep eagerness of His spirit to get into the conflict, and that if, as is likely, it was responded to somewhat too literally by the guests who hung on His lips, in the way of a movement to depart, a wave of His hand, would be enough to show that He had yet more to say ere they broke up; and that disciple, whose pen was dipped in a love to his Master which made *their* movements of small consequence save when essential to the illustration of *His* words, would record this little outburst of the Lamb hastening to the slaughter, in the very midst of His lofty discourse; while the effect of it, if any, upon His hearers, as of no consequence, would naturally enough be passed over.

# CHAPTER 15

## JOHN 15:1-27.

### DISCOURSE AT THE SUPPER TABLE CONTINUED.

**1-8.** *The spiritual oneness of Christ and His people, and His relation to them as the Source of all their spiritual life and fruitfulness, are here beautifully set forth by a figure familiar to Jewish ears* (~~2800~~ Isaiah 5:1, etc.).

**I am the true vine** — of whom the vine of *nature* is but a shadow.

**my Father is the husbandman** — the great Proprietor of the vineyard, the Lord of the spiritual kingdom. (It is surely unnecessary to point out the claim to *supreme divinity* involved in this).

**2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit ... every branch that beareth fruit** — As in a fruit tree, some branches may be *fruitful*, others quite *barren*, according as there is a *vital connection* between the branch and the stock, or *no vital connection*; so the disciples of Christ may be spiritually fruitful or the reverse, according as they are *vitaly* and *spiritually connected* with Christ, or but *externally* and *mechanically attached* to Him. The fruitless He “taketh away” (see on ~~2816~~ John 15:6); the fruitful He “purgeth” (cleanseth, pruneth) — *stripping it*, as the husbandman does, *of what is rank* (~~2809~~ Mark 4:19), “that it may bring forth more fruit”; a process often painful, but no less needful and beneficial than in the natural husbandry.

**3. Now** — rather, “Already.”

**ye are clean through** — by reason of.

**the word I have spoken to you** — already in a purified, fruitful condition, in consequence of the long action upon them of that searching “word” which was “as a refiner’s fire” (~~2806~~ Malachi 3:2,3).

**4. Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine**, etc. — As all spiritual fruitfulness had been ascribed to the mutual *inhabitation*, and living, active *interpenetration* (so to speak) of Christ and His disciples, so here the keeping up of this vital connection is made essential to continued fruitfulness.

**5. without me** — apart, or vitally disconnected from Me.

**ye can do nothing** — spiritually, acceptably.

**6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch ... withered ... cast into the fire ... burned** — The one proper use of the vine is to *bear fruit*; failing this, it is good for one other thing — *fuel*. (See Ezekiel 15:1-5). How awfully striking the figure, in this view of it!

**7. If ye abide in me, and my words ... in you** — Mark the change from the inhabitation of *Himself* to that of His *words*, paving the way for the subsequent exhortations (~~REV~~ John 15:9,10).

**ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you** — because this indwelling of His words in them would secure the harmony of their askings with the divine will.

**8. glorified that ye bear much fruit** — not only from His delight in it for its own sake, but as from “the juices of the Living Vine.”

**so shall ye be my disciples** — *evidence* your discipleship.

**9-11. continue ye in my love** — not, “Continue to love Me,” but, “Continue in the possession and enjoyment of My love to you”; as is evident from the next words.

**10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love** — the obedient spirit of true discipleship cherishing and attracting the continuance and increase of Christ’s love; and this, He adds, was the secret even of His own abiding in His Father’s love!

**12-16. That ye love one another**, etc. — (See on ~~REV~~ John 13:34,35).

**13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends** — The emphasis lies not on “friends,” but on “*laying down his life*” for them; that is, “One can show no greater regard for those dear to him than to give his life for them, and this is the love ye shall find in Me.”

**14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you** — hold yourselves in absolute subjection to Me.

**15. Henceforth I call you not servants** — that is, *in the sense explained* in the next words; for servants He still calls them (~~REV~~ John 15:20), and they delight to call themselves so, in the sense of being “under law to Christ” (~~REV~~ 1 Corinthians 9:20).

**the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth** — knows nothing of his master’s *plans* and *reasons*, but simply receives and executes his orders.

**but ... friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you** — admitted you to free, unrestrained fellowship, keeping back nothing from you which I have received to communicate. (Compare <sup><0187></sup>Genesis 18:17 <sup><0254></sup>Psalms 25:14 <sup><2806></sup>Isaiah 50:4).

**16. Ye have not chosen me, but I ... you** — a wholesale memento after the lofty things He had just said about their mutual indwelling, and the unreservedness of the friendship they had been admitted to.

**ordained** — appointed.

**you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit** — that is, give yourselves to it.

**and that your fruit should remain** — showing itself to be an imperishable and ever growing principle. (Compare <sup><1048></sup>Proverbs 4:18 <sup><6008></sup>2 John 1:8).

**that whatsoever ye shall ask**, etc. — (See on <sup><6157></sup>John 15:7).

**17-21.** The substance of these important verses has occurred more than once before. (See on <sup><1064></sup>Matthew 10:34-36; <sup><0249></sup>Luke 12:49-53, etc.).

**22-25.** (See on <sup><0099></sup>John 9:39-41).

**If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin** — *comparatively* none; all other sins being light compared with the rejection of the Son of God.

**now they have no cloak for their sin** — rather, “pretext.”

**24. If I had not done ... the works which none other ... did** — (See on <sup><6129></sup>John 12:37).

**25. that the word might be fulfilled ... They hated me without a cause** — quoted from the Messianic <sup><0906></sup>Psalms 69:4, applied also in the same sense in <sup><0173></sup>John 2:17 <sup><4001></sup>Acts 1:20 <sup><6119></sup>Romans 11:9,10 15:3.

**26, 27.** (See on <sup><6415></sup>John 14:15; <sup><6417></sup>John 14:17).

**27. ye also shall bear witness** — rather, “are witnesses”; with reference indeed to their *future* witness-bearing, but putting the emphasis upon their *present* ample opportunities for acquiring their qualifications for that great office, inasmuch as they had been “with Him from the beginning.” (See on <sup><0002></sup>Luke 1:2).

# CHAPTER 16

## JOHN 16:1-33.

### DISCOURSE AT THE SUPPER TABLE CONCLUDED.

**1-5. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended** — both the *warnings* and the *encouragements* just given.

**2. They shall put you out of the synagogue** — (<sup><102></sup>John 9:22 12:42).

**the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service** — The words mean *religious service* — “that he is offering a service to God.” (Song of Solomon Saul of Tarsus, <sup><101></sup>Galatians 1:13,14 <sup><106></sup>Philippians 3:6).

**4. these things I said not ... at** — from.

**the beginning** — He *had* said it pretty early (<sup><102></sup>Luke 6:22), but not quite as in <sup><101></sup>John 16:2.

**because I was with you.**

**5. But now I go my way to him that sent me** — While He was with them, the world’s hatred was directed chiefly against Himself; but His departure would bring it down upon them as His representatives.

**and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?** — They *had* done so in a sort (<sup><103></sup>John 13:36 14:5); but He wished more intelligent and eager inquiry on the subject.

**6, 7. But because I have said these things ... sorrow hath filled your heart** — Sorrow had too much paralyzed them, and He would rouse their energies.

**7. It is expedient for you that I go away** — My Savior, can it ever be That I should gain by losing thee? KEBLE.

Yes.

**for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you** — (See on <sup><103></sup>John 7:39; <sup><104></sup>John 14:15).



**8. And when he is come, he will,** etc. — This is one of the passages most pregnant with thought in the profound discourses of Christ; with a few great strokes depicting all and every part of the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the world — His operation with reference to individuals as well as the mass, on believers and unbelievers alike [OLSHAUSEN].

**he will reprove** — This is too weak a word to express what is meant. *Reproof* is indeed implied in the term employed, and doubtless the word begins with it. But *convict* or *convince* is the thing intended; and as the one expresses the work of the Spirit on the *unbelieving* portion of mankind, and the other on the *believing*, it is better not to restrict it to either.

**9. Of sin, because they believe not on me** — As all sin has its root in unbelief, so the most aggravated form of unbelief is the rejection of Christ. The Spirit, however, in fastening this truth upon the conscience, does not *extinguish*, but, on the contrary, does *consummate and intensify, the sense of all other sins*.

**10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more** — Beyond doubt, it is *Christ's personal righteousness* which the Spirit was to bring home to the sinner's heart. The evidence of this was to lie in the great *historical fact*, that He had "gone to His Father and was no more visible to men": — for if His claim to be the Son of God, the Savior of the world, had been a lie, how should the Father, who is "a jealous God," have raised such a blasphemer from the dead and exalted him to His right hand? But if He was the "Faithful and True Witness," the Father's "Righteous Servant," "His Elect, in whom His soul delighted," then was His departure to the Father, and consequent disappearance from the view of men, but the fitting consummation, the august reward, of all that He did here below, the seal of His mission, the glorification of the testimony which He bore on earth, by the reception of its Bearer to the Father's bosom. This triumphant vindication of Christ's *rectitude* is to us divine evidence, bright as heaven, that He is indeed the Savior of the world, God's Righteous Servant to justify many, because He bare their iniquities (<sup>251</sup>Isaiah 53:11). Thus the Spirit, in this clause, is seen convincing men that there is in Christ perfect relief under the sense of *sin* of which He had before convinced them; and so far from mourning over His absence from us, as an irreparable loss, we learn to glory in it, as the evidence of His perfect acceptance on our behalf, exclaiming with one who understood this point, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God," etc. (<sup>252</sup>Romans 8:33,34).

**11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged** — By supposing that the *final judgment* is here meant, the point of this clause is, even by good interpreters, quite missed. The statement, “The prince of this world is *judged*,” means, beyond all reasonable doubt, the same as that in <sup><B12></sup>John 12:31, “Now shall the prince of this world be *cast out*”; and both mean that his dominion over men, or his power to enslave and so to ruin them, is destroyed. The death of Christ “judged” or judicially overthrew him, and he was thereupon “cast out” or expelled from his usurped dominion (<sup><B12></sup>Hebrews 2:14 <sup><B12></sup>1 John 3:8 <sup><B12></sup>Colossians 2:15). Thus, then, the Spirit shall bring home to men’s conscience:

(1) the sense of *sin*, consummated in the rejection of Him who came to “take away the sin of the world”;

(2) the sense of perfect relief in the *righteousness* of the Father’s Servant, now fetched from the earth that spurned Him to that bosom where from everlasting He had dwelt; and

(3) the sense of emancipation from the fetters of Satan, whose *judgment* brings to men liberty to be holy, and transformation out of servants of the devil into sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. To one class of men, however, all this will carry *conviction* only; they “will not come to Christ” — revealed though He be to them as the life-giving One — that they may have life. Such, abiding voluntarily under the dominion of the prince of this world, are *judged in his judgment*, the visible consummation of which will be at the great day. To another class, however, this blessed teaching will have another issue — translating them out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.

**12-15. when he, the Spirit of truth, is come ... he shall not speak of himself** — that is, *from* Himself, but, like Christ Himself, “what He hears,” what is given Him to communicate.

**he will show you things to come** — referring specially to those revelations which, in the Epistles partially, but most fully in the Apocalypse, open up a vista into the Future of the Kingdom of God, whose horizon is the everlasting hills.

**14. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you** — Thus the whole design of the Spirit’s office is to glorify Christ — not in His own Person, for this was done by the Father when He exalted Him to His own right hand — but in the view and estimation of men. For this purpose He was to “*receive of Christ*” — *all the truth relating to Christ* — “*and show it unto them*,” or make them to discern it in its own

light. The *subjective* nature of the Spirit's teaching — the discovery to the souls of men of what is Christ *outwardly* — is here very clearly expressed; and, at the same time, the vanity of looking for revelations of the Spirit which shall do anything beyond throwing light in the soul upon what Christ Himself is, and taught, and did upon earth.

**15. All things that the Father hath are mine** — a plainer expression than this of *absolute community* with the Father in all things cannot be conceived, though the “all things” here have reference to the things of the Kingdom of Grace, which the Spirit was to receive that He might show it to us. We have here a wonderful glimpse into the *inner relations of the Godhead*.

**16-22. A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father** — The joy of the world at their not seeing Him seems to show that His removal from them by *death* was what He meant; and in that case, their joy at again seeing Him points to their transport at His reappearance amongst them on His *Resurrection*, when they could no longer doubt His identity. At the same time the sorrow of the widowed Church in the absence of her Lord in the heavens, and her transport at His personal return, are certainly here expressed.

**23-28. In that day** — of the dispensation of the Spirit (as in <sup>6140</sup>John 14:20).

**ye shall ask** — inquire of

**me nothing** — by reason of the fullness of the Spirit's teaching (<sup>6146</sup>John 14:26 16:13; and compare <sup>6177</sup>1 John 2:27).

**24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name** — for “prayer *in the name of* Christ, and prayer to Christ, presuppose His *glorification*” [OLSHAUSEN].

**ask** — when I am gone, “in My name.”

**25. in proverbs** — in obscure language, opposed to “showing plainly” — that is, by the Spirit's teaching.

**26. I say not ... I will pray the Father for you** — as if He were not of *Himself* disposed to aid you: Christ does pray the Father for His people, but not for the purpose of inclining an *unwilling* ear.

**27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me** — This love of theirs is that which is called forth by God's eternal love in the

gift of His Son *mirrored* in the hearts of those who believe, and resting on His dear Son.

**28. I came forth from the Father**, etc. — that is, “And ye are right, for I have indeed so come forth, and shall soon return whence I came.” This echo of the truth, alluded to in <sup>(~~1627~~)</sup> John 16:27, seems like *thinking aloud*, as if it were grateful to His own spirit on such a subject and at such an hour.

**29, 30. His disciples said, ... now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb** — hardly more so than before; the time for perfect plainness was yet to come; but having caught a glimpse of His meaning (it was nothing more), they eagerly express their satisfaction, as if glad to make anything of His words. How touchingly does this show both the simplicity of their hearts and the infantile character of their faith!

**31-33. Jesus answered ... Do ye now believe?** — that is, “It is well ye do, for it is soon to be tested, and in a way ye little expect.”

**the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone** — A deep and awful sense of *wrong* experienced is certainly expressed here, but how lovingly! That He was not to be utterly deserted, that there was One who would not forsake Him, was to Him matter of ineffable support and consolation; but that He should be without all *human* countenance and cheer, who as Man was exquisitely sensitive to the law of sympathy, would fill themselves with as much *shame*, when they afterwards recurred to it, as the Redeemer’s heart in His hour of need with pungent *sorrow*. “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (<sup>(~~1628~~)</sup> Psalm 69:20).

**because the Father is with me** — how near, and with what sustaining power, who can express?

**33. These things I have spoken unto you** — not the immediately preceding words, but this whole discourse, of which these were the very last words, and which He thus winds up.

**that in me ye might have peace** — in the sublime sense before explained. (See on <sup>(~~1629~~)</sup> John 14:27).

**In the world ye shall have tribulation** — specially arising from its deadly opposition to those who “are not of the world, but chosen out of the world.” So that the “peace” promised was far from an unruffled one.

**I have overcome the world** — not only *before* you, but *for* you, that ye may be able to do the same (<sup>(~~1630~~)</sup> 1 John 5:4,5).

# CHAPTER 17

## JOHN 17:1-26.

### THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

(See on ~~641~~John 14:1). Had this prayer *not* been recorded, what reverential reader would not have exclaimed, Oh, to have been within hearing of such a prayer as that must have been, which wound up the whole of His past ministry and formed the point of transition to the dark scenes which immediately followed! But here it is, and with such signature of the Lips that uttered it that we seem rather to hear it from Himself than read it from the pen of His faithful reporter.

**1-3. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes** — “John very seldom depicts the gestures or looks of our Lord, as here. But this was an occasion of which the impression was indelible, and the upward look could not be passed over” [ALFORD].

**Father, the hour is come** — (See on ~~613~~John 13:31,32).

**glorify thy Son** — Put honor upon Thy Son, by countenancing, sustaining, and carrying Him through that “hour.”

**2. given** — gavest

**him power over all flesh** — (See on ~~4117~~Matthew 11:27; ~~4188~~Matthew 28:18-20).

**give eternal life to as many as**, etc. — literally, “to all that which thou hast given him.” (See on ~~4157~~John 6:37-40).

**3. this is** — that.

**life eternal, that they might** — may.

**know**, etc. — This life eternal, then, is not mere conscious and unending existence, but a life of acquaintance with God in Christ (~~4221~~Job 22:21).

**thee, the only true God** — the sole personal living God; in glorious contrast equally with heathen *polytheism*, philosophic *naturalism*, and mystic *pantheism*.

**and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent** — This is the only place where our Lord gives Himself this compound name, afterwards so current in apostolic preaching and writing. Here the terms are used in their strict signification — “JESUS,” because He “*saves* His people from their sins”; “CHRIST,” as *anointed* with the measureless fullness of the Holy Ghost for the exercise of His saving offices (see on <sup><4116></sup>Matthew 1:16); “WHOM THOU HAST SENT,” in the plenitude of Divine Authority and Power, to save. “The very juxtaposition here of *Jesus Christ* with *the Father* is a proof, by implication, of our Lord’s Godhead. The knowledge of *God and a creature* could not be eternal life, and such an association of the one with the other would be inconceivable” [ALFORD].

**4, 5. I have glorified thee on the earth** — rather, “I glorified” (for the thing is conceived as now *past*).

**I have finished** — I finished.

**the work which thou gavest me to do** — It is very important to preserve in the translation the *past* tense, used in the original, otherwise it might be thought that the work already “*finished*” was only what He had done *before uttering that prayer*; whereas it will be observed that our Lord speaks throughout as already beyond this present scene (<sup><4172></sup>John 17:12, etc.), and so must be supposed to include in His “finished work” the “decease which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem.”

**5. And now** — in return.

**glorify thou me** — The “*I Thee*” and “*Thou Me*” are so placed in the original, each beside its fellow, as to show that A PERFECT RECIPROCITY OF SERVICES of the Son to the Father first, and then of the Father to the Son in return, is what our Lord means here to express.

**with the glory which I had with thee before the world was** — when “in the beginning the Word was *with God*” (<sup><4101></sup>John 1:1), “the only-begotten Son *in the bosom of the Father*” (<sup><4118></sup>John 1:18). With this pre-existent glory, which He veiled on earth, He asks to be reinvested, the design of the veiling being accomplished — not, however, simply as before, but *now in our nature*.

**6-8.** From praying for Himself He now comes to pray for His disciples.

**I have manifested** — I manifested.

**thy name** — His whole character towards mankind.

**to the men thou gavest me out of the world** — (See on <sup><4153></sup>John 6:37-40).

**8. they ... have known surely that I came out from thee** — (See on <sup><B16></sup>John 16:29; <sup><B16></sup>John 16:31).

**9-14. I pray for them** — not as individuals merely, but as representatives of all such in every succeeding age (see on <sup><B17></sup>John 17:20).

**not for the world** — for they had been given Him “*out of the world*” (<sup><B17></sup>John 17:6), and had been already transformed into the very *opposite* of it. The things sought for them, indeed, are applicable only to such.

**10. all mine are thine, and thine are mine** — literally, “All My things are Thine and Thy things are Mine.” (On this use of the *neuter* gender, see on <sup><B16></sup>John 6:37-40). Absolute COMMUNITY OF PROPERTY between the Father and the Son is here expressed as nakedly as words can do it. (See on <sup><B17></sup>John 17:5).

**11. I am no more in the world** — (See on <sup><B17></sup>John 17:4).

**but these are in the world** — that is, Though My struggles are at an end, theirs are not; though I have gotten beyond the scene of strife, I cannot sever Myself in spirit from them, left behind and only just entering on their great conflict.

**Holy Father** — an expression He nowhere else uses. “*Father*” is His wonted appellation, but “*Holy*” is here prefixed, because His appeal was to that perfection of the Father’s nature, to “keep” or preserve them from being tainted by the unholy atmosphere of “the world” they were still in.

**keep through thine own name** — rather, “in thy name”; in the exercise of that gracious and holy character for which He was known.

**that they may be one** — (See on <sup><B17></sup>John 17:21).

**12. I kept** — guarded.

**them in thy name** — acting as Thy Representative on earth.

**none of them is lost, but the son of perdition** — It is not implied here that the son of perdition was one of those whom the Father had given to the Son, but rather the contrary (<sup><B18></sup>John 13:18) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. It is just as in <sup><B18></sup>Luke 4:26,27, where we are not to suppose that the woman of *Sarepta* (in Sidon) was one of the widows of *Israel*, nor Naaman the Syrian one of the lepers in *Israel*, though the language — the same as here — might *seem* to express it.

**son of perdition** — doomed to it (<sup><B18></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3 <sup><B19></sup>Mark 14:21).

**13. I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves** — that is, Such a strain befits rather the upper sanctuary than the scene of conflict; but I speak so “*in the world*,” that My joy, the joy I experience in knowing that such intercessions are to be made for them by their absent Lord, may be tasted by those who now hear them, and by all who shall hereafter read the record of them,

**15-19. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world** — for that, though it would secure their own safety, would leave the world unblessed by their testimony.

**but ... keep them from the evil** — all evil in and of the world.

**16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world** — (See <sup><6158></sup>John 15:18,19). This is reiterated here, to pave the way for the prayer which follows.

**17. Sanctify them** — As the former prayer, “*Keep them*,” was “negative,” asking *protection* for them from the poisonous element which surrounded and pressed upon their renewed nature, so this prayer, “*Sanctify them*,” is positive, asking the *advancement and completion* of their begun sanctification.

**through** — in.

**thy truth** — God’s revealed truth, as the medium or element of sanctification; a statement this of immense importance.

**thy word is truth** — (Compare <sup><6157></sup>John 15:3 <sup><5106></sup>Colossians 1:5 <sup><4013></sup>Ephesians 1:13).

**18. As thou hast sent** — sentest.

**me into the world, even so have I also sent them** — sent I also them.

**into the world** — As their mission was to carry into effect the purposes of their Master’s mission, so our Lord speaks of the *authority* in both cases as *co-ordinate*.

**19. And for their sakes I sanctify** — consecrate.

**myself that they also might** — may.

**be sanctified** — consecrated. The only difference between the application of the same term to Christ and the disciples is, as applied to Christ, that it means *only* to “consecrate”; whereas, in application to the disciples, it means to consecrate with the *additional idea* of previous sanctification, since nothing but what is holy can be presented as an offering. The whole



self-sacrificing work of the disciples appears here as a mere *result* of the offering of Christ [OLSHAUSEN].

**through** — in.

**the truth** — Though the article is wanting in the original here, we are not to translate, as in the *Margin*, “*truly sanctified*”; for the reference seems plainly to be “the truth” mentioned in <sup><877></sup>John 17:17. (See on <sup><877></sup>John 17:17).

**20-23. Neither pray I for these alone** — This very important explanation, uttered in condescension to the hearers and readers of this prayer in all time, is meant not merely of what follows, but of the whole prayer.

**them also which shall believe** — The majority of the best manuscripts read “which believe,” all future time being viewed as *present*, while the present is viewed as past and gone.

**21. that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us** — *The indwelling Spirit of the Father and the Son* is the one perfect bond of union, knitting up into a living unity, first all believers amongst themselves; next, this unity into one still higher, with the Father and the Son. (Observe, that Christ *never mixes Himself up with His disciples as He associates Himself with the Father*, but says I in THEM and THEY in US).

**that the world may believe that thou hast sent me** — sentest me. So the grand impression upon the world at large, that the mission of Christ is divine, is to be made by *the unity of His disciples*. Of course, then, it must be something that shall be *visible* or perceptible to the world. What is it, then? Not certainly a merely formal, mechanical unity of ecclesiastical machinery. For as that may, and to a large extent does, exist in both the Western and Eastern churches, with little of the Spirit of Christ, yea much, much with which the Spirit of Christ cannot dwell so instead of convincing the world *beyond its own pale* of the divinity of the Gospel, it generates infidelity to a large extent within its own bosom. But the Spirit of Christ, illuminating, transforming, and reigning in the hearts of the genuine disciples of Christ, drawing them to each other as members of one family, and prompting them to loving co-operation for the good of the world — this is what, when sufficiently glowing and extended, shall force conviction upon the world that Christianity is divine. Doubtless, the more that differences among Christians disappear — the more they can agree even in minor matters — the impression upon the world may be expected to be greater. But it is not *dependent* upon this; for living and loving oneness in Christ is sometimes more touchingly seen even amidst and in spite of

minor differences, than where no such differences exist to try the strength of their deeper unity. Yet till this living brotherhood in Christ shall show itself strong enough to destroy the sectarianism, selfishness, carnality, and apathy that eat out the heart of Christianity in all the visible sections of it, in vain shall we expect the world to be overawed by it. It is when “the Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high,” as a Spirit of truth and love, and upon all parts of the Christian territory alike, melting down differences and heart burnings, kindling astonishment and shame at past unfruitfulness, drawing forth longings of catholic affection, and yearnings over a world lying in wickedness, embodying themselves in palpable forms and active measures — it is then that we may expect the effect here announced to be produced, and then it will be irresistible. *Should not Christians ponder these things? Should not the same mind be in them which was also in Christ Jesus about this matter? Should not His prayer be theirs?*

**22. And the glory which thou gavest** — hast given.

**me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one** — The last clause shows the meaning of the first. It is not the *future* glory of the heavenly state, but the secret of that *present* unity just before spoken of; *the glory*, therefore, *of the indwelling Spirit of Christ*; the glory of an accepted state, of a holy character, of every grace.

**23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one** — (See on <sup><B7Z></sup>John 17:21).

**24-26. Father, I will** — The majesty of this style of speaking is quite transparent. No petty criticism will be allowed to fritter it away in any but superficial or perverted readers.

**be with me where I am** — (See on <sup><B4B></sup>John 14:3).

**that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me** — (See on <sup><B7E></sup>John 17:5). Christ regards it as glory enough for us to be admitted to see and gaze for ever upon *His* glory! This is “the beatific vision”; but it shall be no mere vision, for “we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is” (<sup><A9P></sup>1 John 3:2).

**25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee** — knew thee not.

**but I have known thee** — knew thee.

**and these have known** — knew.

**that thou hast sent** — sentest

**me** — As before He said “*Holy Father*,” when desiring the display of that perfection on His disciples (<sup><671></sup>John 17:11), so here He styles Him “*Righteous Father*,” because He is appealing to His righteousness or justice, to make a distinction between those two diametrically opposite classes — “*the world*,” on the one hand, which would not “know the Father, though brought so nigh to it in the Son of His love, and, on the other, *Himself*, who recognized and owned Him, *and even His disciples*, who owned His mission from the Father.

**26. And I have declared** — I made known or communicated.

**thy name** — in His past ministry.

**and will declare it** — in yet larger measure, by the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost and through all succeeding ages.

**that the love wherewith thou hast loved** — lovedst.

**me may be in them, and I in them** — This eternal love of the Father, resting first on Christ, is by His Spirit imparted to and takes up its permanent abode in all that believe in Him; and “He abiding in them and they in Him” (<sup><675></sup>John 15:5), they are “*one Spirit*.” “With this lofty thought the Redeemer closes His prayer for His disciples, and in them for His Church through all ages. He has compressed into the last moments given Him for conversation with His own the most sublime and glorious sentiments ever uttered by mortal lips. But hardly has the sound of the last word died away, when He passes with the disciples over the brook Kedron to Gethsemane — and the bitter conflict draws on. The seed of the new world must be sown in Death, that thence Life may spring up” [OLSHAUSEN].

# CHAPTER 18

## JOHN 18:1-13.

### BETRAYAL AND APPREHENSION OF JESUS.

**1-3. over the brook Kedron** — a deep, dark ravine, to the northeast of Jerusalem, through which flowed this small storm brook or winter torrent, and which in summer is dried up.

**where was a garden** — at the foot of the Mount of Olives, “called Gethsemane; that is, olive press (<sup><1070></sup>Matthew 26:30,36).

**2. Judas ... knew the place, for Jesus oftentimes** — see <sup><600></sup>John 8:1  
<sup><0237></sup>Luke 21:37.

**resorted thither with his disciples** — The baseness of this abuse of knowledge in Judas, derived from admission to the closest privacies of his Master, is most touchingly conveyed here, though nothing beyond bare narrative is expressed. Jesus, however, knowing that in this spot Judas would expect to find Him, instead of avoiding it, hies Him thither, as a Lamb to the slaughter. “No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself” (<sup><600></sup>John 10:18). Besides, the scene which was to fill up the little breathing-time, the awful interval, between the Supper and the Apprehension — like the “silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour” between the breaking of the Apocalyptic Seals and the peal of the Trumpets of war (<sup><600></sup>Revelation 8:1) — the AGONY — would have been too terrible for the upper room; nor would He cloud the delightful associations of the *last Passover* and the *first Supper* by pouring out the anguish of His soul there. The garden, however, with its amplitude, its shady olives, its endeared associations, would be congenial to His heart. Here He had room enough to retire — first, from eight of them, and then from the more favored three; and here, when that mysterious scene was over, the stillness would only be broken by the tread of the traitor.

**3. Judas then** — “He that was called Judas, one of the Twelve,” says Luke (<sup><0247></sup>Luke 22:47), in language which brands him with peculiar infamy, as *in* the sacred circle while in no sense *of* it.

**a band of men** — “the *detachment* of the Roman cohort on duty at the festival for the purpose of maintaining order” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**officers from the chief priests and Pharisees** — captains of the temple and armed Levites.

**lanterns and torches** — It was full moon, but in case He should have secreted Himself somewhere in the dark ravine, they bring the means of exploring its hiding-places — little knowing whom they had to do with. “Now he that betrayed Him had given them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He, hold Him fast” (<sup>4168</sup>Matthew 26:48). The cold-bloodedness of this speech was only exceeded by the deed itself. “And Judas went before them [<sup>4224</sup>Luke 22:47], and forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed Him” (<sup>4169</sup>Matthew 26:49; compare <sup>4107</sup>Exodus 4:27 18:7 <sup>4174</sup>Luke 7:45). The impudence of this atrocious deed shows how thoroughly he had by this time mastered all his scruples. If the dialogue between our Lord and His captors was *before* this, as some interpreters think it was, the kiss of Judas was purely gratuitous, and probably to make good his right to the money; our Lord having presented Himself unexpectedly before them, and rendered it unnecessary for any one to point Him out. But a comparison of the narratives seems to show that our Lord’s “coming forth” to the band was *subsequent* to the interview of Judas. “And Jesus said unto him, Friend” — not the endearing term “friend” (in <sup>4155</sup>John 15:15), but “companion,” a word used on occasions of remonstrance or rebuke (as in <sup>4113</sup>Matthew 20:13 22:12) — “Wherefore art thou come?” (<sup>4180</sup>Matthew 26:50). “Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss” — imprinting upon the foulest act the mark of tenderest affection? What *wounded feeling* does this express! Of this Jesus showed Himself on various occasions keenly susceptible — as all generous and beautiful natures do.

**4-9. Jesus ... knowing all things that should come** — were coming.

**upon him, went forth** — from the shade of the trees, probably, into open view, indicating His sublime preparedness to meet His captors.

**Whom seek ye?** — partly to prevent a rush of the soldiery upon the disciples [<sup>BENGEL</sup>]; and see <sup>4145</sup>Mark 14:51,52, as showing a tendency to this: but still more as part of that courage and majesty which so overawed them. He would not wait to be *taken*.

**5. They answered ... Jesus of Nazareth** — just the sort of blunt, straight forward reply one expects from military men, simply acting on their instructions.

**I am He** — (See on <sup>4110</sup>John 6:20).

**Judas ... stood with them** — No more is recorded here of *his* part of the scene, but we have found the gap painfully supplied by all the other Evangelists.

**6. As soon then as he said unto them, I am He, they went backward** — recoiled.

**and fell to the ground** — struck down by a power such as that which smote Saul of Tarsus and his companions to the earth (<sup><4034></sup>Acts 26:14). It was the glorious effulgence of the majesty of Christ which overpowered them. “This, occurring before His surrender, would show His *power* over His enemies, and so the *freedom* with which He gave Himself up” [MEYER].

**7. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye?** — Giving them a door of escape from the guilt of a deed which *now* they were able in some measure to understand.

**Jesus of Nazareth** — The stunning effect of His first answer wearing off, they think only of the necessity of executing their orders.

**8. I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way** — Wonderful self-possession, and consideration for others, in such circumstances!

**9. That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none** — The reference is to such sayings as <sup><4035></sup>John 6:39 17:12; showing how conscious the Evangelist was, that in reporting his Lord’s former sayings, he was giving them not in *substance* merely, but in *form* also. Observe, also, how the preservation of the disciples on this occasion is viewed as part that *deeper preservation* undoubtedly intended in the saying quoted.

**10, 11. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus** — None of the other Evangelists mention the name either of the ardent disciple or of his victim. John being “known to the high priest” (<sup><4036></sup>John 18:15), the mention of the servant’s name by *him* is quite natural, and an interesting mark of truth in a small matter. As to the *right ear*, specified both here and in Luke (<sup><4037></sup>Luke 22:50), the man was “likely foremost of those who advanced to seize Jesus, and presented himself in the attitude of a combatant; hence his right side would be exposed to attack. The blow of Peter was evidently aimed vertically at his head” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**11. Then said Jesus** — “Suffer ye thus far” (<sup><4038></sup>Luke 22:51).

**Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?** — This expresses *both the feelings* which struggled in the Lord's breast during the Agony in the garden — *aversion to the cup viewed in itself*, but, *in the light of the Father's will*, perfect *preparedness to drink it*. (See on <sup><4224></sup>Luke 22:39-46). Matthew adds to the address to Peter the following: — “For all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword” (<sup><4165></sup>Matthew 26:52) — that is, ‘Those who take the sword must run all the risks of human warfare; but Mine is a warfare whose weapons, as they are not carnal, are attended with no such hazards, but carry certain victory.’ “Thinkest thou that I cannot now” — even after things have proceeded so far — “pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me” — rather, “place at My disposal” — “more than twelve legions of angels”; with allusion, possibly, to the one angel who had, in His agony, “appeared to Him from heaven strengthening Him” (<sup><4228></sup>Luke 22:43); and in the precise number, alluding to the *twelve* who needed the help, Himself and His eleven disciples. (The full complement of a legion of Roman soldiers was six thousand). “But how then shall the scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be?” (<sup><4165></sup>Matthew 26:53,54). He could not suffer, according to the Scripture, if He allowed Himself to be delivered from the predicted death. “And He touched his ear and healed him” (<sup><4225></sup>Luke 22:51); for “the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them” (<sup><4165></sup>Luke 9:56), and, even while they were destroying His, to save theirs.

**12. Then the band ... took Jesus** — but not till He had made them feel that “no man took His life from Him, but that He laid it down of Himself.”

**13. And led him away** — “In that hour,” says Matthew (<sup><4165></sup>Matthew 26:55,56), and probably now, on the way to judgment. when the crowds were pressing upon Him, “said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, for to take Me” — expressive of the indignity which He felt to be thus done to Him — “I sat daily with you in the temple, and ye laid no hold on Me. But this” (adds <sup><4225></sup>Luke 22:53) “is your hour and the power of darkness.” Matthew continues — “But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (<sup><4165></sup>Matthew 26:56) — thus fulfilling His prediction (<sup><4142></sup>Mark 14:27 <sup><4162></sup>John 16:32).

## JOHN 18:13-27.

### JESUS BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS — FALL OF PETER.

**13, 14. And led him away to Annas first** — (See on ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Luke 3:2, and ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Matthew 26:57). (Also see on ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Mark 14:53.)

**14. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people** — (Also see on ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Mark 14:53.)

**15-18. Simon Peter followed Jesus** — Natural though this was, and safe enough, had he only “watched and prayed that he enter not into temptation,” as his Master bade him (ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Matthew 26:41), it was, in his case, a fatal step.

**and ... another disciple** — Rather, “the other disciple” — our Evangelist himself, no doubt.

**known unto the high priest** — (See on ⲁⲓⲃⲣ John 18:10).

**went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.**

**16. But Peter stood at the door without** — by preconcerted arrangement with his friend till he should get access for him.

**Then went out that other ... and spake to her that kept the door, and brought in Peter** — The *naturalness* of these small details is not unworthy of notice. This other disciple first made good his own entrance on the score of acquaintance with the high priest; this secured, he goes forth again, now as a privileged person, to make interest for Peter’s admission. But thus our poor disciple is in the coils of the serpent. The next steps will best be seen by *inverting* ⲁⲓⲃⲣ John 18:17 and ⲁⲓⲃⲣ John 18:18.

**17. Then saith the damsel that kept the door** — “one of the maids of the high priest,” says Mark (ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Mark 14:66). “When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him and said” (ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Mark 14:67). Luke is more graphic (ⲁⲓⲃⲣ Luke 22:56) — She “beheld him as he sat by the fire (literally, ‘the light’), and earnestly looked on him (fixed her gaze upon him), and said.” “His demeanor and timidity, which must have vividly showed themselves, as it so generally happens, leading to the recognition of him” [OLSHAUSEN].



**Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?** — that is, thou as well as “that other disciple,” whom she knew to be one, but did not challenge, perceiving that he was a privileged person.

**He saith, I am not** — “He denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest” (<sup>41850</sup>Matthew 26:70) — a common form of point blank denial; “I know [supply ‘Him’] not, neither understand I what thou sayest” (<sup>41448</sup>Mark 14:68); “Woman, I know Him not” (<sup>42257</sup>Luke 22:57). This was THE FIRST DENIAL. “And he went out into the porch [thinking, perhaps, to steal away], *and the cock crew,*” (<sup>41448</sup>Mark 14:68).

**18. And the servants and officers** — the menials and some of the “band” that “took Jesus.” (Also see on <sup>41459</sup>Mark 14:54.)

**stood there, who had made** — “having made.”

**a fire of coals, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves** — “John alone notices the material (charcoal) of which the fire was made, and the reason for a fire — the coldness of the night” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. “Peter went in and sat with the servants to see the end” (<sup>41858</sup>Matthew 26:58), and warmed himself at the fire” (<sup>41459</sup>Mark 14:54). These two statements are extremely interesting. His wishing to “see the end,” of issue of these proceedings, was what led him into the palace, for he evidently feared the worst. But once in, the serpent coil is drawn closer; it is a cold night, and why should not he take advantage of the fire as well as others? Besides, in the talk of the crowd about the all-engrossing topic, he may pick up something which he would like to hear. “And as Peter was beneath in the palace” (<sup>41466</sup>Mark 14:66). Matthew (<sup>41869</sup>Matthew 26:69) says, “sat *without* in the palace.” According to Oriental architecture, and especially in large buildings, as here, the street door — or heavy folding gate through which single persons entered by a wicket kept by a porter — opened by a passage or “porch” (<sup>41448</sup>Mark 14:68) into a quadrangular *court*, here called the “palace” or *hall*, which was *open above*, and is frequently *paved* with flagstones. In the center of this court the “fire” would be kindled (in a brazier). At the upper end of it, probably, was the chamber in which the trial was held, *open to the court and not far from the fire* (<sup>42261</sup>Luke 22:61), but on a higher level; for Mark (<sup>41466</sup>Mark 14:66) says the court was “*beneath*” it. The ascent was, perhaps, by a short flight of steps. This explanation will make the intensely interesting details more intelligible.

**19-21. The high priest ... asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine** — probably to entrap Him into some statements which might be used against Him at the trial. From our Lord's answer it would seem that “His disciples” were understood to be some secret party. (Also see on <sup>41459</sup>Mark 14:54.)

**20. I spake** — have spoken.

**openly to the world** — See <sup><200></sup>John 7:4.

**I ever taught in the synagogues and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort** — courting publicity, though with sublime noiselessness.

**in secret have I said** — spake I.

**nothing** — that is, nothing of any different nature; all His private communications with the Twelve being but explanations and developments of His public teaching. (Compare <sup><256></sup>Isaiah 45:19 48:16). (Also see on <sup><415></sup>Mark 14:54.)

**21. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me ... they know what I ... said** — This seems to imply that He saw the attempt to draw Him into self-crimination, and resented it by falling back upon the right of every accused party to have some charge laid against Him by competent witnesses. (Also see on <sup><415></sup>Mark 14:54.)

**22. struck Jesus with the palm ... Answerest Thou the high priest so** — (See <sup><230></sup>Isaiah 50:6; and compare <sup><423></sup>Acts 23:2). (Also see on <sup><415></sup>Mark 14:54.)

**23. If I have spoken**, etc. — “if I spoke” evil, in reply to the high priest. (Also see on <sup><415></sup>Mark 14:54.)

**if well** — He does not say “If *not*” evil, as if His reply were merely unobjectionable: “*well*” seems to challenge more than this as due to His remonstrance This shows that <sup><415></sup>Matthew 5:39 is not to be taken to the letter.

**24-27. Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas** — Our translators so render the words, understanding that the foregoing interview took place before *Caiaphas*; Annas, declining to meddle with the case, having sent Him to Caiaphas *at once*. But the words here literally are, “Annas sent Him [not ‘*had* sent Him’] to Caiaphas” — and the “now” being of doubtful authority. Thus read, the verse affords no evidence that He was sent to Caiaphas *before* the interview just recorded, but implies rather the contrary. We take this interview, then, with some of the ablest interpreters, to be a preliminary and non-official one with *Annas*, at an hour of the night when Caiaphas’ Council could not convene; and one that ought not to be confounded with that solemn one recorded by the other Evangelists, when all were assembled and witnesses called. But *the building in which both met with Jesus appears to have been the same, the*

room only being different, and the court, of course, in that case, one. (Also see on <sup><4145f></sup>Mark 14:54.)

**25. And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore ... Art thou not also one of his disciples?** — In <sup><4187f></sup>Matthew 26:71 the *second* charge was made by “another maid, when he was gone out into the porch,” who “saw him, and said unto them that were there, This [fellow] was also with Jesus of Nazareth.” So also <sup><4145f></sup>Mark 14:69. But in <sup><4228f></sup>Luke 22:58 it is said, “After a little while” (from the time of the first denial), “another [*man*] saw him, and said, Thou art also of them.” Possibly it was thrown at him by more than one; but these circumstantial variations only confirm the truth of the narrative.

**He denied it, and said, I am not** — in <sup><41872></sup>Matthew 26:72, “He denied with an oath, I do not know the man.” This was THE SECOND DENIAL.

**26. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him** — No doubt his relationship to Malchus drew attention to the man who smote him, and this enabled him to identify Peter. “Sad reprisals!” [BENGEL]. The other Evangelists make his detection to turn upon his *dialect*. “After a while [‘about the space of one hour after’] (<sup><4228f></sup>Luke 22:59)) came unto him they that stood by and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee” (<sup><41873f></sup>Matthew 26:73). “Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto” (<sup><41470f></sup>Mark 14:70; and so <sup><4228f></sup>Luke 22:59). The Galilean dialect had a more *Syrian* cast than that of Judea. *If Peter had held his peace*, this peculiarity had not been observed; but hoping, probably, to put them off the scent by joining in the *fireside talk*, he only thus revealed himself.

**27. Peter then denied again** — But, if the challenge of Malchus’ kinsman was made simultaneously with this on account of his Galilean dialect, it was no simple denial; for <sup><41874f></sup>Matthew 26:74 says, “Then began he to *curse and to swear*, saying, I know not the man.” So <sup><41471f></sup>Mark 14:71. This was THE THIRD DENIAL.

**and immediately** — “while he yet spake” (<sup><4226f></sup>Luke 22:60).

**the cock crew** — As Mark is the only Evangelist who tells us that our Lord predicted that the cock should crow *twice* (<sup><41430f></sup>Mark 14:30), so he only mentions that it *did* crow twice (<sup><41472f></sup>Mark 14:72). The other Evangelists, who tell us merely that our Lord predicted that “before the cock should crow he would deny Him thrice” (<sup><41834f></sup>Matthew 26:34 <sup><4223f></sup>Luke 22:34 <sup><6138f></sup>John 13:38), mention only *one actual* crowing, which was Mark’s last. This is something affecting in this Evangelist — who, according to the earliest

tradition (confirmed by internal evidence), derived his materials so largely from Peter as to have been styled his “*interpreter*,” being the *only one* who gives both the sad prediction and its still sadder fulfillment *in full*. It seems to show that Peter himself not only retained through all his after-life the most vivid recollection of the circumstances of his fall, but that he was willing that others should know them too. The immediately *subsequent* acts are given in full only in Luke (~~422~~ Luke 22:61,62): “And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter,” from the hall of judgment to the court, in the way already explained. But who can tell what lightning flashes of wounded love and piercing reproach shot from that “look” through the eye of Peter into his heart! “And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.” How different from the sequel of Judas’ act! Doubtless the hearts of the two men towards the Savior were perfectly different from the first; and the treason of Judas was but the consummation of the wretched man’s resistance of the blaze of light in the midst of which he had lived for three years, while Peter’s denial was but a momentary obscuration of the heavenly light and love to his Master which ruled his life. But the immediate cause of the revulsion, which made Peter “weep bitterly,” was, beyond all doubt, this heart-piercing “look” which his Lord gave him. And remembering the Savior’s own words at the table, “Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, *but I have prayed* [rather, ‘I prayed’] *for thee that thy faith fail not*” (see on ~~423~~ Luke 22:31,32), may we not say that *this prayer fetched down all that there was in that ‘look’* to pierce and break the heart of. Peter, to keep it from despair, to work in it “repentance unto salvation not to be repented of,” and at length, under other healing touches, to “restore his soul?” (See on ~~416~~ Mark 16:7).

## ~~438~~ JOHN 18:28-40.

### JESUS BEFORE PILATE.

*Note.* — Our Evangelist, having given the interview with Annas, omitted by the other Evangelists, here omits the trial and condemnation before Caiaphas, which the others had recorded. (See on ~~415~~ Mark 14:53-65). [The notes broken off there at ~~415~~ Mark 14:54 are here concluded].

### ~~416~~ MARK 14:61:

*The high priest asked Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?* — Matthew says the high priest put Him upon solemn oath, saying, “I adjure

Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God” (<sup><1165></sup>Matthew 26:63). This rendered an answer by our Lord legally necessary (<sup><1161></sup>Leviticus 5:1). Accordingly,

<sup><1162></sup>**MARK 14:62:**

*Jesus said, I am* — “Thou hast said” (<sup><1164></sup>Matthew 26:64). In <sup><1265></sup>Luke 22:67,68, some other words are given, “If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go.” This seems to have been uttered *before* giving His direct answer, as a calm remonstrance and dignified protest against the prejudgment of His case and the unfairness of their mode of procedure.

*and ye shall see the Son of man*, etc. — This concluding part of our Lord’s answer is given somewhat more fully by Matthew and Luke. “Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter [rather, ‘From henceforth’] shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (<sup><1164></sup>Matthew 26:64 <sup><1269></sup>Luke 22:69). — that is, I know the scorn with which ye are ready to meet such an avowal: To your eyes, which are but eyes of flesh, there stands at this bar only a mortal like yourselves, and He at the mercy of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities: “*Nevertheless*,” a day is coming when ye shall see another sight: Those eyes, which now gaze on Me with proud disdain, shall see this very prisoner at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and coming in the clouds of heaven: Then shall the judged One be revealed as the Judge, and His judges in this chamber appear at His august tribunal; then shall the *unrighteous* judges be *impartially* judged; and while they are wishing that they had never been born, He for whom they now watch as their Victim shall be greeted with the hallelujahs of heaven, and the welcome of Him that sitteth upon the throne!

<sup><1163></sup>**MARK 14:63,64:**

*Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy* — “of his own mouth” (<sup><1271></sup>Luke 22:71); an affectation of religious horror.

*What think ye?* — “Say, what verdict would ye pronounce.”

*They all condemned Him to be guilty of death* — of a capital crime. (See <sup><1316></sup>Leviticus 24:16).

<sup><1165></sup>**MARK 14:65:**

*And some began to spit on Him* — “Then did they spit in His face” (<sup><1167></sup>Matthew 26:67). See <sup><2811></sup>Isaiah 50:6.

*And to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy* — or, “divine,” “unto us, Thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?” The sarcasm in styling Him *the Christ*, and as such demanding of Him the perpetrator of the blows inflicted upon Him, was in them as infamous as to Him it was stinging.

*and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands* — “And many other things blasphemously spake they against him” (<sup><426></sup>Luke 22:65). This general statement is important, as showing that virulent and varied as were the *recorded* affronts put upon Him, they are but a *small specimen* of what He endured on that black occasion.

**28. Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment** — but not till “in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council against Him to put Him to death, and bound Him” (<sup><427></sup>Matthew 27:1; and see on <sup><415></sup>Mark 15:1). The word here rendered “hall of judgment” is from the *Latin*, and denotes “the palace of the governor of a Roman province.”

**they themselves went not into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled** — by contact with ceremonially unclean Gentiles.

**but that they might eat the passover** — If this refer to the principal part of the festival, the eating of the lamb, the question is, how our Lord and His disciples came to eat it the night before; and, as it was an *evening* meal, how ceremonial defilement contracted in the *morning* would unfit them for partaking of it, as after six o’clock it was reckoned a new day. These are questions which have occasioned immense research and learned treatises. But as the usages of the Jews appear to have somewhat varied at different times, and our present knowledge of them is not sufficient to clear up all difficulties, they are among the not very important questions which probably will never be entirely solved.

**29-32. Pilate went out to them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?** — State your charge.

**30. If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee** — They were conscious they *had no case* of which Pilate could take cognizance, and therefore insinuate that they had already found Him worthy of death by their own law; but not having the power, under the Roman government, to carry their sentence into execution, they had come merely for his sanction.

**32. That the saying ... might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die** — that is, by *crucifixion* (<sup><412></sup>John 12:32,33

Matthew 20:19); which being a Roman mode of execution, could only be carried into effect by order of the governor. (The Jewish mode in such cases as this was by *stoning*).

**33-38. Pilate ... called Jesus, and said ... Art thou the King of the**

**Jews?** — In <sup><23P</sup>Luke 23:2 they charge our Lord before Pilate with “perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a king.” Perhaps this was what occasioned Pilate’s question.

**34. Jesus answered ... Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?** — an important question for our Lord’s case, to bring out whether the word “*King*” were meant in a *political* sense, with which Pilate had a right to deal, or whether he were merely *put up* to it by His accusers, who had no claims to charge Him but such as were of a purely *religious* nature, with which Pilate had nothing to do.

**35. Pilate answered, Amos I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee to me: What hast thou done?** — that is, “Jewish questions I neither understand nor meddle with; but Thou art here on a charge which, though it *seems* only Jewish, *may* yet involve treasonable matter: As *they* state it, I cannot decide the point; tell me, then, what procedure of Thine has brought Thee into this position.” In modern phrase, Pilate’s object in this question was merely to determine the *relevancy* of the charge.

**36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world** — He does not say “not *over*,” but “not of this world” — that is, in its *origin* and *nature*; therefore “no such kingdom as need give thee or thy master the least alarm.”

**if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews** — “A very convincing argument; for if His servants did not fight to prevent their King from being delivered up to His enemies, much less would they use force for the establishment of His kingdom” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**but now** — but the fact is.

**is my kingdom not from hence** — Our Lord only says whence His kingdom is *not* — first simply affirming it, next giving proof of it, then reaffirming it. This was all that Pilate had to do with. The *positive* nature of His kingdom He would not obtrude upon one who was as little able to comprehend it, as entitled officially to information about it. (It is worthy of



notice that the “MY,” which occurs *four* times in this one verse — *thrice* of His *kingdom*, and *once* of His *servants* — is put in the emphatic form).

**37. Art thou a king then?** — There was no sarcasm or disdain in this question (as THOLUCK, ALFORD, and others, allege), else our Lord’s answer would have been different. Putting emphasis upon “*thou*,” his question betrays a mixture of *surprise* and *uneasiness*, partly at the possibility of there being, after all, something dangerous under the claim, and partly from a certain awe which our Lord’s demeanor probably struck into him.

**Thou sayest that I am a king** — It is even so.

**To this end was I** — “have I been.”

**born and for this cause came I** — am I come.

**into the world, that I may bear witness to the truth** — His *birth* expresses His manhood; His *coming into the world*, His existence before assuming humanity: The truth, then, here affirmed, though Pilate would catch little of it, was that *His Incarnation was expressly in order to the assumption of Royalty in our nature*. Yet, instead of saying, He came to be a King, which is His meaning, He says He came to *testify to the truth*. Why this? Because, in such circumstances it required a noble courage not to flinch from His royal claims; and our Lord, *conscious that He was putting forth that courage*, gives a turn to His confession expressive of it. It is to this that Paul alludes, in those remarkable words to Timothy: “I charge thee before God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who, *in the presence* of Pontius Pilate, witnessed *the good confession*” (<sup>5163</sup>1 Timothy 6:13). This one act of our Lord’s life, His courageous witness-bearing before the governor, was selected as an encouraging example of the *fidelity* which Timothy ought to display. As the Lord (says OLSHAUSEN beautifully) owned Himself *the Son of God* before the most exalted theocratic council, so He confessed His *regal dignity* in presence of the representative of the highest political authority on earth.

**Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice** — Our Lord here not only affirms that His word had in it a self-evidencing, self-recommending power, but gently insinuated the *true secret of the growth and grandeur of His kingdom* — as A KINGDOM OF TRUTH, in its highest sense, into which all souls who have learned to live and count all things but loss for the truth are, by a most heavenly attraction, drawn as into their proper element; THE KING of whom Jesus is, fetching them in and ruling them by His captivating power over their hearts.



**38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?** — that is, “Thou stirrest the question of questions, which the thoughtful of every age have asked, but never man yet answered.”

**And when he had said this** — as if, by putting such a question, he was getting into interminable and unseasonable inquiries, when this business demanded rather prompt action.

**he went out again unto the Jews** — thus missing a noble opportunity for himself, and giving utterance to that consciousness of the want of all intellectual and moral certainty, which was the feeling of every thoughtful mind at that time. “The only certainty,” says the elder PLINY, “is that nothing is certain, nor more miserable than man, nor more proud. The fearful laxity of morals at that time must doubtless be traced in a great degree to this skepticism. The revelation of the eternal truth alone was able to breathe new life into ruined human nature, and that in the apprehension of complete redemption” [OLSHAUSEN].

**and saith unto them** — in the hearing of our Lord, who had been brought forth.

**I find in him no fault** — no crime. This so exasperated “the chief priests and elders” that, afraid of losing their prey, they poured forth a volley of charges against Him, as appears from <sup><2201></sup>Luke 23:4,5: on Pilate’s affirming His innocence, “they were *the more fierce*, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.” They see no hope of getting Pilate’s sanction to His death unless they can fasten upon Him a charge of conspiracy against the government; and as *Galilee* was noted for its turbulence (<sup><2301></sup>Luke 13:1 <sup><4157></sup>Acts 5:37), and our Lord’s ministry lay chiefly there, they artfully introduce it to give color to their charge. “And the chief priests accused Him of *many things*, but He answered nothing (<sup><4153></sup>Mark 15:3). Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And He answered him to never a word, inasmuch that the governor marvelled greatly” (<sup><4273></sup>Matthew 27:13,14). See on <sup><4153></sup>Mark 15:3-5. In his perplexity, Pilate, hearing of Galilee, bethinks himself of the expedient of sending Him to Herod, in the hope of thereby further shaking off responsibility in the case. See <sup><4156></sup>Mark 15:6, and see on <sup><2206></sup>Luke 23:6-12. The return of the prisoner only deepened the perplexity of Pilate, who, “calling together the chief priests, rulers, and people,” tells them plainly that not one of their charges against “this man” had been made good, while even Herod, to whose jurisdiction he more naturally belonged, had done nothing to Him: He “will therefore chastise and release him” (<sup><2213></sup>Luke 23:13-16).

**39. But ye have a custom that I should release one unto you at the passover**, etc. — See on <sup>4157</sup>Mark 15:7-11. “On the typical import of the choice of Christ to suffer, by which Barabbas was set free, see the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, particularly <sup>4165</sup>Leviticus 16:5-10, where the subject is the *sin offering* on the great day of atonement” [KRAFFT in LUTHARDT].

# CHAPTER 19

## JOHN 19:1-16.

### JESUS BEFORE PILATE — SCOURGED — TREATED WITH OTHER SEVERITIES AND INSULTS — DELIVERED UP, AND LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.

**1-3. Pilate took Jesus and scourged him** — in hope of appeasing them. (See <sup>(155)</sup>Mark 15:15). “And the soldiers led Him away into the palace, and they call the whole band” (<sup>(156)</sup>Mark 15:16) — the body of the military cohort stationed there — to take part in the mock coronation now to be enacted.

**2. the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head** — in mockery of a regal *crown*.

**and they put on him a purple robe** — in mockery of the *imperial purple*; first “stripping him” (<sup>(172)</sup>Matthew 27:28) of His own outer garment. The robe may have been the “gorgeous” one in which Herod arrayed and sent Him back to Pilate (<sup>(231)</sup>Luke 23:11). “And they put a reed into His right hand” (<sup>(179)</sup>Matthew 27:29) — in mockery of the regal *scepter*. “And they bowed the knee before Him” (<sup>(179)</sup>Matthew 27:29).

**3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews!** — doing Him derisive homage, in the form used on approaching the emperors. “And they spit upon Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head” (<sup>(173)</sup>Matthew 27:30). The best comment on these affecting details is to *cover the face*.

**4, 5. Pilate ... went forth again, and saith ... Behold, I bring him forth to you** — am bringing, that is, going to bring him forth to you.

**that ye may know I find no fault in him** — and, by scourging Him and allowing the soldiers to make sport of Him, have gone as far to meet your exasperation as can be expected from a judge.

**5. Then Jesus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!** — There is no reason to think that *contempt* dictated this speech. There was clearly a struggle in the breast of this wretched man. Not only was he reluctant to surrender to mere clamor an innocent man, but a feeling of anxiety about

His mysterious claims, as is plain from what follows, was beginning to rack his breast, and the object of his exclamation seems to have been to *move their pity*. But, be *his* meaning what it may, those three words have been eagerly appropriated by all Christendom, and enshrined for ever in its heart as a sublime expression of its calm, rapt admiration of its suffering Lord.

**6, 7. When the chief priests ... saw him, they cried out** — their fiendish rage kindling afresh at the sight of Him.

**Crucify him, crucify him** — (See <sup><154></sup>Mark 15:14).

**Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him** — as if this would relieve *him* of the responsibility of the deed, who, by surrendering Him, incurred it all!

**7. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by oar law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God** — Their criminal charges having come to nothing, they give up that point, and as Pilate was throwing the whole responsibility upon them, they retreat into their own Jewish law, by which, as claiming equality with God (see <sup><155></sup>John 5:18 and <sup><156></sup>John 8:59), He ought to die; insinuating that it was Pilate's duty, even as civil governor, to protect their law from such insult.

**8-11. When Pilate ... heard this saying, he was the more afraid** — the name "SON OF GOD," the lofty sense evidently attached to it by His Jewish accusers, the dialogue he had already held with Him, and the dream of his wife (<sup><157></sup>Matthew 27:19), all working together in the breast of the wretched man.

**9. and went again into the judgment hall, and saith to Jesus, Whence art thou?** — beyond all doubt a question relating not to His *mission* but to His personal *origin*.

**Jesus gave him no answer** — He had said enough; the time for answering such a question was past; the weak and wavering governor is already on the point of giving way.

**10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not to me?** — The "me" is the emphatic word in the question. He falls back upon the *pride of office*, which doubtless tended to blunt the workings of his conscience.

**knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?** — said to work upon Him at once by *fear* and by *hope*.

**11. Thou couldst** — rather, "shouldst."

**have no power at all against me** — neither to crucify nor to release, nor to do anything whatever against Me [BENGEL].

**except it were** — “unless it had been.”

**given thee from above** — that is, “Thou thinkest too much of thy power, Pilate: against Me that power is none, save what is meted out to thee by special divine appointment, for a special end.”

**therefore he that delivered me unto thee** — Caiaphas, too wit — but he only as representing the Jewish authorities as a body.

**hath the greater sin** — as having better opportunities and more knowledge of such matters.

**12-16. And from thenceforth** — particularly this speech, which seems to have filled him with awe, and redoubled his anxiety.

**Pilate sought to release him** — that is, to gain their *consent* to it, for he could have done it at once on his authority.

**but the Jews cried** — seeing their advantage, and not slow to profit by it. If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend, etc. — “This was equivalent to a threat of *impeachment*, which we know was much dreaded by such officers as the procurators, especially of the character of Pilate or Felix. It also consummates the treachery and disgrace of the Jewish rulers, who were willing, for the purpose of destroying Jesus, to affect a zeal for the supremacy of a foreign prince” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. (See <sup><BIB></sup>John 19:15).

**When Pilate ... heard that, ... he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in** — “upon”

**the judgment seat** — that he might pronounce sentence against the Prisoner, on this charge, the more solemnly.

**in a place called the Pavement** — a tessellated pavement, much used by the Romans.

**in the Hebrew, Gabbatha** — from its being *raised*.

**14. It was the preparation** — that is, the day before the Jewish sabbath.

**and about the sixth hour** — The true reading here is probably, “the *third* hour” — or nine A.M. — which agrees best with the whole series of events, as well as with the other Evangelists.

**he saith to the Jews, Behold your King!** — Having now made up his mind to yield to them, he takes a sort of quiet revenge on them by this irony, which he knew would sting them. This only reawakens their cry to despatch Him.

**15. crucify your King? ... We have no king but Caesar** — “Some of those who thus cried died miserably in rebellion against Caesar forty years afterwards. But it suited their present purpose” [ALFORD].

**16. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified**, etc. — (See <sup>¶158</sup>Mark 15:15).

## <sup>¶897</sup>JOHN 19:17-30.

### CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS.

**17. And he bearing his cross** — (See on <sup>¶238</sup>Luke 23:26).

**went forth** — Compare <sup>¶831</sup>Hebrews 13:11-13, “without the camp”; “without the gate.” On arriving at the place, “they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall [wine mingled with myrrh, <sup>¶153</sup>Mark 15:23], and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink” (<sup>¶238</sup>Matthew 27:34). This potion was stupefying, and given to criminals just before execution, to deaden the sense of pain.

Fill high the bowl, and spice it well, and pour The dews oblivious: for the Cross is sharp, The Cross is sharp, and He Is tenderer than a lamb. KEBLE.

*But our Lord would die with every faculty clear, and in full sensibility to all His sufferings.*

Thou wilt feel all, that Thou may'st pity all; And rather would'st Thou wrestle with strong pain Than overcloud Thy soul, So clear in agony, Or lose one glimpse of Heaven before the time, O most entire and perfect Sacrifice, Renewed in every pulse. KEBLE.

**18. they crucified him, and two others with him** — “malefactors” (<sup>¶233</sup>Luke 23:33), “thieves” (rather “robbers,” <sup>¶238</sup>Matthew 27:38 <sup>¶157</sup>Mark 15:27).

**on either side one and Jesus in the midst** — a hellish expedient, to hold Him up as the worst of the three. But in this, as in many other of their doings, “the scripture was fulfilled, which saith (<sup>¶282</sup>Isaiah 53:12), *And he was numbered with the transgressors*” — (<sup>¶158</sup>Mark 15:28) — though the

prediction reaches deeper. “Then said Jesus” — [“probably while being nailed to the CROSS,”] [OLSHAUSEN], “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO” (<sup><0238></sup>Luke 23:34) — and again the Scripture was fulfilled which said, “And He made intercession for the transgressors” (<sup><2592></sup>Isaiah 53:12), though this also reaches deeper. (See <sup><4187></sup>Acts 3:17 13:27; and compare <sup><5113></sup>1 Timothy 1:13). Often have we occasion to observe how our Lord is the first to fulfill His own precepts — thus furnishing the right interpretation and the perfect Model of them. (See on <sup><4154></sup>Matthew 5:44). How quickly was it seen in “His martyr Stephen,” that though He had left the earth in Person, His Spirit remained behind, and Himself could, in some of His brightest lineaments, be reproduced in His disciples! (<sup><4180></sup>Acts 7:60). And what does the world in every age owe to these few words, spoken *where* and *as* they were spoken!

**19-22. Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross ... Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews ... and it was written in Hebrew** — or *Syro-Chaldaic*, the language of the country.

**and Greek** — the current language.

**and Latin** — the official language. These were the chief languages of the earth, and this secured that all spectators should be able to read it. Stung by this, the Jewish ecclesiastics entreat that it may be so altered as to express, not His real dignity, but His false claim to it. But Pilate thought he had yielded quite enough to them; and having intended expressly to spite and insult them by this title, for having got him to act against his own sense of justice, he peremptorily refused them. And thus, amidst the conflicting passions of men, was proclaimed, in the chief tongues of mankind, from the Cross itself and in circumstances which threw upon it a lurid yet grand light, the truth which drew the Magi to His manger, and will yet be owned by all the world!

**23, 24. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts; to every soldier** — the four who nailed Him to the cross, and whose perquisite they were.

**a part, and also his coat** — the Roman *tunic*, or close-fitting vest.

**without seam, woven from the top throughout** — “perhaps denoting considerable skill and labor as necessary to produce such a garment, the work probably of one or more of the women who ministered in such things unto Him, <sup><4188></sup>Luke 8:3” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**24. Let us not rend it, but cast lots ... whose it shall be, that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my raiment**

**among them; and for my vesture they did cast lots** — (<sup><4278></sup>Psalm 22:18). That a prediction so exceedingly specific — distinguishing one piece of dress from others, and announcing that while *those* should be parted amongst several, *that* should be given by lot to one person — that such a prediction should not only be fulfilled to the letter, but by a party of heathen military, without interference from either the friends of the enemies of the Crucified One, is surely worthy to be ranked among the wonders of this all-wonderful scene. Now come the *mockeries*, and from four different quarters: —

(1) “And *they that passed by* reviled Him, wagging their heads” in ridicule (<sup><4279></sup>Psalm 22:7 <sup><4280></sup>109:25; compare <sup><4286></sup>Jeremiah 18:16 <sup><4285></sup>Lamentations 2:15). “Ah!” — “Ha,” an exclamation here of derision. “Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself and come down from the cross” (<sup><4273></sup>Matthew 27:39,40 <sup><4159></sup>Mark 15:29,30). “It is evident that our Lord’s saying, or rather this *perversion* of it (for He claimed not to *destroy*, but to *rebuild* the temple destroyed by them) had greatly exasperated the feeling which the priests and Pharisees had contrived to excite against Him. It is referred to as the principal fact brought out in evidence against Him on the trial (compare <sup><4163></sup>Acts 6:13,14), as an offense for which He deserved to suffer. And it is very remarkable that now *while it was receiving its real fulfillment*, it should be made more public and more impressive by the insulting proclamation of His enemies. Hence the importance attached to it after the resurrection, <sup><4172></sup>John 2:22” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

(2) “Likewise also the *chief priests*, mocking Him, *with the scribes and elders*, said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save” (<sup><4241></sup>Matthew 27:41,42). There was a deep truth in this, as in other taunts; for *both* He could not do, having “come to give *His* life a ransom for *many*” (<sup><4118></sup>Matthew 20:28 <sup><4105></sup>Mark 10:45). No doubt this added an unknown sting to the reproach. “If He be the king of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him” (<sup><4172></sup>Matthew 27:42). *No, they would not*; for those who resisted the evidence from the resurrection of Lazarus, and from His own resurrection, were beyond the reach of any amount of merely *external* evidence. “He trusted in God that He would deliver him; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him [or ‘delight in Him,’ compare <sup><5083></sup>Psalm 18:19 <sup><4214></sup>Deuteronomy 21:14]; for He said, I am the Son of God” (<sup><4241></sup>Matthew 27:41-43). We thank you, O ye chief priests, scribes, and elders, for this triple testimony, unconsciously borne by you, to our Christ: first to *His habitual trust in God*, as a feature in His character so marked and palpable that even ye found upon it your impotent taunt;



next, to *His identity with the Sufferer of the twenty-second Psalm*, whose very words (<sup><4218></sup>Psalm 22:8) ye unwittingly appropriate, thus *serving yourselves heirs* to the dark office and impotent malignity of Messiah's enemies; and again, to the true sense of that august title which He took to Himself, "THE SON OF GOD," which He rightly interpreted at the very first (see <sup><4218></sup>John 5:18) as a claim to that *oneness of nature* with Him, and *dearness to Him*, which a son has to his father.

(3) "And *the soldiers* also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, and saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself" (<sup><4239></sup>Luke 23:36,37). They insultingly offer to share with Him their own vinegar, or sour wine, the usual drink of Roman soldiers, it being about the time of their midday meal. In the taunt of the soldiers we have one of those *undesigned coincidences* which so strikingly verify these historical records. While the ecclesiastics deride Him for calling Himself, "the *Christ*, the *King of Israel*, the *Chosen*, the *Son of God*," the soldiers, to whom all such phraseology was mere Jewish jargon, make sport of Him as a pretender to *royalty* ("KING of the Jews"), an office and dignity which it belonged to them to comprehend. "*The thieves* also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth" (<sup><4244></sup>Matthew 27:44 <sup><4152></sup>Mark 15:32). Not *both* of them, however, as some commentators unnaturally think we must understand these words; as if some sudden change came over the *penitent* one, which turned him from an unfeeling railer into a trembling petitioner. The plural "thieves" need not denote more than the *quarter* or *class* whence came this last and cruelest taunt — that is, "Not only did scoffs proceed from the *passers-by*, the *ecclesiastics*, the *soldiery*, but even from His *fellow-sufferers*," a mode of speaking which no one would think necessarily meant both of them. Compare <sup><4121></sup>Matthew 2:20, "*They* are dead which sought the child's life," meaning *Herod*; and <sup><4101></sup>Mark 9:1, "There be *some* standing here," where it is next to certain that only John, the youngest and last survivor of the apostles, is meant. And is it conceivable that this penitent thief should have first himself reviled the Savior, and then, on his views of Christ suddenly changing, he should have turned upon his fellow sufferer and fellow reviler, and rebuked him not only with dignified sharpness, but in the language of *astonishment* that he should be capable of such conduct? Besides, there is a deep calmness in all that he utters, extremely unlike what we should expect from one who was the subject of a mental revolution so sudden and total. On the scene itself, see on <sup><4239></sup>Luke 23:29-43.

**25-27. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, wife of Cleophas** — This should be read, as in the

Margin, “Clopas,” the same as “Alpheus” (<sup>400B</sup>Matthew 10:3). The “Cleopas” of <sup>424B</sup>Luke 24:18 was a different person.

**26, 27. When Jesus ... saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved, standing by, he saith to his mother, WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON! Then saith he to the disciple, BEHOLD THY MOTHER! —** What forgetfulness of self, what filial love, and to the “mother” and “son” what parting words!

**from that hour ... took her to his own home** — or, home with him; for his father Zebedee and his mother Salome were both alive, and the latter here present (<sup>4150</sup>Mark 15:40). See on <sup>403B</sup>Matthew 13:55. Now occurred the supernatural *darkness*, recorded by all the other Evangelists, but not here. “Now from the sixth hour (twelve o’clock, noon) there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour” (<sup>417B</sup>Matthew 27:45). No ordinary eclipse of the sun could have occurred at this time, it being then *full moon*, and this obscuration lasted about *twelve times* the length of any ordinary eclipse. (Compare <sup>402B</sup>Exodus 10:21,23). Beyond doubt, the divine intention of the portent was to invest this darkest of all tragedies with a gloom expressive of its real character. “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried, ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI ... *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*” (<sup>417B</sup>Matthew 27:46). As the darkness commenced at the sixth hour, the second of the Jewish hours of prayer, so it continued till the ninth hour, *the hour of the evening sacrifice*, increasing probably in depth, and *reaching its deepest gloom at the moment of this mysterious cry*, when the flame of the one great “Evening Sacrifice” was burning fiercest. The words were made to His hand. They are the opening words of a Psalm (<sup>4021</sup>Psalms 22:1) full of the last “sufferings of Christ and the following glories” (<sup>4011</sup>1 Peter 1:11). “FATHER,” was the cry in the first prayer which He uttered on the cross, for matters had not then come to the worst. “Father” was the cry of His last prayer, for matters had then passed their worst. But at this crisis of His sufferings, “Father” does not issue from His lips, for the light of a Father’s countenance was then mysteriously eclipsed. He falls back, however, on a title expressive of His *official* relation, which, though lower and more distant in itself, yet when grasped in pure and naked faith was mighty in its claims, and rich in psalmodic associations. And what deep earnestness is conveyed by the redoubling of this title! But as for the cry itself, it will never be fully comprehended. An absolute desertion is not indeed to be thought of; but a total eclipse of the *felt* sense of God’s presence it certainly expresses. It expresses *surprise*, as under the experience of something not only *never before known*, but *inexplicable* on the footing which had till then subsisted between Him and God. *It is a question which the lost cannot utter*. They are forsaken, but they know why. Jesus is forsaken, but *does*

*not know and demands to know why.* It is thus *the cry of conscious innocence, but of innocence* unavailing to draw down, at that moment, the least token of approval from the unseen Judge — innocence whose only recognition at that moment lay in the thick surrounding gloom which but reflected the horror of great darkness that invested His own spirit. *There was indeed a cause for it*, and He knew it too — the “why” must not be pressed so far as to exclude this. *He must taste this bitterest of the wages of sin “who did no sin”* (<sup><4122></sup>1 Peter 2:22). But that is not the point now. In Him there was no cause at all (<sup><6143></sup>John 14:30) and He takes refuge in the glorious fact. When no ray from above shines in upon Him, He strikes a light out of His own breast. If God will not own Him, He shall own Himself. On the rock of His unsullied allegiance to Heaven He will stand, till the light of Heaven returns to His spirit. And it is near to come. While He is yet speaking, the fierceness of the flame is beginning to abate. One incident and insult more, and the experience of one other predicted element of suffering, and the victory is His. The incident, and the insult springing out of it, is the misunderstanding of the cry, for we can hardly suppose that it was anything else. “Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias” (<sup><4174></sup>Matthew 27:47).

**28-30. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished** — that is, the moment for the fulfillment of the last of them; for there was one other small particular, and the time was come for that too, in consequence of the burning thirst which the fevered state of His frame occasioned (<sup><4275></sup>Psalm 22:15).

**that the scripture** — (<sup><4321></sup>Psalm 69:21).

**might be fulfilled saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar** — on the offer of the soldiers’ vinegar, see on <sup><6124></sup>John 19:24.

**and they** — “one of them,” (<sup><4174></sup>Matthew 27:48).

**29. filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon** — a stalk of

**hyssop, and put it to his mouth** — Though a stalk of this plant does not exceed eighteen inches in length, it would suffice, as the feet of crucified persons were not raised high. “The rest said, Let be” — [that is, as would seem, ‘Stop that officious service’] “let us see whether Elias will come to save Him” (<sup><4174></sup>Matthew 27:49). This was the last cruelty He was to suffer, but it was one of the most unfeeling. “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice” (<sup><4236></sup>Luke 23:46). This “*loud voice*,” noticed by three of the Evangelists, does not imply, as some able interpreters contend, that our Lord’s strength was so far from being exhausted that He needed not to die then, and surrendered up His life sooner than Nature required, merely

because it was the appointed time. It was indeed the appointed time, but time that He should be “crucified *through weakness*” (~~4334~~1 Corinthians 13:4), and Nature was now reaching its utmost exhaustion. But just as even His own dying saints, particularly the martyrs of Jesus, have sometimes had such gleams of coming glory immediately before breathing their last, as to impart to them a strength to utter their feelings which has amazed the by-standers, so this *mighty voice* of the expiring Redeemer was nothing else but the exultant spirit of the Dying Victor, receiving the fruit of His travail just about to be embraced, and nerving the organs of utterance to an ecstatic expression of its sublime feelings (not so much in the *immediately* following words of tranquil surrender, in Luke, as in the *final* shout, recorded only by John): “FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT!” (~~4234~~Luke 23:46). Yes, the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. His soul has emerged from its mysterious horrors; “*My God*” is heard no more, but in unclouded light He yields sublime into His *Father’s* hands the infinitely precious spirit — using here also the words of those matchless Psalms (~~4315~~Psalms 31:5) which were ever on His lips. “As the Father receives the spirit of Jesus, so Jesus receives those of the faithful” (~~4409~~Acts 7:59) [BENGEL]. And now comes the expiring mighty shout.

**30. It is finished! and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost** — What is finished? The Law is fulfilled as never before, nor since, in His “obedience unto death, even the death of the cross”; Messianic prophecy is accomplished; Redemption is completed; “He hath finished the transgression, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and sealed up the vision and prophecy, and anointed a holy of holies”; He has inaugurated the kingdom of God and given birth to a new world.

## ~~4334~~ JOHN 19:31-42.

### BURIAL OF CHRIST.

**31-37. the preparation** — sabbath eve.

**that the bodies should not remain** — over night, against the Mosaic law (~~4322~~Deuteronomy 21:22,23).

**on the sabbath day, for that sabbath day was an high day** — or “great” day — the first day of unleavened bread, and, as concurring with an ordinary sabbath, the most solemn season of the ecclesiastical year. Hence their peculiar jealousy lest the law should be infringed.

**besought Pilate that their legs might be broken** — to hasten their death, which was done in such cases with clubs.

**33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already** — there being in *His* case elements of suffering, unknown to the malefactors, which might naturally hasten His death, lingering though it always was in such cases, not to speak of His *previous* sufferings.

**they brake not his legs** — a fact of vast importance, as showing that the *reality* of His death was visible to those whose business it was to see to it. The *other* divine purpose served by it will appear presently.

**34. But one of the soldiers** — to make assurance of the fact doubly sure.

**with a spear pierced his side** — making a wound deep and wide, as indeed is plain from <sup>ⓖⓗⓅ</sup>John 20:27,29. Had life still remained, it must have fled now.

**and forthwith came thereout blood and water** — “It is now well known that the effect of long-continued and intense agony is frequently to produce a secretion of a colorless lymph within the pericardium (the membrane enveloping the heart), amounting in many cases to a very considerable quantity” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**35. And he that saw it bare record** — hath borne witness.

**and his witness is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe** — This solemn way of referring to his own testimony in this matter has no reference to what he says in his Epistle about Christ’s “coming by water and blood” (see on <sup>ⓖⓗⓅ</sup>1 John 5:6), but is intended to call attention both to the fulfillment of Scripture in these particulars, and to the undeniable evidence he was thus furnishing of the *reality* of Christ’s death, and consequently of His resurrection; perhaps also to meet the growing tendency, in the Asiatic churches, to deny the reality of our Lord’s body, or that “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (<sup>ⓖⓗⓅ</sup>1 John 4:1-3).

**36. that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken** — The reference is to the paschal lamb, as to which this ordinance was stringent (<sup>ⓖⓗⓅ</sup>Exodus 12:46 <sup>ⓖⓗⓅ</sup>Numbers 9:12. Compare <sup>ⓖⓗⓅ</sup>1 Corinthians 5:7). But though we are to see here the fulfillment of a very definite typical ordinance, we shall, on searching deeper, see in it a *remarkable divine interposition to protect the sacred body of Christ from the last indignity after He had finished the work given Him to do*. Every imaginable indignity had been permitted *before that*, up to the moment of His death. But no sooner is that over than an Unseen hand is found to have provided against the clubs of the rude soldiers coming in contact with that

temple of the Godhead. Very different from such violence was that *spear-thrust*, for which not only doubting Thomas would thank the soldier, but intelligent believers in every age, to whom the certainty of their Lord's death and resurrection is the life of their whole Christianity.

**37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced** — The quotation is from <sup><3820></sup>Zechariah 12:10; not taken as usual from the *Septuagint* (the current *Greek* version), which here is all wrong, but direct from the *Hebrew*. And there is a remarkable nicety in the choice of the words employed both by the prophet and the Evangelist for “piercing.” The word in Zechariah means to *thrust through* with spear, javelin, sword, or any such weapon. In that sense it is used in all the ten places, besides this, where it is found. How suitable this was to express the action of the Roman soldier, is manifest; and our Evangelist uses the exactly corresponding word, which the *Septuagint* certainly does not. Very different is the other word for “pierce” in <sup><4026></sup>Psalms 22:16, “*They pierced my hands and my feet.*” The word there used is one signifying to *bore* as with an awl or hammer. How striking are these small niceties!

**38-40. Joseph of Arimathea** — “a rich man” (<sup><4057></sup>Matthew 27:57), thus fulfilling <sup><2539></sup>Isaiah 53:9; “an honorable counsellor,” a member of the Sanhedrim, and of good condition, “which also waited for the kingdom of God” (<sup><4158></sup>Mark 15:43), a devout expectant of Messiah's kingdom; “a good man and a just, the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them” (<sup><4239></sup>Luke 23:50,51 — he had gone the length, perhaps, of dissenting and protesting in open council against the condemnation of our Lord); “who also himself was Jesus' disciple,” (<sup><4057></sup>Matthew 27:57).

**being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews** — “He went in boldly unto Pilate” (<sup><4158></sup>Mark 15:43) — literally, “having taken courage went in,” or “had the boldness to go in.” Mark alone, as his manner is, notices the *boldness* which this required. The act would without doubt identify him for the first time with the disciples of Christ. Marvellous it certainly is, that one who while Jesus was yet alive merely refrained from condemning Him, not having the courage to espouse His cause by one positive act, should, now that He was dead, and His cause apparently dead with Him, summon up courage to go in personally to the Roman governor and ask permission to take down and inter the body. But if this be the first instance, it is not the last, that *a seemingly dead Christ has wakened a sympathy which a living one had failed to evoke. The heroism of faith is usually kindled by desperate circumstances, and is not seldom displayed by those who before were the most timid, and scarce known as disciples at all.* “And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead” (<sup><4154></sup>Mark 15:44) — rather “wondered that he was already dead.” “And calling the centurion, he asked



him whether He had been any while dead” (<sup><4154></sup>Mark 15:44) — Pilate could hardly credit what Joseph had told him, that He had been dead “some time,” and, before giving up the body to His friends, would learn how the fact stood from the centurion, whose business it was to oversee the execution. “And when he knew it of the centurion” (<sup><4155></sup>Mark 15:45), that it was as Joseph had said, “he gave” — rather “made a gift of” — “the body to Joseph”; struck, possibly, with the rank of the petitioner and the dignified boldness of the petition, in contrast with the spirit of the other party and the low rank to which he had been led to believe all the followers of Christ belonged. Nor would he be unwilling to Show that he was not going to carry this black affair any farther. But, whatever were Pilate’s motives, two most blessed objects were thus secured:

(1) *The reality of our Lords death was attested* by the party of all others most competent to decide on it, and certainly free from all bias — the officer in attendance — in full reliance on whose testimony Pilate surrendered the body:

(2) The dead Redeemer, thus delivered out of the hands of His enemies, and committed by the supreme political authority to the care of His friends, was thereby protected from all further indignities; a thing most befitting indeed, now that His work was done, but impossible, so far as we can see, if His enemies had been at liberty to do with Him as they pleased. How wonderful are even the minutest features of this matchless History!

**39. also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night** — “This remark corresponds to the secrecy of Joseph’s discipleship, just noticed, and calls attention to the similarity of their previous character and conduct, and the remarkable change which had now taken place” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**brought ... myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight** — an immense quantity, betokening the greatness of their love, but part of it probably intended as a layer for the spot on which the body was to lie. (See <sup><4134></sup>2 Chronicles 16:14) [MEYER].

**40. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury** — the mixed and pulverized myrrh and aloes shaken into the folds, and the entire body, thus swathed, wrapt in an outer covering of “clean linen cloth” (<sup><4175></sup>Matthew 27:59). Had the Lord’s own friends had the least reason to think that the spark of life was still in Him, would *they* have done this? But even if one could conceive them mistaken, could anyone have lain thus enveloped for the period during which He was in the grave, and life still remained?

Impossible. When, therefore, He walked forth from the tomb, we can say with the most absolute certainty, “Now is Christ *risen from the dead*, and become the first-fruits of them that slept” (~~4850~~1 Corinthians 15:20). No wonder that the learned and the barbarians alike were prepared to die for the name of the Lord Jesus; for such evidence was to the unsophisticated resistless. (No mention is made of *anointing* in this operation. No doubt it was a hurried proceeding, for fear of interruption, and because it was close on the sabbath, the women seem to have set this as their proper task “as soon as the sabbath should be past” [~~4166~~Mark 16:1]. But as the Lord graciously held it as undesignedly anticipated by Mary at Bethany [~~4148~~Mark 14:8], so this was probably all the anointing, in the strict sense of it, which He received.)

**41, 42. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulcher** — The choice of this tomb was, on *their* part, dictated by the double circumstance that it was so near at hand, and by its belonging to a friend of the Lord; and as there was need of haste, even they would be struck with the providence which thus supplied it. “There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jew’s preparation day, for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.” But there was one recommendation of it which probably would not strike them; but God had it in view. Not its being “hewn out of a rock” (~~4156~~Mark 15:46), accessible only at the entrance, which doubtless would impress them with its security and suitableness. But it was “a new sepulcher” (~~4394~~John 19:41), “*wherein never man before was laid*” (~~4253~~Luke 23:53): and Matthew (~~4261~~Matthew 27:60) says that Joseph laid Him “in *his own new tomb*, which he had hewn out in the rock” — doubtless for his own use, though the Lord had higher use for it. Thus as He rode into Jerusalem on an ass “*whereon never man before had sat*” (~~4112~~Mark 11:2), so now He shall lie in a tomb *wherein never man before had lain*, that from these specimens it may be seen that in all things He was “SEPARATE FROM SINNERS” (~~3026~~Hebrews 7:26).



# CHAPTER 20

## JOHN 20:1-18.

### MARY'S VISIT TO THE SEPULCHRE, AND RETURN TO IT WITH PETER AND JOHN — HER RISEN LORD APPEARS TO HER.

**1, 2. The first day ... cometh Mary Magdalene early**, etc. — (See on ~~MARK~~ Mark 16:1-4; and ~~MATTHEW~~ Matthew 28:1,2).

**she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher** — Dear disciple! thy dead Lord is to thee “the Lord” still.

**3-10. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came first to the sepulcher** — These particulars have a singular air of artless truth about them. Mary, in her grief, runs to the two apostles who were soon to be so closely associated in proclaiming the Savior's resurrection, and they, followed by Mary, hasten to see with their own eyes. The younger disciple outruns the older; love haply supplying swifter wings. He stoops, he gazes in, but enters not the open sepulcher, held back probably by a reverential fear. The bolder Peter, coming up, goes in at once, and is rewarded with bright evidence of what had happened.

**6-7. seeth the linen clothes lie** — lying.

**And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes** — not loosely, as if hastily thrown down, and indicative of a hurried and disorderly removal.

**but wrapped** — folded.

**together in a place by itself** — showing with what grand tranquillity “the Living One” had walked forth from “the dead” (~~LUKE~~ Luke 24:5). “Doubtless the two attendant angels (~~JOHN~~ John 20:12) did this service for the Rising One, the one disposing of the linen clothes, the other of the napkin” [BENGEL].

**8. Then went in ... that other disciple which came first to the sepulcher** — The repetition of this, in connection with his not having gone in till after Peter, seems to show that at the moment of penning these words the

advantage which each of these loving disciples had of the other was present to his mind.

**and he saw and believed** — Probably he means, though he does not say, that he believed in his Lord's resurrection more immediately and certainly than Peter.

**9. For as yet they knew** — that is, understood.

**not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead** — In other words, they believed in His resurrection at first, not because they were prepared by Scripture to expect it; but *facts* carried resistless conviction of it in the first instance to their minds, and furnished a key to the Scripture predictions of it.

**11-15. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping**, etc. — Brief was the stay of those two men. But Mary, arriving perhaps by another direction after they left, lingers at the spot, weeping for her missing Lord. As she gazes through her tears on the open tomb, she also ventures to stoop down and look into it, when lo! “two angels in white” (as from the world of light, and see on <sup>488B</sup>Matthew 28:3) appear to her in a “sitting” posture, “as having finished some business, and awaiting some one to impart tidings to” [BENGEL].

**12. one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain** — not merely proclaiming silently the *entire* charge they had had of the body, of Christ [quoted in LUTHARDT], but rather, possibly, calling mute attention to the narrow space within which the Lord of glory had contracted Himself; as if they would say, Come, see within what limits, marked off by the interval here between us two, *the Lord* lay! But she is in tears, and these suit not the scene of so glorious an Exit. They are going to point out to her the incongruity.

**13. Woman, why weepest thou?** — You would think the vision too much for a lone woman. But absorbed in the one Object of her affection and pursuit, she speaks out her grief without fear.

**Because**, etc. — that is, Can I choose but weep, when “they have taken away,” etc. repeating her very words to Peter and John. On this she turned herself and saw Jesus Himself standing beside her, but took Him for the gardener. Clad therefore in some such style He must have been. But if any ask, as too curious interpreters do, whence He got those habiliments, we answer [with OLSHAUSEN and LUTHARDT] where the two angels got theirs. Nor did the voice of His first words disclose Him to Mary — “Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?” He will *try* her ere he *tell* her. She

answers not the stranger's question, but comes straight to her point with him.

**15. Sir, if thou have borne him hence** — borne *whom*? She says not. She can think only of *One*, and thinks others must understand her. It reminds one of the question of the Spouse, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" (~~218~~ Song of Solomon 3:3).

**tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away** — Wilt thou, dear fragile woman? But it is the language of sublime affection, that thinks itself fit for anything if once in possession of its Object. It is enough. Like Joseph, He can no longer restrain Himself (~~481~~ Genesis 45:1).

**16, 17. Jesus saith unto her, Mary** — It is not now the distant, though respectful, "Woman." It is the oft-repeated name, uttered, no doubt, with all the wonted manner, and bringing a rush of unutterable and overpowering associations with it.

**She turned herself, and saith to him, Rabboni!** — But that single word of transported recognition was not enough for woman's full heart. Not knowing the change which had passed upon Him, she hastens to express by her action what words failed to clothe; but she is checked.

**17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father** — Old familiarities must now give place to new and more awful yet sweeter approaches; but for these the time has not come yet. This seems the spirit, at least, of these mysterious words, on which much difference of opinion has obtained, and not much that is satisfactory said.

**but go to my brethren** — (Compare ~~418~~ Matthew 28:10 ~~501~~ Hebrews 2:11,17). That He had still our Humanity, and therefore "*is not ashamed to call us brethren*," is indeed grandly evidenced by these words. But it is worthy of most reverential notice, that *we nowhere read of anyone who presumed to call Him Brother*. "My brethren: Blessed Jesus, who are these? Were they not Thy followers? yea, Thy forsakers? How dost Thou raise these titles with Thyself! At first they were Thy *servants*; then *disciples*; a little before Thy death, they were Thy *friends*; now, after Thy resurrection, they were Thy *brethren*. But oh, mercy without measure! how wilt Thou, how canst Thou call *them* brethren whom, in Thy last parting, Thou foundest fugitives? Did they not run from Thee? Did not one of them rather leave his inmost coat behind him than not be quit of Thee? And yet Thou sayest, 'Go, tell My brethren! It is not in the power of the sins of our infirmity to unbrother us'" [BISHOP HALL].

**I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God** — words of incomparable glory! Jesus had called God habitually His *Father*, and on one occasion, in His darkest moment, His *God*. But both are here united, expressing that full-orbed relationship which embraces in its vast sweep at once Himself and His redeemed. Yet, note well, He says not, *Our Father* and *our God*. All the deepest of the Church fathers were wont to call attention to this, as expressly designed to distinguish between what God is to Him and to us — *His Father essentially, ours not so: our God essentially, His not so: His God only in connection with us: our God only in connection with Him*.

**18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her** — *To a woman was this honor given to be the first that saw the risen Redeemer, and that woman was not His mother.* (See on <sup><4116></sup>Mark 16:9).

## <sup><4119></sup>JOHN 20:19-23.

### JESUS APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES.

**19-23. the same day at evening, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus** — plainly not by the ordinary way of entrance.

**and saith unto them Peace be unto you** — not the mere *wish* that even His own exalted peace might be theirs (<sup><4147></sup>John 14:27), but conveying it into their hearts, even as He “opened their understandings to understand the scriptures” (<sup><4245></sup>Luke 24:45).

**20. And when he had so said, he showed them his hands and his side** — not only as *ocular* and *tangible* evidence of the *reality* of His resurrection (See on <sup><4237></sup>Luke 24:37-43), but as through “the *power* of that resurrection” dispensing all His peace to men.

**Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.**

**21. Then said Jesus** — prepared now to listen to Him in a new character.

**Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, so send I you** — (See on <sup><4178></sup>John 17:18).

**22. he breathed on them** — a symbolical conveyance to them of the Spirit.

**and saith, Receive ye the Holy Ghost** — an earnest and first-fruits of the more copious Pentecostal effusion.

**23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them**, etc. — In any *literal* and *authoritative* sense *this power was never exercised by one of the apostles*, and plainly *was never understood by themselves as possessed by them or conveyed to them*. (See on <sup><B16></sup>Matthew 16:19). The power to intrude upon the relation between men and God cannot have been given by Christ to His ministers in any but a *ministerial* or *declarative* sense — as the authorized interpreters of His word, while in the *actings* of His ministers, the real nature of the power committed to them is seen in the exercise of *church discipline*.

## <sup><B16></sup>JOHN 20:24-29.

### JESUS AGAIN APPEARS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES.

**24, 25. But Thomas** — (See on <sup><B16></sup>John 11:16).

**was not with them when Jesus came** — why, we know not, though we are loath to think (with STIER, ALFORD and LUTHARDT) it was *intentional*, from sullen despondency. The fact merely is here stated, as a loving apology for his slowness of belief.

**25. We have seen the Lord** — This way of speaking of Jesus (as <sup><B16></sup>John 20:20 and <sup><B16></sup>John 21:7), so suited to His resurrection-state, was soon to become the prevailing style.

**Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe** — The very form of this speech betokens the strength of the unbelief. “It is not, *If I shall see I shall believe*, but, *Unless I shall see I will not believe*; nor does he expect to see, although the others tell him they had” [BENGEL]. How Christ Himself viewed this state of mind, we know from <sup><B16></sup>Mark 16:14, “He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.” But whence sprang this pertinacity of resistance in *such* minds? Not certainly from reluctance to believe, but as in Nathanael (see on <sup><B16></sup>John 1:46) from mere dread of mistake in so vital a matter.

**26-29. And after eight days** — that is, on the eighth, or first day of the preceding week. They probably met every day during the preceding week, but their Lord designedly reserved His second appearance among them till

the recurrence of His resurrection day, that He might thus inaugurate the delightful sanctities of THE LORD'S DAY (~~and~~ Revelation 1:10).

**disciples were within, and Thomas with them ... Jesus ... stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.**

**27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither ... behold ... put it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing** — “There is something rhythmical in these words, and they are purposely couched in the words of Thomas himself, to put him to shame” [LUTHARDT]. But wish what condescension and gentleness is this done!

**28. Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God** — That Thomas did *not* do what Jesus invited him to do, and what he had made the condition of his believing, seems plain from ~~and~~ John 20:29 (“Because thou hast *seen* Me, thou hast believed”). He is overpowered, and the glory of Christ now breaks upon him in a flood. His exclamation surpasses all that had been yet uttered, nor can it be surpassed by anything that ever will be uttered in earth or heaven. On the striking parallel in Nathanael, see on ~~and~~ John 1:49. The Socinian invasion of the supreme divinity of Christ here manifestly taught — as if it were a mere call upon God in a fit of astonishment — is beneath notice, save for the profanity it charges upon this disciple, and the straits to which it shows themselves reduced.

**29. because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed** — words of measured commendation, but of indirect and doubtless painfully — felt rebuke: that is, ‘Thou hast indeed believed; it is well: it is only on the evidence of thy senses, and after peremptorily refusing all evidence short of that.’

**blessed they that have not seen, and yet have believed** — “Wonderful indeed and rich in blessing for us who have not seen Him, is this closing word of the Gospel” [ALFORD].

## ~~and~~ JOHN 20:30,31.

### FIRST CLOSE OF THIS GOSPEL.

The connection of these verses with the last words of ~~and~~ John 20:29 is beautiful: that is, And indeed, as the Lord pronounced them blessed who not having seen Him have yet believed, so for that one end have the whole

contents of this Gospel been recorded, that all who read it may believe on Him, and believing, have life in that blessed name.

**30. many other signs** — miracles.

**31. But these are written** — as sufficient specimens.

**the Christ, the Son of God** — the one His *official*, the other His *personal*, title.

**believing ... may have life** — (See on ~~John~~ John 6:51-54).

# CHAPTER 21

## JOHN 21:1-23.

### SUPPLEMENTARY PARTICULARS.

(That this chapter was added by another hand has been asserted, against clear evidence to the contrary, by some late critics, chiefly because the Evangelist had *concluded* his part of the work with ~~END~~ John 20:30,31. But neither in the Epistles of the New Testament, nor in other good authors, is it unusual to insert supplementary matter, and so have more than one conclusion).

**1, 2. Jesus showed himself again** — manifested himself again.

**and on this wise he manifested himself** — This way of speaking shows that after His resurrection He appeared to them but *occasionally*, *unexpectedly*, and in a way quite *unearthly*, though yet *really* and *corporeally*.

**2. Nathanael** — (See on ~~END~~ Matthew 10:3).

**3-6. Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing** — (See on ~~END~~ Luke 5:11).

**that night ... caught nothing** — as at the first miraculous draught (see on ~~END~~ Luke 5:5); no doubt so ordered that the miracle might strike them the more by contrast. The same principle is seen in operation throughout much of Christ's ministry, and is indeed a great law of God's spiritual procedure with His people.

**4. Jesus stood** — (Compare ~~END~~ John 20:19,26).

**but the disciples knew not it was Jesus** — Perhaps there had been some considerable interval since the last manifestation, and having agreed to betake themselves to their secular employment, they would be unprepared to expect Him.

**5. Children** — This term would not necessarily identify Him, being not unusual from any superior; but when they did recognize Him, they would feel it sweetly like Himself.

**have ye any meat?** — provisions, supplies, meaning *fish*.



**They answered ... No** — This was in His wonted style, making them *tell* their case, and so the better prepare them for what was coming.

**6. he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship** — no doubt, by this very specific direction, intending to reveal to them His knowledge of the deep and power over it.

**7-11. that disciple whom Jesus loved, said, It is the Lord** — again having the advantage of his brother in quickness of recognition (see on <sup><4308></sup>John 20:8), to be followed by an alacrity in Peter *all his own*.

**he was naked** — his vest only on, worn next the body.

**cast himself into the sea** — the shallow part, not more than a hundred yards from the water's edge (<sup><4308></sup>John 21:8), not meaning therefore to swim, but to get sooner to Jesus than in the full boat which they could hardly draw to shore.

**8. the other disciples came in a little ship** — by ship.

**9. they saw** — “see.”

**a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread** — By comparing this with <sup><1906></sup>1 Kings 19:6, and similar passages, the unseen agency by which Jesus made this provision will appear evident.

**10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish ye have now caught** — Observe the double supply thus provided — His and theirs. The meaning of this will perhaps appear presently.

**11. Peter went up** — into the boat; went aboard.

**and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken** — The manifest reference here to the former miraculous draught (<sup><4308></sup>Luke 5:1-11) furnishes the key to this scene. There the draught was *symbolical* of the success of their future ministry: While “Peter and all that were with him were astonished at the draught of the fishes which they had taken, Jesus said unto him, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” Nay, when first called, in the act of “casting their net into the sea, for they were fishers,” the same *symbolic* reference was made to their secular occupation: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (<sup><4308></sup>Matthew 4:18,19). Here, then, if but the same symbolic reference be kept in view, the design of the whole scene will, we think, be clear. The *multitude* and the *size* of the fishes *they* caught symbolically foreshadowed the vast success of their now fast approaching ministry, and this only as a beginning of successive

draughts, through the agency of a Christian ministry, till, “as the waters cover the sea, the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” And whereas, at the first miraculous draught, the net “was breaking” through the weight of what it contained — expressive of *the difficulty with which, after they had ‘caught men,’ they would be able to retain, or keep them from escaping back into the world* — while here, “for all they were so many, yet was not the net broken,” are we not reminded of such sayings as these (~~408~~ John 10:28): “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand” [LUTHARDT]? But it is not through the agency of a Christian ministry that all true disciples are gathered. Jesus Himself, by unseen methods, gathers some, who afterwards are recognized by the constituted fishers of men, and mingle with the fruit of their labors. And are not these symbolized by that portion of our Galilean repast which the fishers found, in some unseen way, made ready to their hand?

**12-14. none ... durst ask him, Who art thou, knowing it was the Lord** — implying that they *would* have liked Him just to say, “It is I”; but having such convincing *evidence* they were afraid of being “upbraided for their unbelief and hardness of heart” if they ventured to put the question.

**13. Jesus ... taketh bread** — the bread.

and giveth them, and *the* fish likewise — (See on ~~424~~ Luke 24:30).

**14. This is the third time that Jesus showed himself** — was manifested.

**to his disciples** — His *assembled* disciples; for if we reckon His appearances to individual disciples, they were more.

**15-17. when they had dined, Jesus saith** — Silence appears to have reigned during the meal; unbroken on *His* part, that by their mute observation of Him they might have their assurance of His identity the more confirmed; and on *theirs*, from reverential shrinking to speak till He did.

**Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?** — referring lovingly to those sad words of Peter, shortly before denying his Lord, “Though *all men* shall be offended because of Thee, *yet will I never* be offended” (~~408~~ Matthew 26:33), and intending by this allusion to bring the whole scene vividly before his mind and put him to shame.

**Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee** — He adds not, “more than these,” but prefixes a touching appeal to the Savior’s own omniscience for the truth of his protestation, which makes it a totally different kind of speech from his former.

**He saith unto him, Feed my lambs** — It is surely wrong to view this term as a mere diminutive of affection, and as meaning the same thing as “the sheep” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. It is much more according to usage to understand by the “lambs,” *young and tender* disciples, whether in age or Christian standing (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 40:11 <sup>4002</sup>John 2:12,13), and by the “sheep” the more *mature*. Shall we say (with many) that Peter was here reinstated in office? Not exactly, since he was not actually excluded from it. But after such conduct as his, the deep wound which the honor of Christ had received, the stain brought on his office, the damage done to his high standing among his brethren, and even his own comfort, in prospect of the great work before him, required some such renewal of his call and re-establishment of his position as this.

**16. He saith to him ... the second time ... lovest thou me**, etc. — In this repetition of the question, though the wound was meant to be reopened, the words “*more than these*” are not repeated; for Christ is a *tender* as well as *skillful* Physician, and Peter’s silence on that point was confession enough of his sin and folly. On Peter’s repeating his protestation in the same words, our Lord rises higher in the manifestation of His restoring grace.

**Feed** — keep.

**my sheep** — It has been observed that the word here is studiously changed, from one signifying simply to *feed*, to one signifying to *tend* as a shepherd, denoting the *abiding* exercise of that vocation, and in its highest functions.

**17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said the third time**, etc. — This was the Physician’s deepest incision into the wound, while yet smarting under the two former probings. Not till now would Peter discern the object of this succession of thrusts. The third time reveals it all, bringing up such a rush of dreadful recollections before his view, of his “*thrice* denying that he knew Him,” that he feels it to the quick. It was fitting that he should; it was meant that he should. But this accomplished, the painful dialogue concludes with a delightful “Feed My sheep”; as if He should say, “Now, Simon, the last speck of the cloud which overhung thee since that night of nights is dispelled: Henceforth thou art to Me and to My work as if no such scene had ever happened.”

**18, 19. When thou wast young** — embracing the whole period of life to the verge of old age.

**thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst** — wast thine own master.

**when ... old thou shalt stretch forth thine hands** — to be bound for execution, though not necessarily meaning *on a cross*. There is no reason, however, to doubt the very early tradition that Peter's death was by crucifixion.

**19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God** — not, therefore, a mere prediction of the manner of his *death*, but of the *honor* to be conferred upon him by dying for his Master. And, indeed, beyond doubt, this prediction was intended to follow up his triple restoration: — “Yes, Simon, thou shalt not only feed My lambs, and feed My sheep, but after a long career of such service, shalt be counted worthy to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

**And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me** — By thus connecting the utterance of this prediction with the invitation to follow Him, the Evangelist would indicate the deeper sense in which the call was understood, not merely to go along with Him at that moment, but to come after Him, “*taking up his cross*.”

**20, 21. Peter, turning about** — showing that he followed immediately as directed.

**seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on Jesus' breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?** — The Evangelist makes these allusions to the peculiar familiarity to which he had been admitted on the most memorable of all occasions, perhaps lovingly to account for Peter's somewhat forward question about him to Jesus; which is the rather probable, as it was at Peter's suggestion that he put the question about the traitor which he here recalls (John 13:24,25).

**21. Peter ... saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?** — What of this man? or, How shall it fare with him?

**22, 23. Jesus saith to him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me** — From the fact that John alone of the Twelve survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and so witnessed the commencement of that series of events which belongs to “the last days,” many good interpreters think that this is a virtual prediction of fact, and not a mere supposition. But this is very doubtful, and it seems more natural to consider our Lord as intending to give *no positive indication* of John's fate at all, but to signify that this was a matter which belonged to the Master of both, who would disclose or conceal it as He thought proper, and that Peter's part was to mind his own affairs. Accordingly, in “follow thou

Me,” the word “*thou*” is emphatic. Observe the absolute disposal of human life which Christ claims: “*If I will* that he tarry till I come,” etc.

**23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die** — into which they the more easily fell from the prevalent expectation that Christ’s second coming was then near at hand.

**yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die** — The Evangelist is jealous for His Master’s honor, which his death might be thought to compromise if such a misunderstanding should not be corrected.

## JOHN 21:24, 25.

### FINAL CLOSE OF THIS GOSPEL.

**24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things** — thus identifying the author of this book with all that it says of this disciple.

**we know that his testimony is true** — (Compare  John 19:35).

**25. And there are many other things which Jesus did** — (Compare  John 20:30,31).

**if ... written every one, I suppose** — an expression used to show that what follows is not to be pressed too far.

**even the world itself would not hold the books**, etc. — not a *mere* hyperbolical expression, unlike the sublime simplicity of this writer, but intended to let his reader know that, even now that he had done, he felt his materials so far from being exhausted, that he was still running over, and could multiply “Gospels” to almost any extent within the strict limits of what “Jesus did.” But in the *limitation* of these matchless histories, in point of number, there is as much of that divine wisdom which has presided over and pervades the living oracles, as in their *variety* and *fullness*.

# THE ACTS

## OF THE APOSTLES

*Commentary by* **DAVID BROWN**

### INTRODUCTION

THIS book is to the Gospels what the fruit is to the tree that bears it. In the Gospels we see the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying: in the Acts we see it bringing forth much fruit (~~<6124>~~John 12:24). There we see Christ purchasing the Church with His own blood: here we see the Church, so purchased, rising into actual existence; first among the Jews of Palestine, and next among the surrounding Gentiles, until it gains a footing in the great capital of the ancient world — sweeping majestically from Jerusalem to Rome. Nor is this book of less value as an Introduction to the Epistles which follow it, than as a Sequel to the Gospels which precede it. For without this history the Epistles of the New Testament — presupposing, as they do, the historical circumstances of the parties addressed, and deriving from these so much of their freshness, point, and force — would in no respect be what they now are, and would in a number of places be scarcely intelligible.

The genuineness, authenticity, and canonical authority of this book were never called in question within the ancient Church. It stands immediately after the Gospels, in the catalogues of the *Homologoumena*, or universally acknowledged books of the New Testament (see *Introduction* to our larger *Commentary*, Vol. V, pp. iv, v). It was rejected, indeed, by certain heretical sects in the second and third centuries — by the Ebionites, the Severians (see EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.29), the Marcionites, and the Manicheans: but the totally uncritical character of their objections (see *Introduction* above referred to, pp. xiii, xiv) not only deprives them of all weight, but indirectly shows on what solid grounds the Christian Church had all along proceeded in recognizing this book.

In our day, however, its authenticity has, like that of all the leading books of the New Testament, been made the subject of keen and protracted controversy. DE WETTE, while admitting Luke to be the author of the entire work, pronounces the earlier portion of it to have been drawn up from

unreliable sources (*New-Testament Introduction*, 2a, 2C). But the Tübingen school, with BAUR at their head, have gone much farther. As their fantastic theory of the post-Joannean date of the Gospels could not pretend even to a hearing so long as the authenticity of the Acts of the Apostles remained unshaken, they contend that the earlier portion of this work can be shown to be unworthy of credit, while the latter portion is in flat contradiction to the Epistle to the Galatians — which this school regard as unassailable — and bears internal evidence of being a designed distortion of facts for the purpose of setting up the catholic form which Paul gave to Christianity in opposition to the narrow Judaic but original form of it which Peter preached, and which after the death of the apostles was held exclusively by the sect of the Ebionites. It is painful to think that anyone should have spent so many years, and, aided by learned and acute disciples in different parts of the argument, should have expended so much learning, research, and ingenuity in attempting to build up a hypothesis regarding the origination of the leading books of the New Testament which outrages all the principles of sober criticism and legitimate evidence. As a school, this party at length broke up: its head, after living to find himself the sole defender of the theory as a whole, left this earthly scene complaining of desertion. While some of his associates have abandoned such heartless studies altogether for the more congenial pursuits of philosophy, others have modified their attacks on the historical truth of the New Testament records, retreating into positions into which it is not worth while to follow them, while others still have been gradually approximating to sound principles. The one compensation for all this mischief is the rich additions to the apologetical and critical literature of the books of the New Testament, and the earliest history of the Christian Church, which it has drawn from the pens of THIERSCH, EBRARD, and many others. Any allusions which it may be necessary for us to make to the assertions of this school will be made in connection with the passages to which they relate — in Acts, First Corinthians, and Galatians.

The manifest connection between this book and the third Gospel — of which it professes to be simply the continuation by the same author — and the striking similarity which marks the style of both productions, leave no room to doubt that the early Church was right in ascribing it with one consent to Luke. The difficulty which some fastidious critics have made about the sources of the earlier portion of the history has no solid ground. That the historian himself was an eye-witness of the earliest scenes — as HUG concludes from the circumstantiality of the narrative — is altogether improbable: but there were hundreds of eye-witnesses of some of the scenes, and enough of all the rest, to give to the historian, partly by oral, partly by written testimony, all the details which he has embodied so

graphically in his history; and it will appear, we trust, from the commentary, that Deuteronomy Wette's complaints of confusion, contradiction, and error in this portion are without foundation. The same critic, and one or two others, would ascribe to Timothy those later portions of the book in which the historian speaks in the first person plural — "we"; supposing him to have taken notes of all that passed under his own eye, which Luke embodied in his history just as they stood. It is impossible here to refute this gratuitous hypothesis in detail; but the reader will find it done by EBRARD (*The Gospel History*, sect. 110, Clark's translation; sect. 127 of the original work, *Wissenschaftliche Kritik der Evangelische Geschichte*, 1850), and by DAVIDSON (*Introduction to New Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 9-21).

The undesigned coincidences between this History and the Apostolic Epistles have been brought out and handled, as an argument for the truth of the facts thus attested, with unrivalled felicity by PALEY in his *Horae Paulinae*, to which Mr. BIRKS has made a number of ingenious additions in his *Horae Apostolicae*. Exception has been taken to some of these by JOWETT (*St. Paul's Epistles*, Vol. I, pp. 108 ff.), not without a measure of reason in certain cases — for our day, at least — though even he admits that in this line of evidence the work of PALEY, taken as a whole, is unassailable.

Much has been written about the object of this history. Certainly "the Acts of the Apostles" are but very partially recorded. But for this title the historian is not responsible. Between the two extremes — of supposing that the work has no plan at all, and that it is constructed on an elaborate and complex plan, we shall probably be as near the truth as is necessary if we take the design to be to record the diffusion of Christianity and the rise of the Christian Church, first among the Jews of Palestine, the seat of the ancient Faith, and next among the surrounding Gentiles, with Antioch for its headquarters, until, finally, it is seen waving over imperial Rome, foretokening its universal triumph. In this view of it, there is no difficulty in accounting for the almost exclusive place which it gives to the labors of Peter in the first instance, and the all but entire disappearance from the history both of him and of the rest of the Twelve after the great apostle of the Gentiles came upon the stage — like the lesser lights on the rise of the great luminary.



# CHAPTER 1

## ACTS 1:1-11.

### INTRODUCTION — LAST DAYS OF OUR LORD UPON EARTH — HIS ASCENSION.

**1, 2. former treatise** — Luke's Gospel.

**Theophilus** — (See on ~~QMS~~ Luke 1:3).

**began to do and teach** — a very important statement, dividing the work of Christ into two great branches: the one embracing His work *on earth*, the other His subsequent work *from heaven*; the one in His own Person, the other by His Spirit; the one the “beginning,” the other the continuance of the same work; the one complete when He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, the other to continue till His second appearing; the one recorded in “The Gospels,” the *beginnings* only of the other related in this book of “The Acts.” “Hence the grand history of what Jesus did and taught does not conclude with His departure to the Father; but Luke now begins it in a higher strain; for all the subsequent labors of the apostles are just an exhibition of *the ministry of the glorified Redeemer Himself* because they were acting under His authority, and He was the principle that operated in them all” [OLSHAUSEN].

**2. after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments,** etc. — referring to the charge recorded in ~~QMS~~ Matthew 28:18-20 ~~QMS~~ Mark 16:15-18 ~~QMS~~ Luke 24:44-49. It is worthy of notice that nowhere else are such communications of the risen Redeemer said to have been given “through the Holy Ghost.” In general, this might have been said of all He uttered and all He did in His official character; for it was for this very end that God “gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (~~QMS~~ John 3:34). But after His resurrection, as if to signify the new relation in which He now stood to the Church, He signaled His first meeting with the assembled disciples by *breathing* on them (immediately after dispensing to them His *peace*) and saying, “*Receive ye the Holy Ghost*” (~~QMS~~ John 20:22) thus anticipating the donation of the Spirit from His hands (see on ~~QMS~~ John 20:21,22); and on the same principle His parting charges are here said to have been given “through the Holy Ghost,” as if to mark that He was now all redolent with the Spirit; that what had been husbanded, during His

suffering work, for His own necessary uses, had now been set free, was already overflowing from Himself to His disciples, and needed but His ascension and glorification to flow all forth. (See on <sup><173></sup>John 7:39.)

**3-5. showed himself alive** — As the author is about to tell us that “*the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*” was the great burden of apostolic preaching, so the subject is here filly introduced by an allusion to the primary evidence on which that great fact rests, the repeated and undeniable manifestations of Himself in the body to the assembled disciples, who, instead of being predisposed to believe it, had to be overpowered by the resistless evidence of their own senses, and were slow of yielding even to this (<sup><1134></sup>Mark 16:14).

**after his passion** — or, suffering. This primary sense of the word “passion” has fallen into disuse; but it is nobly consecrated in the phraseology of the Church to express the Redeemer’s final endurances.

**seen of them forty days** — This important specification of time occurs here only.

**speaking of** — rather “speaking.”

**the things pertaining to the kingdom of God** — till now only in germ, but soon to take visible form; the earliest and the latest burden of His teaching on earth.

**4. should not depart from Jerusalem** — because the Spirit was to glorify the existing economy, by descending on the disciples at its metropolitan seat, and at the next of its great festivals after the ascension of the Church’s Head; in order that “out of Zion might go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (<sup><2113></sup>Isaiah 2:3; and compare <sup><2449></sup>Luke 24:49).

**5. ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence** — *ten* days hence, as appears from <sup><2315></sup>Leviticus 23:15,16; but it was expressed thus indefinitely to exercise their faith.

**6-8. wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?** — Doubtless their carnal views of Messiah’s kingdom had by this time been modified, though how far it is impossible to say. But, as they plainly looked for *some* restoration of the kingdom to Israel, so they are neither rebuked nor contradicted on this point.

**7. It is not for you to know the times**, etc. — implying not only that this was *not* the time, but that the question was irrelevant to their present business and future work.

**8. receive power** — See <sup><244></sup>Luke 24:49.

**and ye shall be witnesses unto me ... in Jerusalem ... in all Judea ... and unto the uttermost part of the earth** — *This order of apostolic preaching and success supplies the proper key to the plan of the Acts, which relates first the progress of the Gospel “in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria” (the first through ninth chapters), and then “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (the tenth through twenty-eighth chapters).*

**9-11. while they beheld, he was taken up** — See on <sup><250></sup>Luke 24:50-53. Lest it should be thought He had disappeared when they were looking in some other direction, and so was only *concluded* to have gone up to heaven, it is here expressly said that “*while they were looking* He was taken up, and a cloud received Him *out of their sight*.” So Elijah, “If thou *see me* when I am taken from thee” (<sup><1210></sup>2 Kings 2:10); “And Elisha *saw* it” (<sup><4112></sup>Acts 1:12). (See on <sup><4192></sup>Luke 9:32.)

**10. while they looked steadfastly toward heaven** — following Him with their eager eyes, in rapt amazement. Not, however, as a mere fact is this recorded, but as a part of that resistless evidence of their senses on which their whole subsequent testimony was to be borne.

**two men in white apparel** — angels in human form, as in <sup><2416></sup>Luke 24:4.

**11. Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven**, etc. — “as if your now glorified Head were gone from you never to return: He is coming again; not another, but ‘this same Jesus’; and ‘as ye have seen Him go, in the like manner shall He come’ — as *personally*, as *visibly*, as *gloriously*; and let the joyful expectation of this coming swallow up the sorrow of that departure.”

## <sup><4112></sup>ACTS 1:12-26.

### RETURN OF THE ELEVEN TO JERUSALEM — PROCEEDINGS IN THE UPPER ROOM TILL PENTECOST.

**12-14. a sabbath day’s journey** — about two thousand cubits.

**13. went up into an upper room** — perhaps the same “large upper room” where with their Lord they had celebrated the last Passover and the first Supper (<sup><2212></sup>Luke 22:12).

**where abode** — not lodged, but had for their place of rendezvous.

**Peter**, etc. — (See on <sup><100></sup>Matthew 10:2-4).

**14. continued with one accord** — knit by a bond stronger than death.

**in prayer and supplication** — for the promised baptism, the need of which in their orphan state would be increasingly felt.

**and Mary the mother of Jesus** — distinguished from the other “women,” but “so as to exclude the idea of her having any pre-eminence over the disciples. We find her with the rest in prayer to her glorified Son” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. *This is the last mention of her in the New Testament.* The fable of the *Assumption of the Virgin* has no foundation even in tradition [ALFORD].

**with his brethren** — (See on <sup><800></sup>John 7:3).

**15-26. in those days** — of expectant prayer, and probably towards the close of them, when the nature of their future work began more clearly to dawn upon them, and the Holy Ghost, already “breathed” on the Eleven (<sup><800></sup>John 20:22), was stirring in Peter, who was to be the leading spirit of the infant community (<sup><069></sup>Matthew 16:19).

**the number ... about an hundred and twenty** — Many, therefore, of the “five hundred brethren” who saw their risen Lord “at once” (<sup><806></sup>1 Corinthians 15:6), must have remained in Galilee.

**18. falling headlong**, etc. — This information supplements, but by no means contradicts, what is said in <sup><170></sup>Matthew 27:5.

**20. his bishopric** — or “charge.” The words are a combination of <sup><685></sup>Psalms 69:25 and <sup><908></sup>Psalms 109:8; in which the apostle discerns a greater than David, and a worse than Ahithophel and his fellow conspirators against David.

**21. all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us** — in the close intimacies of a three years’ public life.

**22. Beginning from the baptism of John** — by whom our Lord was not only Himself baptized, but first officially announced and introduced to his own disciples.

**unto that same day when he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection** — How clearly is the primary office of the apostles here expressed:

(1) to testify, from personal observation, to the one great fact of “the resurrection of the Lord Jesus”;

(2) to show how this glorified His whole previous life, of which they were constant observers, and established His divine claims.

**23. they appointed** — “put up” in nomination; meaning not the Eleven but the whole company, of whom Peter was the spokesman.

**two** — The choice would lie between a very few.

**24. prayed and said, Thou, Lord,** etc. — “The word ‘Lord,’ placed absolutely, denotes in the New Testament almost universally THE SON; and the words, ‘Show whom Thou hast chosen,’ are decisive. The apostles are just Christ’s messengers: It is He that sends them, and of Him they bear witness. Here, therefore, we have the first example of a prayer offered to the exalted Redeemer; furnishing indirectly the strongest proof of His divinity” [OLSHAUSEN].

**which knowest the hearts of all men** — See ~~¶124~~ John 2:24,25 21:15-17 ~~¶123~~ Revelation 2:23.

**25. that he might go to his own place** — A euphemistic or softened expression of the awful future of the traitor, implying not only destined habitation but congenial element.

**26. was numbered** — “voted in” by general suffrage.

**with the eleven apostles** — completing the broken Twelve.

## CHAPTER 2

### ⌄~~411~~ ACTS 2:1-13.

#### DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT — THE DISCIPLES SPEAK WITH TONGUES — AMAZEMENT OF THE MULTITUDE.

**1-4. when the day of Pentecost was fully come** — The fiftieth from the morrow after the first Passover sabbath (⌄~~425~~ Leviticus 23:15,16).

**with one accord** — the solemnity of the day, perhaps, unconsciously raising their expectations.

**2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind**, etc. — “The whole description is so picturesque and striking that it could only come from an eye-witness” [OLSHAUSEN]. The suddenness, strength, and diffusiveness of the sound strike with deepest awe the whole company, and thus complete their preparation for the heavenly gift. Wind was a familiar emblem of the Spirit (⌄~~459~~ Ezekiel 37:9 ⌄~~488~~ John 3:8 20:22). But this was not a rush of actual wind. It was only a sound “*as of*” it.

**3. cloven tongues, like as of fire**, etc. — “disparted tongues,” that is, tongue-shaped, flame-like appearances, rising from a common center or root, and resting upon each of that large company: — beautiful visible symbol of the burning energy of the Spirit now descending in all His plenitude upon the Church, and about to pour itself through every tongue, and over every tribe of men under heaven!

**4. they ... began to speak with ... tongues**, etc. — real, living languages, as is plain from what follows. The thing uttered, probably the same by all, was “the wonderful works of God,” perhaps in the inspired words of the Old Testament evangelical hymns; though it is next to certain that the speakers themselves understood nothing of what they uttered (see on ⌄~~441~~ 1 Corinthians 14:1-25).

**5-11. there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation** — not, it would seem, permanently settled there (see ⌄~~419~~ Acts 2:9), though the language seems to imply more than a temporary visit to keep this one feast.

**9-11. Parthians**, etc. — Beginning with the farthest east, the Parthians, the enumeration proceeds farther and farther westward till it comes to Judea; next come the western countries, from Cappadocia to Pamphylia; then the southern, from Egypt to Cyrene; finally, apart from all geographical consideration, Cretes and Arabians are placed together. This enumeration is evidently designed to convey an impression of universality [BAUMGARTEN].

## ~~4124~~ ACTS 2:14-36.

### PETER FOR THE FIRST TIME, PUBLICLY PREACHES CHRIST.

**14-21. Peter, standing up with the eleven** — in advance, perhaps, of the rest.

**15. these are not drunken** — meaning, not the Eleven, but the body of the disciples.

**but the third hour** — nine A.M. (see ~~2106~~ Ecclesiastes 10:16 ~~2351P~~ Isaiah 5:11 ~~2357~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

**17. in the last days** — meaning, the days of the Messiah (~~2106P~~ Isaiah 2:2); as closing all preparatory arrangements, and constituting the final dispensation of God's kingdom on earth.

**pour out of my Spirit** — in contrast with the mere drops of all preceding time.

**upon all flesh** — hitherto confined to the seed of Abraham.

**sons ... daughters ... young men ... old men ... servants ... handmaidens** — without distinction of sex, age, or rank.

**see visions ... dream dreams** — This is a mere accommodation to the ways in which the Spirit operated under the ancient economy, when the prediction was delivered; for in the New Testament, visions and dreams are rather the exception than the rule.

**19. I will show wonders**, etc. — referring to the signs which were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem (see on ~~4225~~ Luke 21:25-28).

**21. whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved** — This points to the permanent establishment of the economy of salvation, which followed on the breaking up of the Jewish state.

**22-28. a man approved of God** — rather, “authenticated,” “proved,” or “demonstrated to be from God.”

**by miracles ... which God did by him** — This is not a low view of our Lord’s miracles, as has been alleged, nor inconsistent with <sup><41></sup>John 2:11, but is in strict accordance with His progress from humiliation to glory, and with His own words in <sup><4159></sup>John 5:19. This view of Christ is here dwelt on to exhibit to the Jews the whole course of Jesus of Nazareth as the ordinance and doing of *the God of Israel* [ALFORD].

**23. determinate counsel and foreknowledge** — God’s fixed plan and perfect foresight of all the steps involved in it.

**ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain** — How strikingly is the criminality of Christ’s murderers here presented in harmony with the eternal purpose to surrender Him into their hands!

**24. was not possible he should be holden of it** — Glorious saying! It was indeed impossible that “the Living One” should remain “among the dead” (<sup><2418></sup>Luke 24:5); but here, the impossibility seems to refer to the prophetic assurance that He should not see corruption.

**27. wilt not leave my soul in hell** — in its disembodied state (see on <sup><2163></sup>Luke 16:23).

**neither ... suffer thine Holy One to see corruption** — in the grave.

**28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life** — that is, resurrection-life.

**thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance** — that is, in glory; as is plain from the whole connection and the actual words of the sixteenth Psalm.

**29-36. David ... is ... dead and buried**, etc. — Peter, full of the Holy Ghost, sees in this sixteenth Psalm, one Holy Man, whose life of high devotedness and lofty spirituality is crowned with the assurance, that though He taste of death, He shall rise again without seeing corruption, and be admitted to the bliss of God’s immediate presence. Now as this was palpably untrue of David, it could be meant only of One other, even of Him whom David was taught to expect as the final Occupant of the throne of Israel. (Those, therefore, and they are many, who take David himself to be the subject of this Psalm, and the words quoted to refer to Christ only *in a more eminent* sense, nullify the whole argument of the apostle). The Psalm is then affirmed to have had its only proper fulfillment in JESUS, of whose resurrection and ascension they were witnesses, while the glorious effusion



of the Spirit by the hand of the ascended One, setting an infallible seal upon all, was even then witnessed by the thousands who stood listening to Him. A further illustration of Messiah's ascension and session at God's right hand is drawn from <sup><480></sup>Psalm 110:1, in which David cannot be thought to speak of himself, seeing he is still in his grave.

**36. Therefore** — that is, to sum up all.

**let all the house of Israel** — for in this first discourse the appeal is formally made to the whole house of Israel, as the then existing Kingdom of God.

**know assuredly** — by indisputable facts, fulfilled predictions, and the seal of the Holy Ghost set upon all.

**that God hath made** — for Peter's object was to show them that, instead of interfering with the arrangements of the God of Israel, these events were His own high movements.

**this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified** — "The sting is at the close" [BENGEL]. To prove to them merely that Jesus was the Messiah might have left them all unchanged in heart. But to convince them that He whom they had crucified had been by the right hand of God exalted, and constituted the "LORD" whom David in spirit adored, to whom every knee shall bow, and the CHRIST of God, was to bring them to "look on Him whom they had pierced and mourn for Him."

**37-40. pricked in their hearts** — the begun fulfillment of <sup><320></sup>Zechariah 12:10, whose full accomplishment is reserved for the day when "all Israel shall be saved" (see on <sup><510></sup>Romans 11:26).

**what shall we do?** — This is that beautiful spirit of genuine compunction and childlike docility, which, discovering its whole past career to have been one frightful mistake, seeks only to be set right for the future, be the change involved and the sacrifices required what they may. So Saul of Tarsus (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:6).

**38. Repent** — The word denotes *change of mind*, and here includes the reception of the Gospel as the proper issue of that revolution of mind which they were then undergoing.

**baptized ... for the remission of sins** — as the visible seal of that remission.

**39. For the promise** — of the Holy Ghost, through the risen Savior, as the grand blessing of the new covenant.

**all afar off** — the Gentiles, as in ~~<4017>~~Ephesians 2:17), but “to the Jew first.”

**40. with many other words did he testify and exhort** — Thus we have here but a summary of Peter’s discourse; though from the next words it would seem that only the more practical parts, the home appeals, are omitted.

**Save yourselves from this untoward generation** — as if Peter already foresaw the hopeless impenitence of the nation at large, and would have his hearers hasten in for themselves and secure their own salvation.

## ~~<4124>~~ ACTS 2:41-47.

### BEAUTIFUL BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

**41-47. they that gladly received his word were baptized** — “It is difficult to say how three thousand could be baptized in one day, according to the old practice of a complete submersion; and the more as in Jerusalem there was no water at hand except Kidron and a few pools. The difficulty can only be removed by supposing that they already employed sprinkling, or baptized in houses in large vessels. Formal submersion in rivers, or larger quantities of water, probably took place only where the locality conveniently allowed it” [OLSHAUSEN].

**the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls** — fitting inauguration of the new kingdom, as an economy of the Spirit!

**42. continued steadfastly in** — “attended constantly upon.”

**the apostles’ doctrine** — “teaching”; giving themselves up to the instructions which, in their raw state, would be indispensable to the consolidation of the immense multitude suddenly admitted to visible discipleship.

**fellowship** — in its largest sense.

**breaking of bread** — not certainly in the Lord’s Supper alone, but rather in frugal repasts taken together, with which the Lord’s Supper was probably conjoined until abuses and persecution led to the discontinuance of the common meal.

**prayers** — probably, stated seasons of it.

**43. fear came upon every soul** — A deep awe rested upon the whole community.

**44. all that believed were together, and had all things common** — (See on <sup><406></sup>Acts 4:34-37).

**46. daily ... in the temple** — observing the hours of Jewish worship.

**and breaking bread from house to house** — rather, “at home” (*Margin*), that is, in *private*, as contrasted with their *temple*-worship, but in some stated place or places of meeting.

**eat their meat with gladness** — “exultation.”

**and singleness of heart.**

**47. Praising God** — “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, *for God now accepteth thy works*” (<sup><210></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:7, also see on <sup><408></sup>Acts 8:39).

**having favor with all the people** — commending themselves by their lovely demeanor to the admiration of all who observed them.

**And the Lord** — that is, JESUS, as the glorified Head and Ruler of the Church.

**added** — kept adding; that is, to the visible community of believers, though the words “to the Church” are wanting in the most ancient manuscripts.

**such as should be saved** — rather, “the saved,” or “those who were being saved.” “The young Church had but few peculiarities in its outward form, or even in its doctrine: the single discriminating principle of its few members was that they all recognized the crucified Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. This confession would have been a thing of no importance, if it had only presented itself as a naked declaration, and would never in such a case have been able to form a community that would spread itself over the whole Roman empire. It acquired its value only through the power of the Holy Ghost, passing from the apostles as they preached to the hearers; for He brought the confession from the very hearts of men (<sup><408></sup>1 Corinthians 12:3), and like a burning flame made their souls glow with love. By the power of this Spirit, therefore, we behold the first Christians not only in a state of active fellowship, but also internally changed: the narrow views of the natural man are broken through; they have their possessions in common, and they regard themselves as one family” [OLSHAUSEN].

# CHAPTER 3

## ACTS 3:1-26.

### PETER HEALS A LAME MAN AT THE TEMPLE GATE — HIS ADDRESS TO THE WONDERING MULTITUDE.

**1-11. Peter and John** — already associated by their Master, first with James (<sup><4029></sup>Mark 1:29 5:37 9:2), then by themselves (<sup><4218></sup>Luke 22:8; and see <sup><4833></sup>John 13:23,24). Now we find them constantly together, but John (yet young) only as a silent actor.

**went up** — were going up, were on their way.

**2. a certain man lame from his mother's womb** — and now “above forty years old” (<sup><4002></sup>Acts 4:22).

**was carried** — was wont to be carried.

**4, 5. Peter fastening his eyes on him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed** — that, through the eye, faith might be aided in its birth.

**6. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee** — What a lofty superiority breathes in these words!

**In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk** — These words, uttered with supernatural power, doubtless begat in this poor man the faith that sent healing virtue through his diseased members.

**7. And he took ... and lifted him up** — precisely what his Lord had done to his own mother-in-law (<sup><4031></sup>Mark 1:31).

**his feet** — “soles.”

**and ankle bones**, etc. — the technical language of a physician (<sup><5044></sup>Colossians 4:14).

**8. leaping up, stood ... walked ... entered the temple walking, leaping, and praising God** — Every word here is emphatic, expressing the perfection of the cure, as <sup><4081></sup>Acts 3:7 its immediateness.

**9. all the people saw him**, etc. — as they assembled at the hour of public prayer, in the temple courts; so that the miracle had the utmost publicity.

**10. they knew that it was he which sat for alms**, etc. — (Compare <sup><4008></sup>John 9:8).

**11. the lame man ... held**, etc. — This is human nature.

**all the people ran together unto them in the porch**, etc. — How vividly do these graphic details bring the whole scene before us! Thus was Peter again furnished with a vast audience, whose wonder at the spectacle of the healed beggar clinging to his benefactors prepared them to listen with reverence to his words.

**12-16. why marvel at this?** — For miracles are marvels only in relation to the limited powers of man.

**as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk** — Neither the might nor the merit of the cure are due to us, mere agents of Him whom we preach.

**13. The God of Abraham**, etc. — (See on <sup><4122></sup>Acts 2:22; <sup><4126></sup>Acts 2:36).

**hath glorified his Son Jesus** — rather, “his Servant Jesus,” as the same word is rendered in <sup><4128></sup>Matthew 12:18, but in that high sense in which Isaiah applies it always to Messiah (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 42:1 49:6 52:13 53:11). When “Son” is intended a different word is used.

**whom ye delivered up**, etc. — With what heroic courage does Peter here charge his auditors with the heaviest of all conceivable crimes, and with what terrific strength of language are these charges clothed!

**15. killed the Prince of life** — Glorious paradox, but how piercing to the conscience of the auditors.

**16. his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong**, etc. — With what skill does the apostle use the miracle both to glorify his ascended Lord and bring the guilt of His blood more resistlessly home to his audience!

**17-21. And now, brethren** — Our preacher, like his Master, “will not break the bruised reed.” His heaviest charges are prompted by love, which now hastens to assuage the wounds it was necessary to inflict.

**I wot** — “know.”

**through ignorance ye did it** — (See *marginal references*, <sup><4238></sup>Luke 23:34 <sup><4137></sup>Acts 13:27 26:9).

**18. that Christ** — The best manuscripts read, “that His Christ.”

**should suffer** — The doctrine of a SUFFERING MESSIAH was totally at variance with the current views of the Jewish Church, and hard to digest even by the Twelve, up to the day of their Lord's resurrection. Our preacher himself revolted at it, and protested against it, when first nakedly announced, for which he received a terrible rebuke. Here he affirms it to be the fundamental truth of ancient prophecy realized unwittingly by the Jews themselves, yet by a glorious divine ordination. How great a change had the Pentecostal illumination wrought upon his views!

**19. when the times of refreshing shall come** — rather, “in order that the times of refreshing may come”; that long period of repose, prosperity and joy, which all the prophets hold forth to the distracted Church and this miserable world, as eventually to come, and which is here, as in all the prophets, made to turn upon the national conversion of Israel.

**20. he shall send Jesus Christ** — The true reading is, “He shall send your predestinated (or foreordained) Messiah, Jesus.”

**21. until the times** — embracing the whole period between the ascension and the second advent of Christ.

**restitution of all things** — comprehending, probably, the rectification of all the disorders of the fall.

**22-26. a prophet ... like unto me** — particularly *in intimacy of communication with God* (<sup><4026></sup>Numbers 12:6-8), *and as the mediatorial Head of a new order of things* (<sup><3802></sup>Hebrews 3:2-6). Peter takes it for granted that, in the light of all he had just said, it would be seen at once that One only had any claim to be that Prophet.

**him shall ye hear in all things**, etc. — This part of the prediction is emphatically added, in order to shut up the audience to the obedience of faith, on pain of being finally “cut off” from the congregation of the righteous (<sup><3900></sup>Psalms 1:1).

**24. foretold of these days** — of Messiah; all pointing to “the time of reformation” (<sup><3900></sup>Hebrews 9:10), though with more or less distinctness.

**25. Ye are the children ... of the covenant** — and so the natural heirs of its promises.

**in thy seed**, etc. — (See on <sup><3800></sup>Galatians 3:8, etc.).

**26. God, having raised up** — not from the dead, but having provided, prepared, and given.

**his Son Jesus** — “His Servant Jesus” (see on <sup><4023></sup>Acts 3:13).

**sent him to bless you** — literally, “sent Him blessing you,” as if laden with blessing.

**in turning away every one of you from his iniquities** — that is, “Hitherto we have all been looking too much for a Messiah who should shed outward blessings upon the nation generally, and through it upon the world. But we have learned other things, and now announce to you that the great blessing with which Messiah has come laden is the turning away of every one of you from his iniquities.” With what divine skill does the apostle, founding on resistless facts, here drive home to the conscience of his auditors their guilt in crucifying the Lord of Glory; then soothe their awakened minds by assurances of forgiveness on turning to the Lord, and a glorious future as soon as this shall come to pass, to terminate with the Personal Return of Christ from the heavens whither He has ascended; ending all with warnings, from their own Scriptures, to submit to Him if they would not perish, and calls to receive from Him the blessings of salvation.

# CHAPTER 4

## ACTS 4:1-13.

### PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SAMHEDRIM.

**1-12. the captain** — of the Levitical guard.

**of the temple** — annoyed at the disturbance created around it.

**and the Sadducees** — who “say that there is no resurrection” (~~428~~ Acts 23:8), irritated at the apostles “preaching through (rather, ‘in’) Jesus the resurrection from the dead”; for the resurrection of Christ, if a fact, effectually overthrew the Sadducean doctrine.

**4. the number of the men** — or males, exclusive of women; though the word sometimes includes both.

**about five thousand** — and this in Jerusalem, where the means of detecting the imposture or crushing the fanaticism, if such it had been, were within everyone’s reach, and where there was every inducement to sift it to the bottom.

**5. their rulers**, etc. — This was a regular meeting of the Sanhedrim (see on ~~408~~ Matthew 2:4).

**6. Annas ... and Caiaphas** — (See on ~~418~~ Luke 3:2).

**John and Alexander** — of whom nothing is known.

**7. By what power or ... name have ye done this** — thus admitting the reality of the miracle, which afterwards they confess themselves unable to deny (~~406~~ Acts 4:16).

**8. Then, filled with the Holy Ghost, said** — (See ~~413~~ Mark 13:11 ~~4215~~ Luke 21:15).

**10. Be it known unto you ... and to all the people of Israel** — as if emitting a formal judicial testimony to the entire nation through its rulers now convened.

**by the name of Jesus**, etc. — (See on ~~413~~ Acts 3:13, etc.).



**even by him doth this man stand before you whole** — for from ~~4014~~ Acts 4:14 it appears that the healed man was at that moment before their eyes.

**11. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders**, etc. — This application of ~~4022~~ Psalm 118:22, already made by our Lord Himself before some of the same “builders” (~~4042~~ Matthew 21:42), is here repeated with peculiar propriety after the deed of rejection had been consummated, and the rejected One had, by His exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high, become “the head of the corner.”

**12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved** — How sublimely does the apostle, in these closing words, shut up these rulers of Israel to Jesus for salvation, and in what universal and emphatic terms does he hold up his Lord as the one Hope of men!

**13-17. perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men** — that is, uninstructed in the learning of the Jewish schools, and of the common sort; men in private life, untrained to teaching.

**took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus** — recognized them as having been in His company; remembering possibly, that they had seen them with Him [MEYER, BLOOMFIELD, ALFORD]; but, more probably, perceiving in their whole bearing what identified them with Jesus: that is, “We thought we had got rid of Him; but lo! He reappears in these men, and all that troubled us in the Nazarene Himself has yet to be put down in these His disciples.” What a testimony to these primitive witnesses! Would that the same could be said of their successors!

**16. a notable miracle ... done by them is manifest to all ... in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it** — And why should ye wish to deny it, O ye rulers, but that ye hate the light, and will not come to the light lest your deeds should be reproved?

**17. But that it spread no further ... let us straitly** — strictly.

**threaten ... that they speak henceforth to no man in this name** — Impotent device! Little knew they the fire that was burning in the bones of those heroic disciples.

**18-22. Whether it be right ... to hearken to you more than ... God, judge ye.**

**20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard** — There is here a wonderful union of sober, respectful appeal to the better reason of their judges, and calm, deep determination to abide the

consequences of a constrained testimony, which betokens a power above their own resting upon them, according to promise.

**21. finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people** — not at a loss for a pretext, but at a loss how to do it so as not to rouse the opposition of the people.

## ~~4023~~ ACTS 4:23-37.

### PETER AND JOHN DISMISSED FROM THE SAMHEDRIM, REPORT THE PROCEEDINGS TO THE ASSEMBLED DISCIPLES — THEY ENGAGE IN PRAYER — THE ASTONISHING ANSWER AND RESULTS.

**23-30. being let go, they went to their own company** — Observe the two opposite classes, representing the two interests which were about to come into deadly conflict.

**24. they lifted up their voice** — the assembled disciples, on hearing Peter's report.

**with one accord** — the breasts of all present echoing every word of this sublime prayer.

**Lord** — (See on ~~4029~~ Luke 2:29). Applied to God, the term expresses absolute authority.

**God which hast made heaven and earth** — against whom, therefore, all creatures are powerless.

**25. by the mouth of ... David** — to whom the Jews ascribed the second Psalm, though anonymous; and internal evidence confirms it. David's spirit sees with astonishment "the heathen, the people, the kings and princes of the earth," in deadly combination against the sway of Jehovah and *His Anointed* (his Messiah, or Christ), and asks "why" it is. This fierce confederacy our praying disciples see in full operation, in the "gathering together of Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles (the Roman authority), and the people of Israel, against God's holy Child ('Servant') Jesus." (See on ~~4083~~ Acts 3:13). The best ancient copies read, after "were gathered together," "*in this city*," which probably answers to "upon my holy hill of Zion," in the ~~4086~~ Psalm 2:6.

**28. thy hand and thy counsel determined ... to be done** — that is, "Thy counsel" determined to be done by "Thy hand."

**29. now, Lord, behold their threatenings** — Recognizing in the threatenings of the Sanhedrim a declaration of war by the combined powers of the world against their infant cause, they seek not enthusiastically to hide from themselves its critical position, but calmly ask the Lord of heaven and earth to “look upon their threatenings.”

**that with all boldness they may speak thy word** — Rising above self, they ask only fearless courage to testify for their Master, and divine attestation to their testimony by miracles of healing, etc., in His name.

**31-37. place was shaken** — glorious token of the commotion which the Gospel was to make (<sup><4470></sup>Acts 17:6; compare <sup><4465></sup>Acts 16:26), and the overthrow of all opposing powers in which this was to issue.

**they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake**, etc. — The Spirit rested upon the entire community, first, in the very way they had asked, so that they “spake the word with boldness” (<sup><4409></sup>Acts 4:29,31); next, in melting down all selfishness, and absorbing even the feeling of individuality in an intense and glowing realization of Christian unity. The community of goods was but an outward expression of this, and natural in such circumstances.

**33. with great power** — effect on men’s minds.

**great grace was upon them all** — The grace of God copiously rested on the whole community.

**35. laid ... at the apostles’ feet** — sitting, it may be, above the rest. But the expression may be merely derived from that practice, and here meant figuratively.

**36. Joses**, etc. — This is specified merely as an eminent example of that spirit of generous sacrifice which pervaded all.

**son of consolation** — no doubt so surnamed from the character of his ministry.

**a Levite** — who, though as a tribe having no inheritance, might and did acquire property as individuals (<sup><6588></sup>Deuteronomy 18:8).

**Cyprus** — a well-known island in the Mediterranean.

# CHAPTER 5

## ⌄ACTS 5:1-11.

### ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

“The first trace of a shade upon the bright form of the young Church. Probably among the new Christians a kind of holy rivalry had sprung up, every one eager to place his means at the disposal of the apostles” [OLSHAUSEN]. Thus might the new-born zeal of some outrun their abiding principle, while others might be tempted to seek credit for a liberality which was not in their character.

**2. kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it** — The coolness with which they planned the deception aggravated the guilt of this couple.

**brought a certain part** — pretending it to be the whole proceeds of the sale.

**3-6. why hath Satan filled** — “why ... fill — “why hast thou suffered him to fill”

**thine heart** — so criminally entertaining his suggestion? Compare ⌄Acts 5:4, “why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?” And see ⌄John 13:2,27.

**to lie to the Holy Ghost** — to men under His supernatural illumination.

**4. While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?** — from which we see how purely voluntary were all these sacrifices for the support of the infant community.

**not lied to men but God** — to men so entirely the instruments of the directing Spirit that the lie was rather told to Him: language clearly implying both the distinct *personality* and the proper *divinity* of the Holy Ghost.

**5. Ananias ... gave up the ghost ... great fear came on all that heard these things** — on those without the Christian circle; who, instead of disparaging the followers of the Lord Jesus, as they might otherwise have done on the discovery of such hypocrisy, were awed at the manifest

presence of Divinity among them, and the mysterious power of throwing off such corrupt matter which rested upon the young Church.

**6. the young men** — some of the younger and more active members of the church, not as office-bearers, nor coming forward now for the first time, but who probably had already volunteered their services in making subordinate arrangements. In every thriving Christian community such volunteers may be expected, and will be found eminently useful.

**7-11. Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much** — naming the sum.

**9. How is it that ye have agreed together** — (See on <sup><418></sup>Acts 5:2).

**to tempt the Spirit** — *try* whether they could escape detection by that omniscient Spirit of whose supernatural presence with the apostles they had had such full evidence.

**feet of them that buried thy husband are at the door** — How awfully graphic!

**10. buried her by her husband** — The later Jews buried before sunset of the day of death.

**11. And great fear came upon all the church**, etc. — This effect on the Christian community itself was the chief design of so startling a judgment; which had its counterpart, as the sin itself had, in *Achan* (<sup><400></sup>Joshua 7:1-26), while the *time* — at the commencement of a new career — was similar.

## <sup><415></sup>ACTS 5:12-26.

**THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW CAUSE LEADS TO THE ARREST  
OF THE APOSTLES — THEY ARE MIRACULOUSLY  
DELIVERED FROM PRISON, RESUME THEIR TEACHING, BUT  
ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE CONDUCTED BEFORE THE  
SAMHEDRIM.**

**12. Solomon's Porch** — (See on <sup><612></sup>John 10:23).

**13-16. of the rest durst no man join himself**, etc. — Of the unconverted none ventured, after what had taken place, to profess discipleship; but yet their number continually increased.

**15. into the streets** — “in every street.”

**on beds and couches** — The words denote the softer couches of the rich and the meaner cribs of the poor [BENGEL].

**shadow of Peter ... might overshadow some of them** — Compare <sup><4192></sup>Acts 19:12 <sup><4186></sup>Luke 8:46. So Elisha. Now the predicted greatness of Peter (<sup><4168></sup>Matthew 16:18), as the directing spirit of the early Church, was at its height.

**17-23. sect of the Sadducees** — See on <sup><4400></sup>Acts 4:1 for the reason why this is specified.

**19. by night** — the same night.

**20. all the words of this life** — beautiful expression for that Life in the Risen One which was the burden of their preaching!

**21. entered into the temple**, etc. — How self-possessed! the indwelling Spirit raising them above fear.

**called ... all the senate**, etc. — an unusually general convention, though hastily summoned.

**23. the prison ... shut ... keepers ... before the doors, but ... no man within** — the reverse of the miracle in <sup><4163></sup>Acts 16:26; a similar contrast to that of the nets at the miraculous draughts of fishes (<sup><4176></sup>Luke 5:6 <sup><4211></sup>John 21:11).

**24-26. they doubted** — “were in perplexity.”

**26. without violence, for they feared**, etc. — hardened ecclesiastics, all unawed by the miraculous tokens of God’s presence with the apostles, and the fear of the mob only before their eyes!

## <sup><4157></sup>ACTS 5:27-42.

### SECOND APPEARANCE AND TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SAMHEDRIM — ITS RAGE CALMED BY GAMALIEL — BEING DISMISSED, THEY DEPART REJOICING, AND CONTINUE THEIR PREACHING.

**27, 28. ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine** — noble testimony to the success of their preaching, and (for the reason mentioned on <sup><4400></sup>Acts 4:4) to the truth of their testimony, from reluctant lips!

**28. intend to bring this man's blood upon us** — They avoid naming Him whom Peter gloried in holding up [BENGEL]. In speaking thus, they seem to betray a disagreeable recollection of their own recent imprecation, His blood be upon us," etc. (<sup>4172</sup>Matthew 27:25), and of the traitor's words as he threw down the money, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (<sup>4170</sup>Matthew 27:4).

**29, 30. Then Peter**, etc. — (See on <sup>4172</sup>Acts 2:22, and <sup>4183</sup>Acts 3:13, etc.).

**31. Prince and a Savior** — the first word expressing that *Royalty* which all Israel looked for in Messiah, the second the *Saving* character of it which they had utterly lost sight of. Each of these features in our Lord's work enters into the other, and both make one glorious whole (compare <sup>4185</sup>Acts 3:15 <sup>4180</sup>Hebrews 2:10).

**to give** — dispensing as a "Prince."

**repentance and remission of sins** — as a "Savior"; "repentance" embracing all that change which issues in the faith which secures "forgiveness" (compare <sup>4178</sup>Acts 2:38 20:21). How gloriously is Christ here exhibited; not, as in other places, as the *Medium*, but as the *Dispenser* of all spiritual blessings!

**32, 33. we are his witnesses ... and the Holy Ghost** — They as competent human witnesses to facts, and the Holy Ghost as attesting them by undeniable miracles.

**33. cut to the heart and took** — "were taking."

**counsel to slay them** — How different this feeling and the effect of it from that "pricking of the heart" which drew from the first converts on the day of Pentecost the cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (<sup>4175</sup>Acts 2:37). The words used in the two places are strikingly different.

**34. Then stood up ... Gamaliel** — in all probability one of that name celebrated in the Jewish writings for his wisdom, the son of Simeon (possibly the same who took the infant Savior in his arms, <sup>4175</sup>Luke 2:25-35), and grandson of HILLEL, another celebrated rabbi. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem [LIGHTFOOT].

**35-39. Theudas** — not the same with a deceiver of that name whom JOSEPHUS mentions as heading an insurrection some twelve years after this [*Antiquities*, 20.5.1], but some other of whom he makes no mention. Such insurrections were frequent.

**37. Judas of Galilee** — (See on ~~<000>~~Luke 2:2, and ~~<030>~~Luke 13:1-3) [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 13.1.1].

**38. if ... of men, it will come to naught** — This neutral policy was true wisdom, in the then temper of the council. But individual neutrality is hostility to Christ, as He Himself teaches (~~<0123>~~Luke 11:23).

**40-42. beaten them** — for disobeying their orders (compare ~~<0236>~~Luke 23:16).

**41. departed ... rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name** — “thought worthy by God to be dishonored by man” (~~<0152>~~Matthew 5:12 ~~<0044>~~1 Peter 4:14,16) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. *This was their first taste of persecution*, and it felt sweet for His sake whose disciples they were.

**42. in every house** — in private. (See on ~~<0106>~~Acts 2:46).

**ceased not to preach Jesus Christ** — that is, Jesus (to be the) Christ.



# CHAPTER 6

## ~~<401E>~~ ACTS 6:1-7.

### FIRST ELECTION OF DEACONS.

**1. the Grecians** — the Greek-speaking Jews, mostly born in the provinces.

**the Hebrews** — those Jews born in Palestine who used their native tongue, and were wont to look down on the “Grecians” as an inferior class.

**were neglected** — “overlooked” by those whom the apostles employed, and who were probably of the Hebrew class, as being the most numerous. The complaint was in all likelihood well founded, though we cannot suspect the distributors of intentional partiality. “It was really just an emulation of love, each party wishing to have their own poor taken care of in the best manner” [OLSHAUSEN].

**the daily ministration** — the daily distribution of alms or of food, probably the latter.

**2-4. the multitude** — the general body of the disciples.

**It is not reason** — The word expresses dislike; that is “We cannot submit.”

**to leave the word of God** — to have our time and attention withdrawn from preaching; which, it thus appears, they regarded as their primary duty.

**to serve tables** — oversee the distribution of provisions.

**3. look ye out among you** — that is, ye, “the multitude,” from among yourselves.

**seven men of honest report** — good reputation (~~<401E>~~ Acts 10:22 ~~<501E>~~ Timothy 3:7).

**full of the Holy Ghost** — not full of miraculous gifts, which would have been no qualification for the duties required, but *spiritually gifted* (although on two of them miraculous power did rest).

**and wisdom** — discretion, aptitude for practical business.

**whom we may appoint** — for while the *election* was vested in the Christian people, the *appointment* lay with the apostles, as spiritual rulers.

**4. we will give ourselves to prayer** — public prayer, as along with preaching their great work.

**5. Stephen**, etc. — As this and the following names are all *Greek*, it is likely they were all of the “Grecian” class, which would effectually restore mutual confidence.

**6. when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them** — the one proclaiming that all official gifts flowed from the Church’s glorified Head, the other symbolizing the communication of these to the chosen office-bearers through the recognized channels.

**7. word of God increased ... disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly** — prosperity crowning the beautiful spirit which reigned in this mother community.

**a great company of the priests were obedient**, etc. — This was the crowning triumph of the Gospel, whose *peaceful* prosperity was now at its greatest height. After Stephen’s teaching and trial made it clear that sacerdotal interests could not stand with the Gospel, such priestly accessions became rare indeed. Note

(1) how easily misunderstandings may arise among the most loving and devoted followers of the Lord Jesus: but

(2) How quickly and effectually such misunderstandings may be healed, where honest intentions, love, and wisdom reign:

(3) What a beautiful model for imitation is furnished by the class here complained of, who, though themselves the majority, chose the new office-bearers from amongst the complaining minority!

(4) How superior to the lust of power do the apostles here show themselves to be, in not only divesting themselves of the immediate superintendence of temporal affairs in the Christian community, but giving the choice of those who were to be entrusted with it to the disciples at large!

(5) How little of formal organization did the apostles give to the Church at first, and when an emergency arose which demanded something more, how entirely was the remedy suggested by the reason of the thing!

(6) Though the new office-bearers are not expressly called *Deacons* here, it is universally admitted that this was the first institution of that order in the Church; the success of the expedient securing its permanency, and the qualifications for “the office of a Deacon” being laid down in one of the apostolical Epistles immediately after those of “a Bishop” (~~<408>~~1 Timothy 3:8-13).

## ~~<408>~~ACTS 6:8-15.

### STEPHEN ARRAIGNED BEFORE THE SAMHEDRIM.

**8. And Stephen**, etc. — The foregoing narrative seems to be only an introduction to what follows.

**full of faith** — rather, “of grace,” as the best manuscripts read.

**9, 10. synagogue of the Libertines** — Jewish freedmen; manumitted Roman captives, or the children of such, expelled from Rome (as appears from JOSEPHUS and TACITUS), and now residing at Jerusalem.

**Cyrenians** — Jews of Cyrene, in Libya, on the coast of Africa.

**them of Cilicia** — amongst whom may have been Saul of Tarsus (~~<408>~~Acts 7:58 21:39).

**and of Asia** — (See on ~~<406>~~Acts 16:6).

**10. not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake** — What he said, and the power with which he spake it, were alike resistless.

**11-14. blasphemous words against Moses** — doubtless referring to the impending disappearance of the whole Mosaic system.

**and against God** — This must refer to the supreme dignity and authority which he claimed for Christ, as the head of that new economy which was so speedily to supersede the old (compare ~~<406>~~Acts 7:56,59,60).

**15. as ... the face of an angel** — a play of supernatural radiance attesting to all who beheld his countenance the divine calm of the spirit within.

# CHAPTER 7

## ⌞400⌟ ACTS 7:1-60.

### DEFENSE AND MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

In this long defense Stephen takes a much wider range, and goes less directly into the point raised by his accusers, than we should have expected. His object seems to have been to show

(1) that so far from disparaging, he deeply revered, and was intimately conversant with, the whole history of the ancient economy; and

(2) that in resisting the erection of the Gospel kingdom they were but treading in their fathers' footsteps, the whole history of their nation being little else than one continued misapprehension of God's high designs towards fallen man and rebellion against them.

**2-5. The God of glory** — A magnificent appellation, fitted at the very outset to rivet the devout attention of his audience; denoting not that visible glory which attended many of the divine manifestations, but the glory of those manifestations themselves, of which this was regarded by every Jew as the fundamental one. It is the glory of absolutely free grace.

**appeared unto our father Abraham before he dwelt in Charran, and said,** etc. — Though this first call is not expressly recorded in Genesis, it is clearly implied in ⌞0150⌟ Genesis 15:7 and ⌞4000⌟ Nehemiah 9:7; and the Jewish writers speak the same language.

**4. when his father was dead, he removed into this land** — Though Abraham was in Canaan before Terah's death, his settlement in it as the land of promise is here said to be after it, as being in no way dependent on the family movement, but a transaction purely between Jehovah and Abraham himself.

**6-8. four hundred years** — using round numbers, as in ⌞0153⌟ Genesis 15:13,16 (see on ⌞4007⌟ Galatians 3:17).

**7. after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place** — Here the promise to Abraham (⌞0156⌟ Genesis 15:16), and that to Moses (⌞0082⌟ Exodus

3:12), are combined; Stephen's object being merely to give a rapid summary of the leading facts.

**8. the covenant of circumcision** — that is, the covenant of which circumcision was the token.

**and so** — that is, according to the terms of this covenant, on which Paul reasons (<sup><881></sup>Galatians 3:1-26).

**the twelve patriarchs** — so called as the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel.

**9-16. the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt, but God was with him** — Here Stephen gives his first example of *Israel's opposition to God's purposes, in spite of which and by means of which those purposes were accomplished.*

**14. threescore and fifteen souls** — according to the *Septuagint* version of <sup><1437></sup>Genesis 46:27, which Stephen follows, including the five children and grandchildren of Joseph's two sons.

**17. But when** — rather, "as."

**the time of the promise** — that is, for its fulfillment.

**the people grew and multiplied in Egypt** — For more than two hundred years they amounted to no more than seventy-five souls; how prodigious, then, must have been their multiplication during the latter two centuries, when six hundred thousand men, fit for war, besides women and children, left Egypt!

**20-22. In which time** — of deepest depression.

**Moses was born** — the destined deliverer.

**exceeding fair** — literally, "fair to God" (*Margin*), or, perhaps, divinely "fair" (see on <sup><8123></sup>Hebrews 11:23).

**22. mighty in words** — Though defective in utterance (<sup><1840></sup>Exodus 4:10); his recorded speeches fully bear out what is here said.

**and deeds** — referring probably to unrecorded circumstances in his early life. If we are to believe JOSEPHUS, his ability was acknowledged ere he left Egypt.

**23-27. In** <sup><4173></sup>Acts 7:23,30,36, the life of Moses is represented as embracing three periods, of forty years each; the Jewish writers say the same; and

though this is not expressly stated in the Old Testament, his age at death, one hundred twenty years (<sup><6347></sup>Deuteronomy 34:7), agrees with it.

**it came into his heart to visit his brethren** — his heart yearning with love to them as God's chosen people, and heaving with the consciousness of a divine vocation to set them free.

**24. avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian** — going farther in the heat of his indignation than he probably intended.

**25. For he supposed his brethren would have understood**, etc. — and perhaps imagined this a suitable occasion for rousing and rallying them under him as their leader; thus anticipating his work, and so running unsent.

**but they understood not** — Reckoning on a spirit in them congenial with his own, he had the mortification to find it far otherwise. This furnishes to Stephen another example of *Israel's slowness to apprehend and fall in with the divine purposes of love*.

**26. next day he showed himself unto them as they strove** — Here, not an Israelite and an Egyptian, but two parties in Israel itself, are in collision with each other; Moses, grieved at the spectacle, interposes as a mediator; but his interference, as unauthorized, is resented by the party in the wrong, *whom Stephen identifies with the mass of the nation* (<sup><4175></sup>Acts 7:35), just as Messiah's own interposition had been spurned.

**28, 29. Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?** — Moses had thought the deed unseen (<sup><1122></sup>Exodus 2:12), but it now appeared he was mistaken.

**29. Then fled Moses**, etc. — for “when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses” (<sup><1125></sup>Exodus 2:15).

**30-34. an angel of the Lord** — rather, “the Angel of the Covenant,” who immediately calls Himself JEHOVAH (Compare <sup><4178></sup>Acts 7:38).

**35-41. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge**, etc. — Here, again, “*the stone which the builders refused is made the head of the corner*” (<sup><4822></sup>Psalms 118:22).

**37. This is that Moses which said ... A prophet ... him shall ye hear** — This is quoted to remind his Moses-worshipping audience of the grand testimony of their faithful lawgiver, that *he himself was not the last and proper object of the Church's faith, but only a humble precursor and small model of Him to whom their absolute submission was due*.

**38. in the church** — the collective body of God’s chosen people; hence used to denote the whole body of the faithful under the Gospel, or particular sections of them.

**This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel ... and with our fathers** — alike near to the Angel of the Covenant, from whom he received all the institutions of the ancient economy, and to the people, to whom he faithfully reported the living oracles and among whom he set up the prescribed institutions. *By this high testimony to Moses, Stephen rebuts the main charge for which he was on trial.*

**39. To whom our fathers would not obey**, etc. — Here he shows that *the deepest dishonor done to Moses came from the nation that now professed the greatest jealousy for his honor.*

**in their hearts turned back ... into Egypt** — “In this Stephen would have his hearers read the downward career on which they were themselves entering.”

**42-50. gave them up** — judicially.

**as ... written in the book of the prophets** — the twelve minor prophets, reckoned as one: the passage is from <sup><315></sup>Amos 5:25.

**have ye offered to me ... sacrifices?** — The answer is, Yes, but as if ye did it not; for “neither did ye offer to Me only, nor always, nor with a perfect and willing heart” [BENGEL].

**43. Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Molech**, etc. — Two kinds of idolatry are charged upon the Israelites: that of the golden calf and that of the heavenly bodies; Molech and Remphan being deities, representing apparently the divine powers ascribed to nature, under different aspects.

**carry you beyond Babylon** — the well-known region of the captivity of Judah; while “Damascus” is used by the prophet (<sup><315></sup>Amos 5:27), whither the ten tribes were carried.

**44. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness** — which aggravated the guilt of that idolatry in which they indulged, with the tokens of the divine presence constantly in the midst of them.

**45. which ... our fathers that came after** — rather, “having received it by succession” (*Margin*), that is, the custody of the tabernacle from their ancestors.

**brought in with Jesus** — or Joshua.

**into the possession** — rather, “at the taking possession of [the territory of] the Gentiles.”

**unto the days of David** — for till then Jerusalem continued in the hands of the Jebusites. But Stephen’s object in mentioning David is to hasten from the tabernacle which he set up, to the temple which his son built, in Jerusalem; and this only to show, from their own Scripture (<sup>2701</sup>Isaiah 66:1,2), that *even that temple*, magnificent though it was, *was not the proper resting-place of Jehovah upon earth*; as his audience and the nations had all along been prone to imagine. (What that resting-place was, even “*the contrite heart, that trembleth at God’s word*,” he leaves to be gathered from the prophet referred to).

**51-53. Ye stiffnecked ... ye do always resist the Holy Ghost**, etc. — It has been thought that symptoms of impatience and irritation in the audience induced Stephen to cut short his historical sketch. But as little farther light could have been thrown upon Israel’s obstinacy from subsequent periods of the national history on the testimony of their own Scriptures, we should view this as the *summing up*, the brief import of the whole Israelitish history — *grossness of heart, spiritual deafness, continuous resistance of the Holy Ghost, down to the very council before whom Stephen was pleading*.

**52. Which of**, etc. — *Deadly hostility to the messengers of God*, whose high office it was to tell of “the Righteous One,” that well-known prophetic title of Messiah (<sup>2701</sup>Isaiah 53:11 <sup>2701b</sup>Jeremiah 23:6, etc.), and this *consummated by the betrayal and murder of Messiah Himself*, on the part of those now sitting in judgment on the speaker, are the still darker features of the national character depicted in these withering words.

**53. Who have received the law by the disposition** — “at the appointment” or “ordination,” that is, by the ministry.

**of angels, and have not kept it** — This closing word is designed to shut up those idolizers of the law under the guilt of high disobedience to it, aggravated by the august manner in which they had received it.

**54-56. When they heard these things they were cut to the heart**, etc. — If they could have *answered* him, how different would have been their temper of mind!

**55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God** — You who can transfer to canvas such scenes as these, in which the rage of hell grins horribly from men, as they sit condemned by a frail prisoner of their own, and see heaven



beaming from his countenance and opening full upon his view — I envy you, for I find no words to paint what, in the majesty of the divine text, is here so simply told. “But how could Stephen, in the council-chamber, see heaven at all? I suppose this question never occurred but to critics of narrow soul, one of whom [MEYER] conjectures that he saw it through the window! and another, of better mould, that the scene lay in one of the courts of the temple” [ALFORD]. As the sight was witnessed by Stephen alone, the opened heavens are to be viewed as revealed to his bright beaming spirit.

**and Jesus standing on the right hand of God** — Why “*standing*,” and not *sitting*, the posture in which the glorified Savior is elsewhere represented? Clearly, to express the eager interest with which He watched from the skies the scene in that council chamber, and the full tide of His Spirit which He was at that moment engaged in pouring into the heart of His heroic witness, till it beamed in radiance from his very countenance.

**56. I see ... the Son of man standing**, etc. — This is the only time that our Lord is by human lips called THE SON OF MAN after His ascension (<sup><4013></sup>Revelation 1:13 14:14 are not instances). And why here? Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, speaking now not of himself at all (<sup><4025></sup>Acts 7:55), but entirely by the Spirit, is led to repeat the very words in which Jesus Himself, *before this same council*, had foretold His glorification (<sup><4064></sup>Matthew 26:64), assuring them that that exaltation of the SON OF MAN which they should hereafter witness to their dismay, was already begun and actual [ALFORD].

**57, 58. Then they cried out ... and ran upon him with one accord** — To men of their mould and in their temper, Stephen’s last seraphic words could but bring matters to extremities, though that only revealed the diabolical spirit which they breathed.

**58. cast him out of the city** — according to <sup><4034></sup>Leviticus 24:14 <sup><4055></sup>Numbers 15:35 <sup><4013></sup>1 Kings 21:13; and see <sup><4030></sup>Hebrews 13:12.

**and stoned** — “proceeded to stone” him. The actual stoning is recorded in <sup><4059></sup>Acts 7:59.

**and the witnesses** — whose hands were to be first upon the criminal (<sup><4074></sup>Deuteronomy 17:7).

**laid down their clothes** — their loose outer garments, to have them taken charge of.

**at a young man’s feet whose name was Saul** — How thrilling is this our first introduction to one to whom Christianity — whether as developed in

the New Testament or as established in the world — owes more perhaps than to all the other apostles together! Here he is, having perhaps already a seat in the Sanhedrim, some thirty years of age, in the thick of this tumultuous murder of a distinguished witness for Christ, not only “consenting unto his death” (~~481~~Acts 8:1), but doing his own part of the dark deed.

**59, 60. calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus**, etc. — An unhappy supplement of our translators is the word “God” here; as if, while addressing the Son, he was really calling upon the Father. The sense is perfectly clear without any supplement at all — “calling upon [invoking] and saying, Lord Jesus”; Christ being the Person directly invoked and addressed by name (compare ~~494~~Acts 9:14). Even GROTIUS, DE WETTE, MEYER, etc. admit this, adding several other examples of direct prayer to Christ; and PLINY, in his well-known letter to the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 110 or 111), says it was part of the regular Christian service to sing, in alternate strains, a hymn to Christ as God.

**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit** — In presenting to Jesus the identical prayer which He Himself had on the cross offered to His Father, Stephen renders to his glorified Lord absolute divine worship, in the most sublime form, and at the most solemn moment of his life. In this commitment of his spirit to Jesus, Paul afterwards followed his footsteps with a calm, exultant confidence that with Him it was safe for eternity (~~512~~2 Timothy 1:12).

**60. cried with a loud voice** — with something of the gathered energy of his dying Lord (see on ~~636~~John 19:16-30).

**Lord** — that is, JESUS, beyond doubt, whom he had just before addressed as Lord.

**lay not this sin to their charge** — Comparing this with nearly the same prayer of his dying Lord, it will be seen how very richly this martyr of Jesus had drunk into his Master’s spirit, in its divinest form.

**he fell asleep** — *never said of the death of Christ*. (See on ~~514~~1 Thessalonians 4:14). How bright the record of this first martyrdom for Christ, amidst all the darkness of its perpetrators; and how many have been cheered by it to like faithfulness even unto death!

# CHAPTER 8

## ~~<401>~~ACTS 8:1-4.

### PERSECUTION CONTINUED, IN WHICH SAUL TAKES A PROMINENT PART — HOW OVERRULED FOR GOOD.

**1. Saul was consenting unto his death** — The word expresses hearty approval.

**they were all scattered abroad** — all the leading Christians, particularly the preachers, agreeably to their Lord's injunctions (~~<401>~~Matthew 10:23), though many doubtless remained, and others (as appears by ~~<401>~~Acts 9:26-30) soon returned.

**except the apostles** — who remained, not certainly as being less exposed to danger, but, at whatever risk, to watch over the infant cause where it was most needful to cherish it.

**2. and devout men** — pious Jews, probably, impressed with admiration for Stephen and secretly inclined to Christianity, but not yet openly declared.

**3. Saul ... entering into every house** — like as inquisitor [BENGEL].

**haling men and women**, etc. — See his own affecting confessions afterwards (~~<401>~~Acts 22:4 26:9,10 ~~<401>~~1 Corinthians 15:9 ~~<401>~~Galatians 1:13 ~~<401>~~Philippians 3:6 ~~<401>~~1 Timothy 1:13).

**4. they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching** — Though solemnly enjoined to do this (~~<401>~~Luke 24:47 ~~<401>~~Acts 1:8), they would probably have lingered at Jerusalem, but for this besom of persecution which swept them out. How often has the rage of Christ's enemies thus "turned out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel" (see ~~<401>~~Philippians 1:12,13).

## ⌄~~485~~ ACTS 8:5-25.

### SUCCESS OF PHILIP'S PREACHING IN SAMARIA — CASE OF SIMON MAGUS.

**5. Then Philip** — not the apostle of that name, as was by some of the Fathers supposed; for besides that the apostles remained at Jerusalem, they would in that case have had no occasion to send a deputation of their own number to lay their hands on the baptized disciples [GROTIUS]. It was the deacon of that name, who comes next after Stephen in the catalogue of the seven, probably as being the next most prominent. The persecution may have been directed especially against Stephen's colleagues [MEYER].

**the city of Samaria** — or “a city of Samaria”; but the former seems more likely. “It furnished the bridge between Jerusalem and the world” [BAUMGARTEN].

**6-8. the people with one accord gave heed to ... Philip** — the way being prepared perhaps by the fruits of our Lord's sojourn, as He Himself seems to intimate (see on ~~⌄486~~ John 4:31-38). But “we may mark the providence of God in sending a Grecian, or a Hellenistic Jew, to a people who from national antipathy would have been unlikely to attend to a *native* of Judea” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**8. great joy in that city** — over the change wrought on it by the Gospel, as well as the cures which attested its divine character.

**9-13. used sorcery** — magical arts.

**some great one ... the great power of God** — a sort of incarnation of divinity.

**10. To whom all gave heed ... because of long time he had bewitched them** — This, coupled with the rapidity with which they deserted him and attached themselves to Philip, shows the ripeness of Samaria for some religious change.

**12. were baptized, both men and women** — the detection of Simon's frauds helping to extend and deepen the effects of Philip's preaching.

**13. Then Simon himself believed also** — Left without followers, he thinks it best to join the man who had fairly outstripped him, not without a touch of real conviction.

**and ... was baptized** — What a light does this throw on what is called *Baptismal Regeneration!*

**he continued with Philip** — “was in constant attendance upon” him.

**14-17. the apostles ... sent Peter and John** — showing that they regarded Peter as no more than their own equal.

**15, 16. prayed ... they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus)** — As the baptism of adults presupposed “the renewing of the Holy Ghost” (<sup>4618</sup>Titus 3:5-7 <sup>4623</sup>1 Corinthians 12:13), of which the profession of faith had to be taken for evidence, this communication of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles’ hands was clearly a *superadded* thing; and as it was only *occasional*, so it was invariably *attended with miraculous manifestations* (see <sup>4404</sup>Acts 10:44, where it followed Peter’s preaching; and <sup>4491</sup>Acts 19:1-7, where, as here, it followed the laying on of hands). In the present case an important object was served by it — “the sudden appearance of a body of baptized disciples in Samaria, by the agency of one who was not an apostle, requiring the presence and power of apostles to perform their special part as the divinely appointed founders of the Church” [ALFORD]. Beautiful, too, was the spectacle exhibited of Jew and Samaritan, one in Christ.

**18-24. offered them money** — Hence the term *simony*, to denote trafficking in sacred things, but chiefly the purchase of ecclesiastical offices.

**19. that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost** — *Spiritual ambition* here shows itself the key to this wretched man’s character.

**20. Thy money perish with thee** — that is, “Accursed be thou and thy money with thee.” It is the language of mingled horror and indignation, not unlike our Lord’s rebuke of Peter himself (<sup>4163</sup>Matthew 16:23).

**21. Thou hast neither part nor lot ... thy heart is not right**, etc. — This is the fidelity of a minister of Christ to one deceiving himself in a very awful manner.

**22. Repent ... pray ... if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven** — this expression of doubt being designed to impress upon him the greatness of his sin, and the need of alarm on his part.

**23. in the gall of bitterness and ... bond of iniquity** — expressing both the awfulness of his condition and the captivity to it in which he was held.

**24. Pray ye to the Lord for me** — Peter had urged him to pray for himself: he asks those wonder-working men to do it for him; having no confidence in the prayer of faith, but thinking that those men possessed some peculiar interest with heaven.

**that none of these things dome upon me** — not that the thought of his wicked heart might be forgiven him, but only that the evils threatened might be averted from him. While this throws great light on Peter's view of his melancholy case, it shows that Christianity, as something divine, still retained its hold of him. (Tradition represents him as turning out a great heresiarch, mingling Oriental or Grecian philosophy with some elements of Christianity.)

**25. and they** — Peter and John.

**when they had ... preached** — in the city where Philip's labors had been so richly blessed.

**returned ... and preached ... in many villages of the Samaritans** — embracing the opportunity of their journey back to Jerusalem to fulfill their Lord's commission to the whole region of Samaria (~~408~~ Acts 1:8).

## ~~408~~ ACTS 8:26-40.

### THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH.

“With this narrative of the progress of the Gospel among the Samaritans is connected another which points to the diffusion of the doctrine of the Cross among the remotest nations. The simplicity of the chamberlain of Meroe forms a remarkable contrast with the craft of the magician just described” [OLSHAUSEN].

**26-28. the angel of the Lord** — rather, “an angel.”

**go ... south, the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza** — There was such a road, across Mount Hebron, which Philip might take without going to Jerusalem (as VON RAUMER'S *Palaestina* shows).

**which is desert** — that is, *the way*; not Gaza itself, which was the southernmost city of Palestine, in the territory of the ancient Philistines. To go from a city, where his hands had been full of work, so far away on a desert road, could not but be staggering to the faith of Philip, especially as he was kept in ignorance of the object of the journey. But like Paul, he “was

not disobedient to the heavenly vision”; and like Abram, “he went out not knowing whither he went” (~~409~~Acts 26:19 ~~3108~~Hebrews 11:8).

**27. a man of Ethiopia** — Upper Egypt, Meroe.

**an eunuch of great authority** — Eunuchs were generally employed for confidential offices in the East, and to some extent are still.

**Candace** — the family name of the queens of Upper Egypt, like Pharaoh, Caesar, etc. (as appears from classic authors).

**had come to Jerusalem to worship** — that is, to keep the recent feast of Pentecost, as a Gentile proselyte to the Jewish faith. (See ~~2518~~Isaiah 56:3-8, and ~~6121~~John 12:20).

**28. Was returning** — Having come so far, he not only stayed out the days of the festival, but prolonged his stay till now. It says much for his fidelity and value to his royal mistress that he had such liberty. But the faith in Jehovah and love of His worship and word, with which he was imbued, sufficiently explain this.

**and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias** — Not contented with the statutory services in which he had joined, he beguiles the tedium of the journey homeward by reading the Scriptures. But this is not all; for as Philip “heard him read the prophet Esaias,” he must have been reading aloud and not (as is customary still in the East) so as merely to be audible, but in a louder voice than he would naturally have used if intent on his own benefit only: evidently therefore he was *reading to his charioteer*.

**29-31. the Spirit said** — by an unmistakable voice within, as in ~~4109~~Acts 10:19 16:6,7.

**go near and join this chariot** — This would reveal to Philip the hitherto unknown object of his journey, and encourage him to expect something.

**30. Understandest thou what thou readest?** — To one so engaged this would be deemed no rude question, while the eager appearance of the speaker, and the question itself, would indicate a readiness to supply any want of insight that might be felt.

**31. How can I, except some man guide me?** — Beautiful expression at once of humility and docility; the invitation to Philip which immediately followed, to “come up and sit with him,” being but the natural expression of this.

**32, 33. The place ... was this, He was led as a sheep,** etc. — One cannot but wonder that this, of all predictions of Messiah’s sufferings in the Old

Testament the most striking, should have been that which the eunuch was reading before Philip joined him. He could hardly miss to have heard at Jerusalem of the sufferings and death of Jesus, and of the existence of a continually increasing party who acknowledged Him to be the Messiah. But his question to Philip, whether the prophet in this passage meant himself or some other man, clearly shows that he had not the least idea of any connection between this prediction and those facts.

**34-38. And the eunuch answered, I pray thee,** etc. — The respect with which he here addresses Philip was prompted by his reverence for one whom he perceived to be his superior in divine things; his own worldly position sinking before this.

**35. Then Philip opened his mouth** — (See on <sup><40RE></sup>Matthew 5:2).

**began at the same scripture** — founding on it as his text.

**preached unto him Jesus** — showing Him to be the glorious Burden of this wonderful prediction, and interpreting it in the light of the facts of His history.

**36. See, here is water** — more simply, “Behold water!” as if already his mind filled with light and his soul set free, he was eagerly looking out for the first water in which he might seal his reception of the truth and be enrolled among the visible disciples of the Lord Jesus.

**what doth hinder me to be baptized?** — Philip had probably told him that this was the ordained sign and seal of discipleship, but the eunuch’s question was likely the first proposal of its application in this case. (<sup><40RE></sup>Acts 8:37 is wanting in the principal manuscripts and most venerable versions of the New Testament. It seems to have been added from the formularies for baptism which came into current use).

**38. they went down both into the water, and he baptized him,** etc. — probably laving the water upon him, though the precise mode is neither certain nor of any consequence.

**39, 40. the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip** — To deny [as MEYER, OLSHAUSEN, BLOOMFIELD] the miraculous nature of Philip’s disappearance, is vain. It stands out on the face of the words, as just a repetition of what we read of the ancient prophets, in <sup><11RE></sup>1 Kings 18:12 <sup><11RE></sup>2 Kings 2:16. And the same word (as BENGEL remarks) is employed to express a similar idea in <sup><47RE></sup>2 Corinthians 12:2,4 <sup><50RE></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:17.

**the eunuch saw him no more** — nor, perhaps, for very joy, cared to see him [BENGEL].



**and he went on his way rejoicing** — He had found Christ, and the key to the Scriptures; his soul was set free, and his discipleship sealed; he had lost his teacher, but gained what was infinitely better: He felt himself a new man, and “his joy was full.” Tradition says he was the first preacher of the Gospel in Ethiopia; and how, indeed, could he choose but “tell what the Lord had done for his soul?” Yet there is no certainty as to any historical connection between his labors and the introduction of Christianity into that country.

**40. Philip was found** — that is, “found himself,” “made his appearance”: an expression confirming the miraculous manner of his transportation.

**at Azotus** — the ancient Ashdod.

**preached in all the cities** — along the coast, proceeding northward.

**till he came to Caesarea** — fifty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem, on the Mediterranean, just south of Mount Carmel; and so named by Herod, who rebuilt it, in honor of Caesar Augustus. Henceforth we lose sight of zealous and honored Philip, as by and by we shall lose sight even of Peter. As the chariot of the Gospel rolls on, other agents are raised up, each suited to his work. But “he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.” (See on <sup>40</sup>John 4:31-38).

# CHAPTER 9

## ⌄ACTS 9:1-25.

### CONVERSION OF SAUL, AND BEGINNINGS OF HIS MINISTRY.

**1. Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,** etc. — The emphatic “yet” is intended to note the remarkable fact, that up to this moment his blind persecuting rage against the disciples of the Lord burned as fiercely as ever. (In the teeth of this, NEANDER and OLSHAUSEN picture him deeply impressed with Stephen’s joyful faith, remembering passages of the Old Testament confirmatory of the Messiahship of Jesus, and experiencing such a violent struggle as would inwardly prepare the way for the designs of God towards him. Is not dislike, if not unconscious disbelief, of *sudden conversion* at the bottom of this?) The word “slaughter” here points to cruelties not yet recorded, but the particulars of which are supplied by himself nearly thirty years afterwards: “And I persecuted this way *unto the death*” (⌄Acts 22:4); “and when they were *put to death*, I gave my voice [vote] against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to [did my utmost to make them] blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange [foreign] cities” (⌄Acts 26:10,11). All this was *before* his present journey.

**2. desired ... letters** — of authorization.

**to Damascus** — the capital of Syria and the great highway between eastern and western Asia, about one hundred thirty miles northeast of Jerusalem; the most ancient city perhaps in the world, and lying in the center of a verdant and inexhaustible paradise. It abounded (as appears from JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.20,2) with Jews, and with Gentile proselytes to the Jewish faith. Thither the Gospel had penetrated; and Saul, flushed with past successes, undertakes to crush it out.

**that if he found any of this way, whether men or women** — Thrice are *women* specified as objects of his cruelty, as an aggravated feature of it (⌄Acts 8:3 22:4; and here).

**3. he came near Damascus** — so ⌄Acts 22:6. Tradition points to a bridge near the city as the spot referred to. Events which are the turning

points in one's history so imprint themselves upon the memory that circumstances the most trifling in themselves acquire by connection with them something of their importance, and are recalled with inexpressible interest.

**suddenly** — At what time of day, it is not said; for artless simplicity reigns here. But he himself emphatically states, in one of his narratives, that it was “*about noon*” (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 22:6), and in the other, “*at midday*” (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 26:13), when there could be no deception.

**there shined round about him a light from heaven** — “a great light (he himself says) above the brightness of the sun,” then shining in its full strength.

**4-6. he fell to the earth** — and his companions with him (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 26:14), who “saw the light” (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 22:9).

**and heard a voice saying unto him** — “in the Hebrew tongue” (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 26:14).

**Saul, Saul** — a reduplication full of tenderness [DE WETTE]. Though his name was soon changed into “Paul,” we find him, in both his own narratives of the scene, after the lapse of so many years, retaining the original form, as not daring to alter, in the smallest detail, the overpowering words addressed to him.

**why persecutest thou me?** — No language can express the affecting character of this question, addressed from the right hand of the Majesty on high to an infuriated, persecuting mortal. (See ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Matthew 25:45, and that whole judgment scene).

**5. Who art thou, Lord?** — “Jesus knew Saul ere Saul knew Jesus” [BENGEL]. The term “Lord” here is an indefinite term of respect for some unknown but august speaker. That Saul saw as well as *heard* this glorious Speaker, is expressly said by Ananias (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 9:17 22:14), by Barnabas (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 9:27), and by himself (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 26:16); and in claiming apostleship, he explicitly states that he had “*seen the Lord*” (ⲁⲓⲛⲉ 1 Corinthians 9:1 15:8), which can refer only to this scene.

**I am Jesus whom thou persecutest** — The “I” and “thou” here are touchingly emphatic in the original; while the term “JESUS” is purposely chosen, to convey to him the thrilling information that the hated name which he sought to hunt down — “*the Nazarene*,” as it is in ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 22:8 — was now speaking to him from the skies, “crowned with glory and honor” (see ⲁⲓⲛⲉ Acts 26:9).

**It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks** — The metaphor of an ox, only driving the goad deeper by kicking against it, is a classic one, and here forcibly expresses, not only the vanity of all his measures for crushing the Gospel, but the deeper wound which every such effort inflicted upon himself.

**6. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said** — (The most ancient manuscripts and versions of the New Testament lack all these words *here* [including the last clause of <sup>4495</sup>Acts 9:5]; but they occur in <sup>4434</sup>Acts 26:14 and <sup>4420</sup>Acts 22:10, from which they appear to have been inserted here). The question, “What shall I do, Lord?” or, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” indicates a state of mind singularly interesting (see on <sup>4437</sup>Acts 2:37). Its elements seem to be these:

- (1) Resistless conviction that “Jesus whom he persecuted,” now speaking to him, was “Christ the Lord.” (See on <sup>4415</sup>Galatians 1:15,16).
- (2) As a consequence of this, that not only all his religious views, but his whole religious character, had been an entire mistake; that he was up to that moment fundamentally and wholly wrong.
- (3) That though his whole future was now a blank, he had absolute confidence in Him who had so tenderly arrested him in his blind career, and was ready both to take in all His teaching and to carry out all His directions. (For more, see on <sup>4499</sup>Acts 9:9).

**Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee**, etc. — See on <sup>4486</sup>Acts 8:26-28.

**7. the men ... stood speechless** — This may mean merely that they remained so; but if the *standing* posture be intended, we have only to suppose that though at first they “all fell to the earth” (<sup>4434</sup>Acts 26:14), they arose of their own accord while Saul yet lay prostrate.

**hearing a** — rather “the”

**voice** — Paul himself says, “they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me” (<sup>4429</sup>Acts 22:9). But just as “the people that stood by *heard*” the voice that saluted our Lord with recorded words of consolation and assurance, and yet *heard not* the articulate words, but thought “it thundered” or that some “angel spake to Him” (<sup>4428</sup>John 12:28,29) — so these men heard the *voice* that spake to Saul, but heard not the *articulate words*. Apparent discrepancies like these, in the different narratives of the same scene in one and the same book of Acts, furnish the strongest confirmation both of the facts themselves and of the book which records them.

**8. Saul arose ... and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man** — after beholding the Lord, since he “could not see for the glory of that light” (<sup>4021</sup>Acts 22:11), he had involuntarily closed his eyes to protect them from the glare; and on opening them again he found his vision gone. “It is not said, however, that he was *blind*, for it was no punishment” [BENGEL].

**9. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink** — that is, according to the *Hebrew* mode of computation: he took no food during the remainder of that day, the entire day following, and so much of the subsequent day as elapsed before the visit of Ananias. Such a period of entire abstinence from food, in that state of mental absorption and revolution into which he had been so suddenly thrown, is in perfect harmony with known laws and numerous facts. But what three days those must have been! “Only one other space of three days’ duration can be mentioned of equal importance in the history of the world” [HOWSON]. Since Jesus had been revealed not only to his *eyes* but to his *soul* (see on <sup>4015</sup>Galatians 1:15,16), the double conviction must have immediately flashed upon him, that his whole reading of the Old Testament hitherto had been wrong, and that the system of legal righteousness in which he had, up to that moment, rested and prided himself was false and fatal. What materials these for spiritual exercise during those three days of total darkness, fasting, and solitude! On the one hand, what self-condemnation, what anguish, what death of legal hope, what difficulty in believing that in such a case there could be hope at all; on the other hand, what heartbreaking admiration of the grace that had “pulled him out of the fire,” what resistless conviction that there must be a purpose of love in it, and what tender expectation of being yet honored, as a chosen vessel, to declare what the Lord had done for his soul, and to spread abroad the savor of that Name which he had so wickedly, though ignorantly, sought to destroy — must have struggled in his breast during those memorable days! Is it too much to say that all that profound insight into the Old Testament, that comprehensive grasp of the principles of the divine economy, that penetrating spirituality, that vivid apprehension of man’s lost state, and those glowing views of the perfection and glory of the divine remedy, that beautiful ideal of the loftiness and the lowliness of the Christian character, that large philanthropy and burning zeal to spend and be spent through all his future life for Christ, which distinguish the writings of this chiefest of the apostles and greatest of men, were all quickened into life during those three successive days?

**10-16. a certain disciple ... named Ananias** — See on <sup>4020</sup>Acts 22:12.

**to him said the Lord** — that is, Jesus. (See <sup>4013</sup>Acts 9:13,14,17).

**11. go into the street ... called Straight** — There is still a street of this name in Damascus, about half a mile in length, running from east to west through the city [MAUNDRELL].

**and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus** — There is something touching in the minuteness of these directions. Tarsus was the capital of the province of Cilicia, lying along the northeast coast of the Mediterranean. It was situated on the river Cydnus, was a “large and populous city” (says XENOPHON, and see <sup><423></sup>Acts 21:39), and under the Romans had the privilege of self-government.

**behold, he prayeth** — “breathing out” no longer “threatenings and slaughter,” but struggling desires after light and life in the Persecuted One. Beautiful note of encouragement as to the frame in which Ananias would find the persecutor.

**12. And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias**, etc. — Thus, as in the case of Cornelius and Peter afterwards, there was a mutual preparation of each for each. But we have no account of the vision which Saul had of Ananias coming unto him and putting his hands upon him for the restoration of his sight, save this interesting allusion to it in the vision which Ananias himself had.

**13. Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man**, etc. — “The objections of Ananias, and the removal of them by the Lord, display in a very touching manner the childlike relation of the believing soul to its Redeemer. The Savior speaks with Ananias as a man does with his friend” [OLSHAUSEN].

**how much evil he hath done to thy saints** — “*Thy saints*,” says Ananias to Christ; therefore Christ is God [BENGEL]. So, in <sup><404></sup>Acts 9:14, Ananias describes the disciples as “those that called on Christ’s name.” See on <sup><405></sup>Acts 7:59,60; and compare <sup><402></sup>1 Corinthians 1:2.

**14. here he hath authority**, etc. — so that the terror not only of the great persecutor’s name, but of this commission to Damascus, had traveled before him from the capital to the doomed spot.

**15. Go thy way** — Do as thou art bidden, without gainsaying.

**he is a chosen vessel** — a word often used by Paul in illustrating God’s sovereignty in election (<sup><402></sup>Romans 9:21-23 <sup><404></sup>2 Corinthians 4:7 <sup><402></sup>2 Timothy 2:20,21 [ALFORD]. Compare <sup><402></sup>Zechariah 3:2).

**16. I will show him** — (See <sup><403></sup>Acts 20:23,24 21:11).

**how great things he must suffer for my name** — that is, Much he has done against that Name; but now, when I show him what great things he must suffer for that Name, he shall count it his honor and privilege.

**17-19. Ananias went his way, and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul** — How beautifully childlike is the obedience of Ananias to “the heavenly vision!”

**the Lord, even Jesus** — This clearly shows in what sense the term “Lord” is used in this book. It is JESUS that is meant, as almost invariably in the Epistles also.

**who appeared unto thee in the way** — This knowledge by an inhabitant of Damascus of what had happened to Saul before entering it, would show him at once that this was the man whom Jesus had already prepared him to expect.

**and be filled with the Holy Ghost** — which Ananias probably, without any express instructions on that subject, took it for granted would descend upon him; and not necessarily after his baptism [BAUMGARTEN, WEBSTER and WILKINSON] — for Cornelius and his company received it before theirs (~~4004~~Acts 10:44-48) — but perhaps immediately after the recovery of his sight by the laying on of Ananias’ hands.

**18. there fell from his eyes as it were scales** — “This shows that the blindness as well as the cure was supernatural. Substances like scales would not form naturally in so short a time” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. And the *medical* precision of Luke’s language here is to be noted.

**was baptized** — as directed by Ananias (~~4026~~Acts 22:16).

**19. when he had received meat, he was strengthened** — for the exhaustion occasioned by his three days’ fast would not be the less real, though unfelt during his struggles. (See on ~~4008~~Matthew 4:2).

**Then was Saul certain days with the disciples at Damascus** — making their acquaintance, in another way than either he or they had anticipated, and regaining his tone by the fellowship of the saints; but not certainly in order to learn from them what he was to teach, which he expressly disavows (~~4012~~Galatians 1:12,16).

**20-22. preached Christ ... that he is the Son of God** — rather, “preached Jesus,” according to all the most ancient manuscripts and versions of the New Testament (so ~~4021~~Acts 9:21, “all that call on this name,” that is, *Jesus*; and ~~4022~~Acts 9:22, “proving that this *Jesus* is very *Christ*”).

**23. And after many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him** — *Had we no other record than this, we should have supposed that what is here related took place while Saul continued at Damascus after his baptism. But in <sup><4017></sup>Galatians 1:17,18 we learn from Paul himself that he “went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus,” and that from the time of his first visit to the close of his second, both of which appear to have been short, a period of three years elapsed; either three full years, or one full year and part of two others. (See on <sup><4016></sup>Galatians 1:16-18). That such a blank should occur in the Acts, and be filled up in Galatians, is not more remarkable than that the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, their stay there, and their return thence, recorded only by Matthew, should be so entirely passed over by Luke, that if we had only his Gospel, we should have supposed that they returned to Nazareth immediately after the presentation in the temple. (Indeed in one of his narratives, <sup><4026></sup>Acts 22:16,17, Paul himself takes no notice of this period). But *wherefore this journey?* Perhaps*

(1) because he felt a period of repose and partial seclusion to be needful to his spirit, after the violence of the change and the excitement of his new occupation.

(2) To prevent the rising storm which was gathering against him from coming too soon to a head.

(3) To exercise his ministry in the Jewish synagogues, as opportunity afforded. On his return, refreshed and strengthened in spirit. he immediately resumed his ministry, but soon to the imminent hazard of his life.

**24, 25. they watched the gates night and day to kill him** — The full extent of his danger appears only from his own account (<sup><4113></sup>2 Corinthians 11:32): “In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me”; the exasperated Jews having obtained from the governor a military force, the more surely to compass his destruction.

**25. Then the disciples ... by night let him down** — “through a window” (<sup><4133></sup>2 Corinthians 11:33).

**by the wall** — Such overhanging windows in the walls of Eastern cities were common, and are to be seen in Damascus to this day.



## ~~<40B>~~ ACTS 9:26-31.

### SAUL'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM AFTER HIS CONVERSION.

**26. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem** — “three years after” his conversion, and particularly “to see Peter” (~~<40B>~~Galatians 1:18); no doubt because he was the leading apostle, and to communicate to him the prescribed sphere of his labors, specially to “the Gentiles.”

**he assayed to join himself to the disciples** — simply as one of them, leaving his apostolic commission to manifest itself.

**they were all afraid of him**, etc. — knowing him only as a persecutor of the faith; the rumor of his conversion, if it ever was cordially believed, passing away during his long absence in Arabia, and the news of his subsequent labors in Damascus perhaps not having reached them.

**27. But Barnabas ... brought him to the apostles** — that is, to Peter and James; for “other of the apostles saw I none,” says he fourteen years after (~~<40B>~~Galatians 1:18,19). Probably none of the other apostles were there at the time (~~<40B>~~Acts 4:36). Barnabas being of Cyprus, which was within a few hours’ sail of Cilicia, and annexed to it as a Roman province, and Saul and he being Hellenistic Jews and eminent in their respective localities, they may very well have been acquainted with each other before this [HOWSON]. What is here said of Barnabas is in fine consistency with the “goodness” ascribed to him (~~<40B>~~Acts 11:24), and with the name “son of consolation,” given him by the apostles (~~<40B>~~Acts 4:36); and after Peter and James were satisfied, the disciples generally would at once receive him.

**how he had seen the Lord ... and he** — the Lord.

**had spoken to him** — that is, how he had received his commission direct from the Lord Himself.

**28, 29. And he was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem** — for fifteen days, lodging with Peter (~~<40B>~~Galatians 1:18).

**29. disputed against the Grecians** — (See on ~~<40B>~~Acts 6:1); addressing himself specially to them, perhaps, as being of his own class, and that against which he had in the days of his ignorance been the fiercest.

**they went about to slay him** — Thus was he made to feel, throughout his whole course, what he himself had made others so cruelly to feel, *the cost of discipleship*.

**30. they brought him down to Caesarea** — on the coast (see on <sup><480></sup>Acts 8:40); accompanying him thus far. But Paul had another reason than his own apprehension for quitting Jerusalem so soon. “While he was praying in the temple, he was in a trance,” and received express injunctions to this effect. (See on <sup><427></sup>Acts 22:17-21).

**and sent him forth to Tarsus** — In <sup><802></sup>Galatians 1:21 he himself says of this journey, that he “came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia”; from which it is natural to infer that instead of sailing direct for Tarsus, he landed at Seleucia, traveled thence to Antioch, and penetrated from this northward into Cilicia, ending his journey at Tarsus. As this was his first visit to his native city since his conversion, so it is not certain that he ever was there again. (See on <sup><412></sup>Acts 11:25). It probably was now that he became the instrument of gathering into the fold of Christ those “kinsmen,” that “sister,” and perhaps her “son,” of whom mention is made in <sup><426></sup>Acts 23:16, etc. <sup><507></sup>Romans 16:7,11,21 [HOWSON].

## <sup><401></sup>ACTS 9:31.

### FLOURISHING STATE OF THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE AT THIS TIME.

**31. Then had all the churches rest** — rather, “the Church,” according to the best manuscripts and versions. But this rest was owing not so much to the conversion of Saul, as probably to the Jews being engrossed with the emperor Caligula’s attempt to have his own image set up in the temple of Jerusalem [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 18.8.1, etc.].

**throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria** — This incidental notice of distinct churches already dotting all the regions which were the chief scenes of our Lord’s ministry, and that were best able to test the facts on which the whole preaching of the apostles was based, is extremely interesting. “The fear of the Lord” expresses their holy walk; “the comfort of the Holy Ghost,” their “peace and joy in believing,” under the silent operation of the blessed Comforter.

## ~~408~~ ACTS 9:32-43.

### PETER HEALS ENEAS AT LYDDA AND RAISES TABITHA TO LIFE AT JOPPA.

The historian now returns to Peter, in order to introduce the all-important narrative of Cornelius (~~408~~ Acts 10:1-48). The occurrences here related probably took place during Saul's sojourn in Arabia.

**32-35. as Peter passed throughout all quarters** — not now fleeing from persecution, but peacefully visiting the churches.

**to the saints which dwelt at Lydda** — about five miles east of Joppa.

**34. And Peter said unto him, Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole** — (See on ~~406~~ Acts 3:6).

**make thy bed** — (See on ~~408~~ John 5:8).

**35. all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron** — (or "Sharon," a rich vale between Joppa and Caesarea).

**saw him, and turned to the Lord** — that is, there was a general conversion in consequence.

**36-39. at Joppa** — the modern *Jaffa*, on the Mediterranean, a very ancient city of the Philistines, afterwards and still the seaport of Jerusalem, from which it lies distant forty-five miles to the northwest.

**Tabitha ... Dorcas** — the *Syro-Chaldaic* and *Greek* names for an *antelope* or *gazelle*, which, from its loveliness, was frequently employed as a proper name for women [MEYER, OLSHAUSEN]. Doubtless the interpretation, as here given, is but an echo of the remarks made by the Christians regarding her — how well her character answered to her name.

**full of good works and alms-deeds** — eminent for the activities and generousities of the Christian character.

**37. when they had washed** — according to the custom of civilized nations towards the dead.

**in an** — rather, "the"

**upper chamber** — (compare ~~4179~~ 1 Kings 17:19).

**38. the disciples sent unto Peter** — showing that the disciples generally did not possess miraculous gifts [BENGEL].

**39. all the widows** — whom she had clad or fed.

**stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas had made** — that is, (as the tense implies), showing these as specimens only of what she *was in the habit of making*.

**40-43. Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down** — the one in imitation of his Master's way (<sup><40></sup>Luke 8:54; and compare <sup><41></sup>2 Kings 4:33); the other, in striking contrast with it. The *kneeling* became the lowly servant, but not the Lord Himself, *of whom it is never once recorded that he knelt in the performance of a miracle*.

**opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up** — The graphic minuteness of detail here imparts to the narrative an air of charming reality.

**41. he gave her his hand, and lifted her up** — as his Lord had done to his own mother-in-law (<sup><40></sup>Mark 1:31).

**43. with one Simon a tanner** — a trade regarded by the Jews as half unclean, and consequently disreputable, from the contact with dead animals and blood which was connected with it. For this reason, even by other nations, it is usually carried on at some distance from towns; accordingly, Simon's house was "by the seaside" (<sup><40></sup>Acts 10:6). Peter's lodging there shows him already to some extent above Jewish prejudice.

# CHAPTER 10

## ~~411E~~ ACTS 10:1-48.

### ACCESSION AND BAPTISM OF CORNELIUS AND HIS PARTY; OR, THE FIRST-FRUIITS OF THE GENTILES.

We here enter on an entirely new phase of the Christian Church, the “opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles”; in other words, the recognition of Gentile, on terms of perfect equality with Jewish, discipleship without the necessity of circumcision. Some beginnings appear to have been already made in this direction (see on ~~411E~~ Acts 11:20,21); and Saul probably acted on this principle from the first, both in Arabia and in Syria and Cilicia. But had he been the prime mover in the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church, the Jewish party, who were never friendly to him, would have acquired such strength as to bring the Church to the verge of a disastrous schism. But on Peter, “the apostle” specially “of the circumcision,” was conferred the honor of initiating this great movement, as before of the first admission of Jewish believers. (See on ~~410E~~ Matthew 16:19). After this, however, one who had already come upon the stage was to eclipse this “chiefest of the apostles.”

**1, 2. Caesarea** — (See on ~~408D~~ Acts 8:40).

**the Italian band** — a cohort of Italians, as distinguished from native soldiers, quartered at Caesarea, probably as a bodyguard to the Roman procurator who resided there. An ancient coin makes express mention of such a cohort in Syria. [AKERMAN, *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*.]

**2. A devout man**, etc. — an uncircumcised Gentile proselyte to the Jewish faith, of whom there were a very great number at this time; a distinguished proselyte, who had brought his whole household establishment under the hallowing influence of the Jewish faith and the regular observance of its principal seasons of worship.

**gave much alms to the people** — that is, the *Jewish* people, on the same principle as another centurion before him (~~407E~~ Luke 7:5); thinking it no “great thing,” if they had “sown unto him spiritual things, that they should reap his carnal things” (~~401E~~ 1 Corinthians 9:11).

**prayed to God alway** — at the stated daily seasons. (See on <sup><40B></sup>Acts 10:3).

**3-6. saw ... evidently** — “distinctly.”

**the ninth hour of the day** — three o’clock, the hour of the evening sacrifice. But he had been “fasting until that hour” (<sup><40B></sup>Acts 10:30), perhaps from the sixth hour (<sup><40B></sup>Acts 10:9).

**4. What is it, Lord?** — language which, tremulously though it was uttered, betokened childlike reverence and humility.

**Thy prayers and thine alms** — The way in which both are specified is emphatic. The one denotes the spiritual outgoing of his soul to God, the other its practical outgoing to men.

**are come up for a memorial before God** — that is, as a *sacrifice* well-pleasing unto God, as an odor of a sweet smell (<sup><40B></sup>Revelation 8:4).

**5. send to Joppa ... for one Simon**, etc. — (See on <sup><40B></sup>Acts 9:11).

**7, 8. when the angel ... was departed, he called** — immediately doing as directed, and thereby showing the simplicity of his faith.

**a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually** — of the “soldiers under him,” such as the centurion at Capernaum had (<sup><40B></sup>Matthew 8:9). Who this “devout soldier” was, can only be matter of conjecture. DA COSTA [*Four Witnesses*] gives a number of ingenious reasons for thinking that, having attached himself henceforth to Peter — whose influence in the composition of the second Gospel is attested by the earliest tradition, and is stamped on that Gospel itself — he is no other than the Evangelist *Mark*.

**9-16. upon the housetop** — the flat roof, the chosen place in the East for cool retirement.

**the sixth hour** — noon.

**10. a trance** — differing from the “vision” of Cornelius, in so far as the things seen had not the same *objective* reality, though both were supernatural.

**12. all manner of four-footed beasts**, etc. — that is, the *clean* and the *unclean* (ceremonially) all mixed together.

**14. Not so, Lord** — See *Marginal* reference.

**I have never eaten anything that is common** — that is, *not sanctified* by divine permission to eat of it, and so “unclean.” “The distinction of meats

was a sacrament of national distinction, separation, and consecration” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**15. What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common** — The ceremonial distinctions are at an end, and Gentiles, ceremonially separated from the chosen people (<sup><4118></sup>Acts 10:28), and debarred from that access to God in the visible ordinances of His Church which they enjoyed, are now on a perfect equality with them.

**16. done thrice** — See <sup><4113></sup>Genesis 41:32.

**17-24. while Peter doubted ... what this should mean, behold, the three men ... stood before the gate ... and asked** — “were inquiring,” that is, in the act of doing so. The preparations here made — of Peter for his Gentile visitors, as of Cornelius for him — are devoutly to be noted. But besides this, at the same moment, “the Spirit” expressly informs him that three men were inquiring for him, and bids him unhesitatingly go with them, as sent by Him.

**21. I am he whom ye seek** — This seems to have been said without any communication being made to Peter regarding the men or their errand.

**22. they said, Cornelius ... a just man**, etc. — fine testimony this from his own servants.

**of good report among all the nation of the Jews** — specified, no doubt, to conciliate the favorable regard of the Jewish apostle.

**to hear words of thee** — (See on <sup><4114></sup>Acts 11:14).

**23. called them in and lodged them** — thus partially anticipating this fellowship with Gentiles.

**Peter went ... with them, and certain brethren** — six in number (<sup><4112></sup>Acts 11:12).

**from Joppa** — as witnesses of a transaction which Peter was prepared to believe pregnant with great consequences.

**24. Cornelius ... called together his kinsmen and near friends** — implying that he had been long enough at Caesarea to form relationships there and that he had intimate friends there whose presence he was not ashamed to invite to a religious meeting of the most solemn nature.

**25-29. as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him** — a mark of the highest respect.

**fell down at his feet, and worshipped him** — In the East this way of showing respect was customary not only to kings, but to others occupying a superior station; but among the Greeks and Romans it was reserved for the gods. Peter, therefore, declines it as due to no mortal [GROTIUS]. “*Those who claim to have succeeded Peter, have not imitated this part of his conduct*” [ALFORD] (therein only verifying <sup><311></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4, and compare <sup><690></sup>Revelation 19:10 22:9).

**28. Ye know it is ... unlawful ... for ... a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation**, etc. — There was no express prohibition to this effect, and to a Certain extent intercourse was certainly kept up. (See the Gospel history, towards the end). But intimate social fellowship was not practiced, as being adverse to the spirit of the law.

**29. I ask therefore**, etc. — The whole speech is full of dignity, the apostle seeing in the company before him a new brotherhood, into whose devout and inquiring minds he was divinely directed to pour the light of new truth.

**30-33. Four days ago** — the messengers being despatched on the first; on the second reaching Joppa (<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:9); starting for Caesarea on the third; and on the fourth arriving.

**33. we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God** — Beautiful expression of entire preparedness to receive the expected divine teaching through the lips of this heaven-commissioned teacher, and delightful encouragement to Peter to give free utterance to what was doubtless already on his lips!

**34, 35. Peter opened his mouth** — (See on <sup><412></sup>Matthew 5:2).

**Of a truth I perceive** — that is, “I have it now demonstrated before mine eyes.”

**that God is no respecter of persons** — Not, “I see there is no capricious *favoritism* with God,” for Peter would never imagine such a thing; but (as the next clause shows), “I see that God has respect only to *personal character and state* in the acceptance of men, national and ecclesiastical distinctions being of no account.”

**35. But in every nation** — not (observe), in every *religion*; according to a common distortion of these words.

**he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness** — This being the well-known phraseology of the Old Testament in describing the truly godly man, within the pale of revealed religion, it cannot be alleged that Peter meant it to denote a merely *virtuous* character, in the heathen sense; and as



Peter had learned enough, from the messengers of Cornelius and from his own lips, to convince him that the whole religious character of this Roman officer had been moulded in the Jewish faith, there can be no doubt that the apostle intended to describe exactly such saintship — in its internal spirituality and external fruitfulness — as God had already pronounced to be genuine and approved. And since to such “He giveth more grace,” according to the law of His Kingdom (<sup><3006</sup>James 4:6 <sup><4259</sup>Matthew 25:29), He sends Peter, not to be the instrument of his *conversion*, as this is very frequently called, but simply to “show him the way of God more perfectly,” as before to the devout Ethiopian eunuch.

**36-38. the word ... sent unto the children of Israel** — for to them (he would have them distinctly know) the Gospel was first preached, even as the facts of it took place on the special theater of the ancient economy.

**preaching peace by Jesus Christ** — the glorious sum of all Gospel truth (<sup><4001</sup>1 Corinthians 1:20-22).

**he is Lord of all** — exalted to embrace under the canopy of His peace, Jew and Gentile alike, whom the blood of His Cross had cemented into one reconciled and accepted family of God (<sup><4023</sup>Ephesians 2:13-18).

**37. That word ... ye how** — The facts, it seems, were too notorious and extraordinary to be unknown to those who mixed so much with Jews, and took so tender an interest in all Jewish matters as they did; though, like the eunuch, they knew not the significance of them.

**which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee** — (See <sup><4044</sup>Luke 4:14,37,44 7:17 9:6 23:5).

**after the baptism which John preached** — (See on <sup><4022</sup>Acts 1:22).

**38. Now God anointed Jesus of Nazareth** — rather, “Jesus of Nazareth (as the burden of that ‘published word’), how God anointed Him.”

**with the Holy Ghost and with power** — that is, at His baptism, thus visibly proclaiming Him MESSIAH, “the Lord’s Christ.” See <sup><4048</sup>Luke 4:18-21. For it is not His unction for personal holiness at His incarnation that is referred to — as many of the Fathers and some moderns take it — but His investiture with the insignia of the Messianic office, in which He presented Himself after His baptism to the acceptance of the people.

**went about doing good** — holding up the *beneficent* character of all His miracles, which was their predicted character (<sup><2316</sup>Isaiah 35:5,6, etc.).

**healing all that were oppressed of the devil** — whether in the form of demoniacal possessions, or more indirectly, as in her “whom Satan had bound with a spirit of infirmity eighteen years” (<sup><2136></sup>Luke 13:16); thereby showing Himself the Redeemer from all evil.

**for God was with him** — Thus gently does the apostle rise to the supreme dignity of Christ with which he closes, accommodating himself to his hearers.

**39-43. we are witnesses of all ... he did** — not objects of superstitious reverence, but simply *witnesses* to the great historical facts on which the Gospel is founded.

**slew and hanged** — that is, slew by hanging.

**on a tree** — So <sup><4150></sup>Acts 5:30 (and see on <sup><4183></sup>Galatians 3:13).

**40-41. showed him openly; Not to all the people** — for it was not fitting that He should subject Himself, in His risen condition, to a second rejection in Person.

**but unto witnesses chosen before of God ... to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose**, etc. — Not the less certain, therefore, was the fact of His resurrection, though withholding Himself from general gaze in His risen body.

**he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead** — He had before proclaimed Him “Lord of all,” for the dispensing of “*peace*” to all alike; now he announces Him in the same supreme lordship, for the exercise of *judgment* upon all alike. On this divine ordination, see <sup><4182></sup>John 5:22,23,27 <sup><4173></sup>Acts 17:31. Thus we have here all Gospel truth in brief. But, *forgiveness through this exalted One* is the closing note of Peter’s beautifully simple discourse.

**43. To him give all the prophets witness** — that is, This is the burden, generally of the prophetic testimony. It was fitter thus to give the spirit of their testimony, than to quote them in detail on such an occasion. But let this apostolic statement of the evangelical import of the Old Testament writings be devoutly weighed by those who are disposed to rationalize away this element in the Old Testament.

**whosoever believeth in him** — This was evidently said with special reference to the Gentile audience then before him, and formed a noble practical conclusion to the whole discourse.

**44, 45. While Peter yet spake ... the Holy Ghost fell** — by visible and audible manifestation (~~4006~~ Acts 10:46).

**45. they of the circumcision ... were astonished ... because that on the Gentiles also was poured out**, etc. — without circumcision.

**46. heard them speak with tongues and magnify God** — As on the day of Pentecost it was no empty miracle, no mere speaking of foreign languages, but utterance of “the wonderful works of God” in tongues to them unknown (~~4021~~ Acts 2:11), so here; but more remarkable in this case, as the speakers were perhaps less familiar with the Old Testament songs of praise.

**46-48. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water ... which have received the Holy Ghost**, etc. — Mark, he does not say, They have received the Spirit, what need have they for water? but, Having the living discipleship imparted to them and visibly stamped upon them, what objection can there be to admitting them, by the seal of baptism, into the full fellowship of the Church?

**47. which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we** — and are thus, in all that is essential to salvation, on a level with ourselves.

**48. he commanded them to be baptized** — not doing it with his own hands, as neither did Paul, save on rare occasions (~~4014~~ 1 Corinthians 1:14-17; compare ~~4028~~ Acts 2:38 ~~4002~~ John 4:2).

**prayed ... him to tarry certain days** — “golden days” [BENGEL], spent, doubtless, in refreshing Christian fellowship, and in imparting and receiving fuller teaching on the several topics of the apostle’s discourse.

# CHAPTER 11

## ~~<4100>~~ACTS 11:1-18.

### PETER VINDICATES HIMSELF BEFORE THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM FOR HIS PROCEDURE TOWARDS THE GENTILES.

**1-11. the apostles and brethren ... in Judea** — rather, “throughout Judea.”

**2. they ... of the circumcision** — not the Jewish Christians generally, for here there were no other, but such as, from their jealousy for “the middle wall of partition” which circumcision raised between Jew and Gentile, were *afterwards* known as “they of the circumcision.” They doubtless embraced apostles as well as others.

**3, 4. Thou wentest in ... But Peter rehearsed the matter**, etc. — These objectors scruple not to demand from Peter, though the first among the apostles, an explanation of his conduct; nor is there any insinuation on Peter’s part of disrespect towards his authority in that demand — a manifest proof that such authority was unknown both to the complainers and to himself.

**12-18. we entered the man’s house** — No mention of Cornelius’ name, much less of his high position, as if that affected the question. To the charge, “Thou wentest in to *men* uncircumcised,” he simply speaks of the uncircumcised “*man*” to whom he had been divinely sent.

**13. seen an angel** — literally, “*the* angel,” for the rumor took that definite shape.

**14. Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved** — The historian makes the angel express this much more generally (~~<4100>~~Acts 10:6). So also the subsequent report of it by the deputies and by Cornelius himself to Peter (~~<4100>~~Acts 10:22,32). But as Peter tarried with Cornelius certain days, and they doubtless talked over the wonderful scene together, perhaps this fuller and richer form of what the angel said was given to Peter; or the apostle himself may have *expressed* what the angel certainly *designed* by directing them to send for him. Observe, “salvation” is here made to hang upon “*words*,” that is, the Gospel message

concerning Christ. But on the “salvation” of Cornelius, see on ~~<40B>~~ Acts 10:34,35. On that of his “house,” see on ~~<290>~~ Luke 19:10.

**16, 17. Then remembered I the word ... John ... baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then,** etc. — that is, “Since God Himself has put them on a level with ourselves, by bestowing on them what the Lord Jesus pronounced the higher baptism of the Holy Ghost, would it not have been to withstand God if I had withheld from them the lower baptism of water, and kept aloof from them as still ‘unclean?’”

**18. held their peace and glorified God** — Well had it been if, when Paul afterwards adduced equally resistless evidence in justification of the same line of procedure, this Jewish party had shown the same reverential and glad submission!

**Then hath God also granted to the Gentiles,** etc. — rather, “granted to the Gentiles also.” (See a similar misplacement of “also” in ~~<800>~~ Hebrews 12:1). To “grant repentance unto life” — that is, “such as issues in life” (compare ~~<200>~~ 2 Corinthians 7:10, “repentance unto salvation”) — is more than to be willing to pardon upon repentance [GROTIUS]. The case of Cornelius is so manifestly one of *grace* reigning in every stage of his religious history, that we can hardly doubt that this was just the feature of it which they meant here to express. *And this is the grace that reigns in every conversion.*

## ~~<4115>~~ ACTS 11:19-24.

### THE GOSPEL BEING PREACHED TO GENTILES AT ANTIOCH ALSO BARNABAS IS SENT THITHER FROM JERUSALEM, WHO HAILS THEIR ACCESSION AND LABORS AMONG THEM.

**19. they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen** — and who “went everywhere preaching the word” (~~<400>~~ Acts 8:4).

**traveled as far as Phenice** — that part of the Mediterranean coast which, commencing a little north of Caesarea, stretches northwards for upwards of one hundred miles, halfway to Antioch.

**and Cyprus** — (See on ~~<405>~~ Acts 4:36). An active commercial intercourse subsisted between Phenice and Cyprus.

**and Antioch** — near the head of the northeast coast of the Mediterranean, on the river Orontes, and containing a large colony of Jews, to whose religion there were there numerous proselytes. “It was almost an Oriental Rome, in which all the forms of the civilized life of the empire found some representative; and through the two first centuries of the Christian era it was what Constantinople became afterwards, ‘the Gate of the East’” [Howson].

**20. some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene** — (see on <sup><403></sup>Luke 23:26); as Lucius, mentioned in <sup><410></sup>Acts 13:1.

**spake unto the Grecians** — rather, “the *Greeks*,” that is, uncircumcised Gentiles (as the true reading beyond doubt is). The Gospel had, from the first, been preached to “the Grecians” or Greek-speaking *Jews*, and these “men of Cyprus and Cyrene” were themselves “Grecians.” How, then, can we suppose that the historian would note, as something new and singular (<sup><412></sup>Acts 11:22), that some of the dispersed Christians preached to *them*?

**21. a great number believed** — Thus the accession of Cornelius and his party was not the first admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church. (See on <sup><410></sup>Acts 10:1.) Nay, we read of no influence which the accession of Cornelius and his house had on the further progress of the Gospel among the Gentiles; whereas there here open upon us operations upon the Gentiles from quite a different quarter, and attended with ever growing success. The only great object served by the case of Cornelius was *the formal recognition of the principles which that case afterwards secured*. (See on <sup><415></sup>Acts 15:19-29.)

**22. sent ... Barnabas ... as far as Antioch** — implying that even on the way to Antioch he found churches to visit [OLSHAUSEN]. It was in the first instance, no doubt, a mission of inquiry; and no one could be more suitable to inquire into the proceedings of those Cyprians and Cyrenians than one who was himself a “Grecian” of Cyprus (<sup><406></sup>Acts 4:36), and “a son of consolation.”

**23. when he ... had seen the grace of God** — in the new converts.

**was glad** — owned and rejoiced in it at once as divine, though they were uncircumcised.

**exhorted them all that with purpose of heart** — as opposed to a hasty and fickle discipleship.

**they would cleave unto the Lord** — the Lord Jesus.

**24. For he was a good man** — The sense of “good” here is plainly “large-hearted,” “liberal-minded,” rising above narrow Jewish

sectarianism, and that because, as the historian adds, he was “full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.”

**and much people were added unto the Lord** — This proceeding of Barnabas, so full of wisdom, love, and zeal, was blessed to the great increase of the Christian community in that important city.

## ~~44125~~ ACTS 11:25, 26.

**BARNABAS, FINDING THE WORK IN ANTIOCH TOO MUCH FOR HIM, GOES TO TARSUS FOR SAUL — THEY LABOR THERE TOGETHER FOR A WHOLE YEAR WITH MUCH SUCCESS, AND ANTIOCH BECOMES THE HONORED BIRTHPLACE OF THE TERM *CHRISTIAN*.**

**25. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus for to seek Saul** — Of course, this was after the hasty despatch of Saul to Tarsus, no doubt by Barnabas himself among others, to escape the fury of the Jews at Jerusalem. And as Barnabas was the first to take the converted persecutor by the hand and procure his recognition as a disciple by the brethren at Jerusalem (~~44325~~ Acts 9:27), so he alone seems at that early period to have discerned in him those peculiar endowments by virtue of which he was afterwards to eclipse all others. Accordingly, instead of returning to Jerusalem, to which, no doubt, he sent accounts of his proceedings from time to time, finding that the mine in Antioch was rich in promise and required an additional and powerful hand to work, he leaves it for a time, takes a journey to Tarsus, “finds Saul” (seemingly implying — not that he lay hid [BENGEL], but that he was engaged at the time in some preaching circuit — see on ~~44523~~ Acts 15:23), and returns with him to Antioch. Nor were his hopes disappointed. As co-pastors, for the time being, of the Church there, they so labored that the Gospel, even in that great and many-sided community, achieved for itself a name which will live and be gloried in as long as this world lasts, as the symbol of all that is most precious to the fallen family of man: — “*The disciples were called CHRISTIANS first in Antioch.*” This name originated not within, but without, the Church; not with their *Jewish* enemies, by whom they were styled “Nazarenes” (~~44215~~ Acts 24:5), but with the *heathen* in Antioch, and (as the form of the word shows) with the *Romans*, not the *Greeks* there [OLSHAUSEN]. It was not at first used in a good sense (as ~~44335~~ Acts 26:28 ~~44045~~ 1 Peter 4:16 show), though hardly framed out of contempt (as DE WETTE, BAUMGARTEN, etc.); but as it was a noble testimony to the light in which the Church regarded Christ — honoring Him as their only

Lord and Savior, dwelling continually on His name, and glorying in it — so it was felt to be too apposite and beautiful to be allowed to die.

## ~~<4112>~~ ACTS 11:27-30.

### BY OCCASION OF A FAMINE BARNABAS AND SAUL RETURN TO JERUSALEM WITH A CONTRIBUTION FOR THE RELIEF OF THEIR SUFFERING BRETHREN.

**27. came prophets from Jerusalem** — inspired teachers, a class we shall afterwards frequently meet with, who sometimes, but not necessarily, foretold future events. They are classed next to apostles (~~<4128>~~ 1 Corinthians 12:28,29 ~~<4041>~~ Ephesians 4:11).

**28. that there should be great dearth throughout all the world** — the whole Roman empire.

**which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar** — Four famines occurred during his reign. This one in Judea and the adjacent countries took place, A.D. 41 [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.2,5]. *An important date for tracing out the chronology of the Acts.* (But this subject is too difficult and extensive to admit of being handled here).

**29. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief**, etc. — This was the pure prompting of Christian love, which shone so bright in those earliest days of the Gospel.

**30. sent it to the elders** — an office well known to be borrowed from the synagogue; *after the model of which, and not at all of the temple, the Christian Churches were constituted by the apostles.*

**by the hands of Barnabas and Saul** — This was Saul's SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM after his conversion.



# CHAPTER 12

## ACTS 12:1-19.

### PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH BY HEROD AGRIPPA I — MARTYRDOM OF JAMES AND MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF PETER.

**1-3. Herod the king** — grandson of Herod the Great, and son of Aristobulus. He at this time ruled over all his father's dominions. PALEY has remarked the accuracy of the historian here. For thirty years before this there was no king at Jerusalem exercising supreme authority over Judea, nor was there ever afterwards, save during the three last years of Herod's life, within which the transactions occurred.

**2. killed James ... with the sword** — beheaded him; a most ignominious mode of punishment, according to the Jews. Blessed martyr! Thou hast indeed “drunk of thy Lord's cup, and hast been baptized with his baptism.” (See on ~~4118~~ Mark 10:38-40.) A grievous loss this would be to the Church; for though nothing is known of him beyond what we read in the Gospels, the place which he had as one of the three whom the Lord admitted to His closest intimacy would lead the Church to look up to him with a reverence and affection which even their enemies would come to hear of. They could spring only upon one more prized victim; and flushed with their first success, they prevail upon Herod to seize him also.

**3. because he saw it pleased the Jews** — Popularity was the ruling passion of this Herod, not naturally so cruel as some of the family [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 19.7.3].

**to take Peter also** — whose loss, at this stage of the Church, would have been, so far as we can see, irreparable.

**Then were the days of unleavened bread** — seven in number, during which, after killing and eating the Passover, no leaven was allowed in Jewish houses (~~10215~~ Exodus 12:15,19).

**4. delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers** — that is, to four parties of four each, corresponding to the four Roman watches; two watching in prison and two at the gates, and each party being on duty for the space of one watch.

**intending after Easter** — rather, “after the Passover”; that is, after the whole festival was over. (The word in our King James Version is an ecclesiastical term of later date, and ought not to have been employed here).

**to bring him forth to the people** — for execution; for during “the days of unleavened bread,” or the currency of any religious festival, the Jews had a prejudice against trying or putting anyone to death.

**5, 6. prayer was made without ceasing** — rather, “instant,” “earnest,” “urgent” (*Margin*); as in <sup><4224></sup>Luke 22:44 <sup><4267></sup>Acts 26:7 and <sup><6048></sup>1 Peter 4:8 (see *Greek*).

**of the church unto God for him** — not in public assembly, for it was evidently not safe to meet thus; but in little groups in private houses, one of which was Mary’s (<sup><4022></sup>Acts 12:12). And this was kept up during all the days of unleavened bread.

**6. And when Herod would have brought him forth** — “was going to bring him forth.”

**the same night** — but a few hours before the intended execution. Thus long were the disciples kept waiting; their prayers apparently unavailing, and their faith, as would seem from the sequel, waxing feeble. Such, however, is the “law” of God’s procedure (<sup><6236></sup>Deuteronomy 32:36 and see on <sup><4218></sup>John 21:3).

**Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains** — Roman prisoners had a chain fastened at one end to the wrist of their fight hand, and at the other to the wrist of a soldier’s left hand, leaving the right arm of the keeper free in case of any attempt to escape. For greater security the prisoner was sometimes, as here, chained to two soldiers, one on each side. (See <sup><4023></sup>Acts 21:23.) Ye think your prey secure, bloodthirsty priests and thou obsequious tyrant who, to “please the Jews,” hast shut in this most eminent of the servants of Christ within double gates, guarded by double sentinels, while double keepers and double chains seem to defy all rescue! So thought the chief priests, who “made the sepulcher of the Lord sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.” But “He that sitteth in heaven shall laugh at you.” Meanwhile, “Peter is sleeping!” In a few hours he expects a stingless death; “neither counts he his life dear unto him, so that he may finish his course with joy and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus.” In this frame of spirit he has dropped asleep, and lies the picture of peace.

**7-11. the angel of the Lord** — rather, “an angel.”

**came upon him** — so in <sup><4019></sup>Luke 2:9, expressive of the unexpected nature of the visit.

**smote Peter on the side ... Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off ... Gird thyself ... And so he did ... Cast thy garment** — tunic, which he had thrown off for the night.

**8. about thee ... follow me** — In such graphic minuteness of detail we have a charming mark of reality: while the rapidity and curtness of the orders, and the promptitude with which they were obeyed, betoken the despatch which, in the circumstances, was necessary.

**9. wist not that it was true; but thought he saw a vision** — So little did the apostle look for deliverance!

**10. first and the second ward ... the iron gate that leadeth unto the city** — We can only conjecture the precise meaning of all this, not knowing the position of the prison.

**passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him** — when he had placed him beyond pursuit. Thus “He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their heads cannot perform their enterprise” (<sup><4012></sup>Job 5:12).

**11. when Peter was come to himself** — recovered from his bewilderment, and had time to look back upon all the steps that had followed each other in such rapid succession.

**Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me**, etc. — another evidence that Peter expected nothing but to seal his testimony with his blood on this occasion.

**12-17. he came to the house of Mary**, etc. — who “must have had a house of some pretensions to receive a large number; and, accordingly, we read that her brother Barnabas (<sup><5040></sup>Colossians 4:10) was a person of substance (<sup><4037></sup>Acts 4:37). She must also have been distinguished for faith and courage to allow such a meeting in the face of persecution” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. To such a house it was natural that Peter should come.

**mother of John ... Mark** — so called to distinguish him from the apostle of that name, and to distinguish her from the other Marys.

**where many were gathered together praying** — doubtless for Peter’s deliverance, and continuing, no doubt, on this the last of the days of unleavened bread, which was their last hope, all night in prayer to God.

**13. came to hearken** — not to open; for neither was it a time nor an hour of night for that, but to listen who was there.

**14. opened not for gladness, but ran in and told**, etc. — How exquisite is this touch of nature!

**15. Thou art mad** — one of those exclamations which one can hardly resist on hearing what seems far “too good to be true.”

**she constantly affirmed** — “kept steadfastly affirming.”

**that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel** — his disembodied spirit, his ghost; anything, in fact, rather than himself. Though this had been the burden of their fervent prayers during all the days of unleavened bread, they dispute themselves out of it as a thing incredible. Still, it is but the unbelief of the disciples who “believed not *for joy* and wondered” at the tidings of their Lord’s resurrection. How often do we pray for what we can hardly credit the bestowment of, when it comes in answer to our prayers! This, however, argues not so much hard unbelief as that kind of it incident to the best in this land of shadows, which perceives not so clearly as it might how very near heaven and earth, the Lord and His praying people, are to each other.

**16. Peter continued knocking** — delay being dangerous.

**17. But he, beckoning ... with his hand to hold their peace** — a lively touch this. In the hubbub of joyful and wondering interrogatories there might mingle reflections, thrown out by one against another, for holding out so long against the testimony of Rhoda; while the emotion of the apostle’s own spirit would be too deep and solemn to take part in such demonstrations or utter a word till, with his hand, he had signified his wish for perfect silence.

**Go show these things unto James and to the brethren** — Whether James the son of Alphaeus, one of the Twelve, usually known as “James the Less,” and “James the Lord’s brother” (~~ROM~~ Galatians 1:19), were the same person; and if not, whether the James here referred to was the former or the latter, critics are singularly divided, and the whole question is one of the most difficult. To us, it appears that there are strong reasons for thinking that they were *not* the same person, and that the one here meant, and throughout the Acts, is *the apostle* James. (But on this more hereafter). James is singled out, because he had probably begun to take the oversight of the Church in Jerusalem, which we afterwards find him exercising (~~4451~~ Acts 15:1-29).

**And he departed, and went into another place** — according to his Lord's express command (<sup><4002></sup>Matthew 10:23). When told, on a former miraculous liberation from prison, to go and speak unto the people (<sup><4461></sup>Acts 5:20), he did it; but in this case to present himself in public would have been to tempt God by rushing upon certain destruction.

**18, 19. as soon as it was day**, etc. — His deliverance must have been during the fourth watch (three to six A.M.); else he must have been missed by the keepers at the change of the watch [WIES].

**19. examined the keepers** — who, either like the keepers of our Lord's sepulcher, had "shaken and become as dead men" (<sup><4189></sup>Matthew 28:4), or had slept on their watch and been divinely kept from awaking.

**commanded that they should be put to death** — Impotent vengeance!

## <sup><4423></sup>ACTS 12:20-25.

### HEROD'S MISERABLE END — GROWING SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL — BARNABAS AND SAUL RETURN TO ANTIOCH.

**20. Herod was ... displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon** — for some reason unknown; but the effect on their commercial relations made the latter glad to sue for peace.

**their country was nourished by the king's country** — See <sup><4181></sup>1 Kings 5:11 <sup><4181></sup>Ezra 3:7 <sup><4271></sup>Ezekiel 27:17. Perhaps the famine (<sup><4418></sup>Acts 11:28) made them the more urgent for reconciliation.

**21. And upon a set day Herod ... made an oration unto them** — to the Tyrians and Sidonians especially.

**22, 23. the people gave a shout**, etc. — JOSEPHUS' account of his death is remarkably similar to this [*Antiquities*, 19.8.2]. Several cases of such deaths occur in history. Thus was this wretched man nearer his end than he of whom he had thought to make a public spectacle.

**24. But the word grew**, etc. — that is, Not only was the royal representative ignominiously swept from the stage, while his intended victim was spared to the Church, but the cause which he and his Jewish instigators sought to crush was only furthered and glorified. How full of encouragement and consolation is all this to the Christian Church in every age!

**25. Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem** — where, it thus appears, they had remained during all this persecution.

**when they had fulfilled their ministry** — or service; that mentioned on ~~44129~~ Acts 11:29,30.

**took with them John ... Mark** — (See on ~~44122~~ Acts 12:12), not to be confounded with the second Evangelist, as is often done. As his uncle was Barnabas, so his spiritual father was Peter (~~44183~~ 1 Peter 5:13).

# CHAPTER 13

**Paul's First Missionary Journey:** *In Company with Barnabas.*

⌌Acts 13:1-14:28.

⌌ACTS 13:1-3.

## **BARNABAS AND SAUL, DIVINELY CALLED TO LABOR AMONG THE GENTILES, ARE SET APART AND SENT FORTH BY THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH.**

The first seven chapters of this book might be entitled, *The Church among the Jews*; the next five (chapters eight through twelve), *The Church in Transition from Jews to Gentiles*; and the last sixteen (chapters thirteen through twenty-eight), *The Church among the Gentiles* [BAUMGARTEN]. “Though Christianity had already spread beyond the limits of Palestine, still the Church continued a stranger to *formal* missionary effort. Casual occurrences, particularly the persecution at Jerusalem (⌌Acts 8:2), had hitherto brought about the diffusion of the Gospel. It was from Antioch that teachers were first sent forth with the definite purpose of spreading Christianity, and organizing churches, with regular institutions (⌌Acts 14:23)” [OLSHAUSEN].

**1. there were ... certain prophets** — (See on ⌌Acts 11:27).

**and teachers; as Barnabas**, etc. — implying that there were others there, besides; but, according to what appears the true reading, the meaning is simply that those here mentioned were in the Church at Antioch as prophets and teachers.

**Simeon ... Niger** — of whom nothing is known.

**Lucius of Cyrene** — (⌌Acts 2:20). He is mentioned, in ⌌Romans 16:21, as one of Paul's kinsmen.

**Manaen** — or Menahem, the name of one of the kings of Israel (⌌2 Kings 15:14).

**which had been brought up with** — or, the foster brother of.

**Herod the tetrarch** — that is, Antipas, who was himself “brought up with a certain private person at Rome” [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 17.1,3]. How

differently did these two foster brothers turn out — the one, abandoned to a licentious life and stained with the blood of the most distinguished of God's prophets, though not without his fits of reformation and seasons of remorse; the other, a devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus and prophet of the Church at Antioch! But this is only what may be seen in every age: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." If the courtier, whose son, at the point of death, was healed by our Lord (<sup><4046></sup>John 4:46) was of Herod's establishment, while Susanna's husband was his steward (<sup><4083></sup>Luke 8:3), his foster brother's becoming a Christian and a prophet is something remarkable.

**and Saul** — last of all, but soon to become first. Henceforward this book is almost exclusively occupied with him; and his impress on the New Testament, on Christendom, and on the world is paramount.

**2. As they ministered to the Lord** — The word denotes the performance of *official* duties of any kind, and was used to express the priestly functions under the Old Testament. Here it signifies the corresponding ministrations of the Christian Church.

**and fasted** — As this was done in other cases on special occasions (<sup><4433></sup>Acts 13:3,14,23), it is not improbable that they had been led to expect some such prophetic announcement at this time.

**the Holy Ghost said** — through some of the prophets mentioned in <sup><4433></sup>Acts 13:1.

**Separate me** — So <sup><8008></sup>Romans 1:1.

**for the work whereunto I have called them** — by some communication, perhaps, to themselves: in the case of Saul at least, such a designation was indicated from the first (<sup><4421></sup>Acts 22:21). *Note.* — While the *personality* of the Holy Ghost is manifest from this language, His supreme *divinity* will appear equally so by comparing it with <sup><8008></sup>Hebrews 5:4.

**3. laid their hands on them** — (See on <sup><4066></sup>Acts 6:6) — "recommending them to the grace of God for the work which they had to fulfill" (<sup><4405></sup>Acts 14:26).

**sent them away** — with the double call — of *the Spirit* first, and next of *the Church*. So clothed, their mission is thus described: "They being sent forth by the Holy Ghost." Have we not here for all time the true principle of appointment to sacred offices?



~~<410>~~ **ACTS 13:4-12.**

**ARRIVING IN CYPRUS THEY PREACH IN THE  
SYNAGOGUES OF SALAMIS — AT PAPHOS, ELYMAS IS  
STRUCK BLIND, AND THE GOVERNOR OF THE ISLAND IS  
CONVERTED.**

**4, 5. departed unto Seleucia** — the seaport of Antioch, from which it lay nearly due west fifteen miles, and five from the Mediterranean shore, on the river Orontes.

**thence sailed to Cyprus** — whose high mountain summits are easily seen in clear weather from the coast [COLONEL CHESNEY in HOWSON]. “Four reasons may have induced them to turn in first to this island:

(1) Its nearness to the mainland;

(2) It was the native place of Barnabas, and since the time when Andrew found his brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus, and “Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus,” family ties had not been without effect on the progress of the Gospel.

(3) It could not be unnatural to suppose that the truth would be welcomed in Cyprus when brought by Barnabas and his kinsman Mark, to their own connections or friends. The Jews were numerous in Salamis. By sailing to that city, they were following the track of the synagogues; and though their mission was chiefly to the Gentiles, their surest course for reaching them was through the proselytes and Hellenizing Jews.

(4) Some of the Cypriotes were already Christians. Indeed, no one place out of Palestine, except Antioch, had been so honorably associated with the work of successful evangelization” [HOWSON].

**5. and when they were at Salamis** — the Grecian capital of the island, on the eastern side, and not many hours’ sail from Seleucia. At this busy mercantile port immense numbers of Jews were settled, which accounts for what is here said, that they had more than one synagogue, in which Barnabas and Saul preached, while other cities had one only.

**they had ... John** — Mark.

**to their minister** — “for their officer”. (See on ~~<410>~~ Luke 4:20). With what fruit they preached here is not said. Probably their feeling was what Paul afterwards expressed at Antioch in Pisidia (~~<413>~~ Acts 13:46).

**6. when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos** — on the opposite or west side of the island, about one hundred miles by land, along the south coast; the Roman capital, where the governor resided.

**they found a ... sorcerer** — one of a numerous class of impostors who, at this time of general unbelief, were encouraged even by cultivated Romans.

**7. Which was with the deputy** — properly, “*the proconsul*.” This name was reserved for the governors of settled provinces, which were placed under the Roman Senate, and is never given in the New Testament to Pilate, Felix, or Festus, who were but *procurators*, or subordinate administrators of unsettled, imperial, military provinces. Now as Augustus reserved Cyprus for himself, its governor would in that case have been not a proconsul, but simply a procurator, had not the emperor afterwards restored it to the Senate, as a Roman historian [DIO CASSIUS] expressly states. In most striking confirmation of this minute accuracy of the sacred historian, coins have actually been found in the island, stamped with the names of *proconsuls*, both in *Greek* and *Latin* [AKERMAN, *Numismatic Illustrations of the New Testament*]. (GROTIUS and BENDEL, not aware of this, have missed the mark here).

**Sergius Paulus, a prudent man** — an intelligent man, who thirsting for truth, sent for Barnabas and Saul, desiring (“earnestly desiring”) to hear the Word of God.

**8-12. But Elymas** — or “the wise.”

**for so is his name by interpretation** — the word is from the *Arabic*.

**withstood them** — perceiving, probably, how eagerly the proconsul was drinking in the word, and fearing a dismissal. (Compare ~~2~~<sup>2</sup> Timothy 3:8).

**9. Then Saul ... also ... called Paul** — and henceforward Paul only; a softening of his former name, in accommodation to Roman ears, and (as the word signifies “little”) probably with allusion as elsewhere to his insignificance of stature and appearance (~~2~~<sup>2</sup> Corinthians 10:1,10) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**filled with the Holy Ghost** — the Spirit coming mightily upon him.

**set his eyes on him and said** — Henceforward Barnabas sinks into the background. The whole soul of his great colleague, now drawn out, as never before, shoots, by the lightning gaze of his eye, through the dark and tortuous spirit of the sorcerer. What a picture!

**10. full of all subtlety** — referring to his magic arts.

**and all malice** — The word signifies “readiness for anything,” knavish dexterity.

**thou child of the devil ... enemy of all righteousness** — These were not words of passion, for immediately before uttering them, it is said he was “filled with the Holy Ghost” [CHRYSOSTOM].

**wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord** — referring to his having to that hour made a trade of leading his fellow creatures astray.

**11. the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind for a season** — the judgment being mercifully designed to lead him to repentance. The tradition that it did is hardly to be depended on.

**there fell on him a mist**, etc. — This is in Luke’s *medical* style.

**12. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord** — so marvellously attested; compare <sup><4102></sup>Mark 1:27. What fruit, if any, followed this remarkable conversion, or how long after it the missionaries remained at Paphos, we know not.

## ~~<4133>~~ ACTS 13:13-52.

### AT PERGA JOHN MARK FORSAKES THEM — AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA, PAUL PREACHES WITH GLORIOUS EFFECT — THE JEWS, ENRAGED, EXPEL THEM OUT OF THEM COASTS.

**13. they came to Perga in Pamphylia** — The distance from Paphos to Attalia, on the Gulf of Pamphylia (see on <sup><4142></sup>Acts 14:25), sailing in a northwest direction, is not much greater than from Seleucia to Salamis on the east. Perga was the metropolis of Pamphylia, on the river Cestrus, and about seven miles inland from Attalia.

**and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem** — As Paul afterwards peremptorily refused to take Mark with him on his second missionary journey, because he “had departed [or ‘fallen off’] from them and had not gone with them to the work” (<sup><4158></sup>Acts 15:38), there can be no doubt that he had either wearied of it or been deterred by the prospect of the dangers which lay before him. (But see on <sup><4157></sup>Acts 15:37, etc.).

**14. departed from Perga** — apparently without making any stay or doing any work: compare the different language of <sup>44125</sup>Acts 14:25, and see immediately below.

**came to Antioch in Pisidia** — usually so called, to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria, from which they had started, though it actually lies in Phrygia, and almost due north from Perga. It was a long journey, and as it lay almost entirely through rugged mountain passes, while “rivers burst out at the base of huge cliffs, or dash down wildly through narrow ravines,” it must have been a perilous one. The whole region was, and to this day is, infested by robbers, as ancient history and modern travels abundantly attest; and there can be but little doubt that to this very journey Paul many years after alludes, when he speaks amidst his “journeyings often,” of his “*perils of rivers*” (as the word is), and his “*perils of robbers*” (<sup>47126</sup>2 Corinthians 11:26). If this journey were taken in May — and earlier than that the passes would have been blocked up with snow — it would account for their not staying at Perga, whose hot streets are then deserted; “men, women, and children, flocks, herds, camels, and asses, all ascending at the beginning of the hot season from the plains to the cool basin-like hollows on the mountains, moving in the same direction with our missionaries” [HOWSON].

**15-17. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand** — as was his manner on such occasions (<sup>4241</sup>Acts 21:40; and see <sup>421</sup>Acts 26:1).

**Men of Israel, and ye that fear God** — by the latter expression meaning religious proselytes, who united with the Jews in all acts of ordinary worship.

**and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in Egypt** — by marvellous interpositions for them in their deepest depression.

**18-22. forty years suffered he their manners** — rather, according to what appears the true reading, “cherished he them” (as a nurse the infant in her bosom).

**20. after that he gave ... judges ... about the space of four hundred and fifty years** — As this appears to contradict <sup>4003</sup>1 Kings 6:1, various solutions have been proposed. Taking the words as they stand in the *Greek*, thus, “after that, by the space of four hundred fifty years, He gave judges,” the meaning may be, that about four hundred fifty years elapsed from the time of the covenant with Abraham *until* the period of the judges; which is historically correct, the word “about” showing that chronological exactness was not aimed at. But taking the sense to be as in our version, that it was the period of the judges itself which lasted about four hundred fifty years,

this statement also will appear historically correct, if we include in it the interval of subjection to foreign powers which occurred during the period of the judges, and understand it to describe the whole period from the settlement of the tribes in Canaan to the establishment of royalty. Thus, from the Exodus to the building of the temple were five hundred ninety-two years [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8.3.1]; deduct forty years in the wilderness; twenty-five years of Joshua's rule [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 5.1.29]; forty years of Saul's reign (<sup><4132></sup>Acts 13:2); forty of David's and the first four years of Solomon's reign (<sup><1003></sup>1 Kings 6:1), and there remain, just four hundred forty-three years; or, in round numbers, "about four hundred fifty years."

**21. God gave ... them Saul ... of the tribe of Benjamin** — That the speaker was himself of the same name and of the same tribe, has often been noticed as in all likelihood present to the apostle's mind while speaking.

**forty years** — With this length of Saul's reign (not mentioned in the Old Testament), JOSEPHUS coincides [*Antiquities*, 6.14.9].

**22. I have found David**, etc. — This quotation is the substance of <sup><4832></sup>Psalms 89:20 <sup><4934></sup>1 Samuel 13:14; and perhaps also of <sup><4932></sup>Psalms 78:70-72.

**23-25. Of this man's seed hath God, according to ... promise, raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus** — The emphasis on this statement lies:

(1) in the *seed* from which Christ sprang — David's — and the *promise* to that effect, which was thus fulfilled;

(2) on the *character* in which this promised Christ was given of God — "a SAVIOR." His personal name "JESUS" is emphatically added, as designed to express that very character. (See on <sup><4102></sup>Matthew 1:21).

**26-31. children ... of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God** — Gentile proselytes.

**to you is the word of this salvation sent** — both being regarded as one class, as "the Jew first," to whom the Gospel was to be addressed in the first instance.

**27. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not**, etc. — The apostle here speaks as if the more immediate guilt of Christ's death lay with the rulers and people of the metropolis, to which he fondly hoped that those residing at such a distance as Antioch would not set their seal.

**28. found no cause of death** — though they *sought* it (<sup><4059></sup>Matthew 26:59,60).

**29. they took him down ... and laid him in a sepulcher** — Though the burial of Christ was an act of honor and love to Him by the disciples to whom the body was committed, yet since His enemies looked after it and obtained a guard of soldiers to keep watch over it as the remains of their own victim, the apostle regards this as the last manifestation on their part of enmity to the Savior, that they might see how God laughed all their precautions to scorn by “raising Him from the dead.”

**31. he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem**, etc. — that is, by those who, having gone out and in with Him in closest intimacy during all His public ministry, which lay chiefly in Galilee, and having accompanied Him on His last journey to Jerusalem, could not possibly be mistaken as to the identity of the risen One, and were therefore unexceptionable and sufficient witnesses.

**33. God hath fulfilled the same** — “hath completely fulfilled.”

**in that he hath raised up Jesus again** — literally, “raised up”; but the meaning is (notwithstanding the contrary opinion of many excellent interpreters) “*from the dead*”; as the context plainly shows.

**as it is written in the second psalm** — in many manuscripts “the first Psalm”; what we call the first being regarded by the ancient Jews as only an introduction to the Psalter, which was considered to begin with the second.

**this day have I begotten thee** — As the apostle in <sup><4104></sup>Romans 1:4 regards the resurrection of Christ merely as the *manifestation* of a prior Sonship, which he afterwards (<sup><4482></sup>Acts 8:32) represents as *essential*, it is plain that this is his meaning here. (Such *declarative* meaning of the verb “to be” is familiar to every reader of the Bible). See <sup><4158></sup>John 15:8, “So shall ye be,” that is, *be seen* to be “My disciples.” It is against the whole sense of the New Testament to ascribe the *origin* of Christ’s Sonship to His resurrection.

**34-37. now no more to return to corruption** — that is, to the grave where death reigns; and compare <sup><4109></sup>Romans 6:9, “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, *death hath no more dominion over him.*”

**I will give you the sure mercies of David** — (<sup><2583></sup>Isaiah 55:3). The word rendered “mercies” is peculiar, denoting the *sanctity* of them, as comprehending the whole riches of the new covenant; while the other word, “sure,” points to the *certainty* with which they would, through David’s Seed, be at length all substantiated. See on <sup><4114></sup>John 1:14. But how do these

words prove the resurrection of Christ? “They presuppose it; for since an eternal kingdom was promised to David, the Ruler of this kingdom could not remain under the power of death. But to strengthen the indefinite prediction by one more definite, the apostle adduces <sup><9630></sup>Psalm 16:10, of which Peter had given the same explanation (see on <sup><4127></sup>Acts 2:27; <sup><4129></sup>Acts 2:30,31), both apostles denying the possibility of its proper reference to David” [OLSHAUSEN].

**36. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God** — rather, “served,” in his own generation, the will (or “counsel”) of God; yielding himself an instrument for the accomplishment of God’s high designs, and in this respect being emphatically “the man after God’s own heart.” This done, he “fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption.” David, therefore (argues the apostle), could not be the subject of his own prediction, which had its proper fulfillment only in the resurrection of the uncorrupted body of the Son of God, emphatically God’s “Holy One.”

**38-41. the forgiveness of sins** — the first necessity of the sinner, and so the first experienced blessing of the Gospel.

**39. by him all that believe are justified from all things** — The sense requires that a pause in the sentence be made here: “By him the believer is absolved from all charges of the law.” What follows,

**from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses** — is not an *exceptional* but an *explanatory* clause. The meaning is not, “Though the law justifies from many things, it cannot justify from all things, but Christ makes up all deficiencies”; but the meaning is, “By Christ the believer is justified from all things, whereas the law justifies from nothing.” (*Note.* — The deeper sense of justification, the *positive* side of it, is reserved for the Epistles, addressed to the justified themselves: and whereas it is the *resurrection* of Christ here, and throughout the Acts chiefly, which is dwelt on, because the first thing in order to bring peace to the guilty through Christ was to establish His Messiahship by His resurrection, in the Epistles to believers His *death* as the way of reconciliation is fully unfolded).

**40. Beware, therefore,** etc. — By this awful warning of the Old Testament the apostle would fain “shut them up unto the faith.”

**41. ye will not believe though a man declare it unto you** — that is, even on unexceptionable testimony. The words, from <sup><3105></sup>Habakkuk 1:5, were originally a merciful but fruitless warning against the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans and the Babylonish captivity. As



such nothing could more fitly describe the more awful calamity impending over the generation which the apostle addressed.

**42, 43. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath** — rather (according to what is beyond doubt the true reading), “Now, as they were going out [of the synagogue], they besought” — that is, not the Gentiles, whose case comes in afterwards, but the mixed congregation of Jews and proselytes, to whom the discourse had been addressed, entreated to have another hearing of such truths; those of them, that is, who had been impressed. “And after the breaking up of the synagogue, many of” both classes, Jews and religious; proselytes, followed Paul and Barnabas (observe, from this time forward, the inverted order of these names; except ~~4414~~ Acts 14:14 13:7 12:25; see on ~~4414~~ Acts 14:14; ~~4437~~ Acts 13:7; ~~4425~~ Acts 12:25). These names evidently been won to the Gospel by what they had heard, and felt a clinging to their spiritual benefactors.

**43. who, speaking to them** — following up the discourse in the synagogue by some further words of encouragement.

**persuaded them to continue in the grace of God** — which they had experienced through the Gospel. (Compare ~~44123~~ Acts 11:23).

**44-48. the next sabbath came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God** — the intervening days having been spent in further inquiry and instruction, and the excitement reaching the Gentiles, who now for the first time crowded, along with the usual worshippers, into the synagogue.

**45. But when the Jews** — those zealots of exclusive Judaism.

**saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy** — rather, “indignation,” and broke out in their usual manner.

**contradicting and blaspheming** — There is nothing more awful than Jewish fury and execration of the name of Jesus of Nazareth, when thoroughly roused.

**46. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said,** etc. — This is in the highest style of a last and solemn protestation.

**It was necessary that the word should first have been spoken to you** — See the direction of Christ in ~~4247~~ Luke 24:47; also ~~6116~~ Romans 1:16.



**since ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life** — pass sentence upon yourselves.

**47. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,** etc. — These and other predictions must have been long before this brought vividly home to Paul's mind in connection with his special vocation to the Gentiles.

**I have set thee** — that is, Messiah; from which Paul inferred that he was but following out this destination of his Lord, in transferring to the Gentiles those “unsearchable riches” which were now by the Jews rejected and despised.

**48. when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad** — to perceive that their accession to Christ was a matter of divine arrangement as well as apostolic effort.

**and glorified the word of the Lord** — by a cordial reception of it.

**and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed** — a very remarkable statement, which cannot, without force, be interpreted of anything lower than this, that *a divine ordination to eternal life is the cause*, not the effect, *of any man's believing*.

**49-52. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region** — implying some stay in Antioch and missionary activity in its vicinity.

**50. the devout and honorable women** — female proselytes of distinction, jaundiced against the new preachers by those Jewish ecclesiastics to whom they had learned to look up. The potent influence of the female character both for and against the truth is seen in every age of the Church's history.

**expelled them** — an easier thing than to refute them.

**51. shook off the dust of their feet against them** — as directed (~~4004~~ Matthew 10:14).

**came unto Iconium** — a populous city about forty-five miles southeast from Pisidian Antioch: at the foot of Mount Taurus; on the borders of Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Pisidia; and in later times largely contributing to the consolidation of the Turkish empire.

**52. the disciples** — who, though not themselves expelled, had to endure sufferings for the Gospel, as we learn from ~~4442~~ Acts 14:22.

**were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost** — who not only raised them above shame and fear, as professed disciples of the Lord Jesus, but filled them with holy and elevated emotions.

# CHAPTER 14

## ⌵ACTS 14:1-7.

### MEETING WITH SIMILAR SUCCESS AND SIMILAR OPPOSITION AT ICONIUM, PAUL AND BARNABAS FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES TO LYSTRA AND DERBE, AND PREACH THERE.

“After this detailed account of Paul’s labors at Pisidian Antioch, Luke subjoins only brief notices of his further labors, partly because from the nature of the case his discourses must have embraced nearly the same topics, and partly because the consequences that resulted assumed quite a similar shape” [OLSHAUSEN].

**1. they went both together into the synagogue** — Though Paul was now the prominent speaker and actor, yet in everything Barnabas went along with him.

**a ... multitude ... of the Greeks believed** — meaning probably the religious proselytes, as opposed to “the Gentiles” mentioned ⌵Acts 14:2.

**3. Long time therefore abode they** — because in spite of opposition they were meeting with so much success.

**speaking boldly in the Lord** — rather, “in dependence on the Lord,” that is, on their glorified Head.

**who gave testimony to the word of his grace** — a notable definition of the Gospel, whose whole burden is GRACE.

**and granted** — “granting,” that is, who confirmed the Gospel by granting miraculous attestation to it. (The “and” is wanting in the best manuscripts).

**5. an assault made ... to stone them** — rather here, “an impetuous movement” with a view to stoning them: for in ⌵2 Corinthians 11:25, Paul says, “*Once* I was stoned,” and that was at Lystra, as expressly related in ⌵Acts 14:19. (PALEY’s remarks — *Horae Paulinae* — on this singular coincidence between the Epistle and the history are very striking).

**fled** — (See ⌵Matthew 10:23).

**6. unto Lystra and Derbe** — the one some twenty miles to the south, the other some sixty miles to the east of Iconium, somewhere near the bases of what are called the Black Mountains and the roots of Mount Taurus; but their exact position has not yet been discovered.

## ~~4418~~ ACTS 14:8-21.

**AT LYSTRA PAUL HEALING A CRIPPLE, THE PEOPLE ARE  
SCARCE RESTRAINED FROM SACRIFICING TO THEM AS  
GODS, BUT AFTERWARDS, THEIR MINDS BEING POISONED,  
THEY STONE PAUL, LEAVING HIM FOR DEAD —  
WITHDRAWING TO DERBE, THEY PREACH AND TEACH  
THERE.**

There being no mention of the synagogue at Lystra, it is probable there were too few Jews there to form one.

**8-10. there sat there a certain man ... a cripple from his mother's womb ... The same heard Paul speak** — in the open air and (~~4441~~ Acts 14:11) to a crowd of people.

**9. who steadfastly beholding him** — as he did Elymas the sorcerer when about to work a miracle on him.

**and perceiving that he had faith to be healed** — Paul may have been led by the sight of this cripple to dwell on the Savior's miracles of healing, and His present power; and perceiving from the eagerness with which the patient drank in his words, that he was prepared to put his own case into the Redeemer's hands, the Spirit of the glorified Physician came all upon Paul, and "with a loud voice" he bade him "stand upright upon his feet." The effect was instantaneous — he sprang to his feet "and walked."

**11-13. in the speech of Lycaonia** — whether a corruption of the *Greek* tongue, which was well enough understood in this region, or the remains of some older tongue, is not known.

**The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men** — the language of an unsophisticated people. But "that which was a superstition in Lycaonia, and for which the whole "creation" groaned, became a reality at Bethlehem" [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**12. they called Barnabas, Jupiter** — the father of the gods, from his commanding mien (CHRYSOSTOM thinks).

**and Paul, Mercurius** — the god of eloquence and the messenger and attendant of Jupiter, in the heathen mythology.

**13. the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city** — that is, whose temple stood

**before their city, brought oxen and garlands** — to crown the victims and decorate, as on festive occasions, the porches.

**14-18. when ... Barnabas and Paul heard** — Barnabas is put first here, apparently as having been styled the “Jupiter” of the company.

**they rent their clothes and ran in** — rather (according to the true reading), “ran forth.”

**among the people, crying out ... Sirs, why do ye these things?** — This was something more than that abhorrence of idolatry which took possession of the Jews as a nation from the time of the Babylonish captivity: it was that delicate sensibility to everything which affects the honor of God which Christianity, giving us in God a reconciled Father, alone can produce; making the Christian instinctively feel himself to be wounded in all dishonor done to God, and filling him with mingled horror and grief when such gross insults as this are offered to him.

**15. We ... are men of like passions,** etc. — How unlike either imposture or enthusiasm is this, and how high above all self-seeking do these men of Christ show themselves to be!

**unto the living God** — This is the most glorious and distinctive of all the names of God. It is the familiar phraseology of the Old Testament. which, in such contrast with all that is to be found within the literature of heathenism, is shown to be, with its sequel, the New Testament, the one Book of the true religion.

**who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all ... therein** — This idea of *creation*, utterly unknown alike to rude and to cultivated heathenism, would not only define what was meant by “the living God,” but open up a new world to the more thoughtful part of the audience.

**16. Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways** — that is, without extending to them the revelation vouchsafed to the seed of Abraham, and the grace attending it; compare ~~Acts~~ Acts 17:30 ~~1~~1 Corinthians 1:21. Yet not without guilt on their part was this privation (~~Romans~~ Romans 1:20, etc.).

**17. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness** — Though the heinousness of idolatry is represented as so much less in the heathen, by how much they were outside the pale of revealed religion, he takes care to add that the heathen have divine “witness” enough to leave them “without excuse.”

**he did good** — scattering His beneficence everywhere and in a thousand forms.

**rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons** — on which human subsistence and all human enjoyment depend. In Lycaonia, where, as ancient writers attest, rain is peculiarly scarce, this allusion would have all the greater effect.

**filling our hearts with food and gladness** — a natural colloquialism, the heart being gladdened by the food supplied to the body.

**18. with these sayings scarce restrained they the people that they had not done sacrifice to them** — In spite of this, and Peter’s repudiation of all such honor (<sup><44016></sup>Acts 10:26), how soon idolatrous tendencies began to show themselves in the Christian Church, at length to be systematized and enjoined in the Church of Rome!

19. came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium — Furious zeal that would travel so far to counteract the missionaries of the Cross!

**persuaded the people** — “the multitudes.”

**and having stoned Paul** — (See on <sup><44015></sup>Acts 14:5). Barnabas they seem to have let alone; Paul, as the prominent actor and speaker, being the object of all their rage. The words seem to imply that it was the Jews who did this; and no doubt they took the lead (<sup><44019></sup>Acts 14:19), but it was the act of the instigated and fickle multitudes along with them.

drew *him* out of the city — By comparing this with <sup><44078></sup>Acts 7:58 it will be seen that the Jews were the chief actors in this scene.

**20. as the disciples stood round about him** — sorrowing. So his labors here had not been in vain: “Disciples” had been gathered, who now rallied around the bleeding body. And *one appears to have been gained on this occasion, of far more importance than all the rest* — TIMOTHEUS. See on <sup><4401></sup>Acts 16:1-3. (It could scarcely have been at the *subsequent* visit, <sup><44021></sup>Acts 14:21, for the reason given in <sup><520102></sup>2 Timothy 3:10,11; while at the *third* visit, <sup><4401></sup>Acts 16:1-3, he was already a Christian).

**he rose up** — It is possible that this recovery was natural; the insensibility occasioned by such treatment as he had received sometimes passing away

of itself, and leaving the patient less hurt than appeared. But certainly the impression naturally left on the mind by the words is that the restoration was miraculous; and so the best interpreters understand the words. This is confirmed by what follows.

**came into the city** — Noble intrepidity!

**next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe** — a journey for which he could hardly be fit if his recovery had been natural. (As to Derbe, see on ~~4446~~ Acts 14:6).

**21. and when they had preached ... to that city and had taught many** — rather, “had made many disciples” (*Margin*); but probably without suffering any persecution, as Derbe is not mentioned along with Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra (~~4446~~ 2 Timothy 3:11).

## ~~4442~~ ACTS 14:21-28.

### PAUL AND BARNABAS RETRACE THEIR STEPS, RETURN TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, AND THUS COMPLETE THEIR FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

**21, 22. they returned ... to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls**, etc. — At Derbe, Paul was not far from the well-known pass which leads down from the central tableland to Cilicia and Tarsus. But his thoughts did not center in an earthly home. He revisited the places where he had been reviled and persecuted, but where he had left as sheep in the desert the disciples whom his Master had enabled him to gather. They needed building up and strengthening in the faith, comforting in the midst of their inevitable suffering, and fencing round by permanent institutions. Undaunted therefore by the dangers that awaited them, our missionaries return to them, using words of encouragement which none but the founders of a true religion would have ventured to address to their earliest converts, that “we can only enter into the kingdom of God by passing through much tribulation” [HOWSON].

**23, 24. when they had ordained them elders** — literally, “chosen by show of hands.” But as that would imply that this was done by the apostles’ own hands, many render the word, as in our version, “ordained.” Still, as there is no evidence in the New Testament that the word had then lost its proper meaning, as this is beyond doubt its meaning in ~~4489~~ 2 Corinthians 8:19, and as there is indisputable evidence that the concurrence of the people was required in all elections to sacred office in the earliest ages

of the Church, it is perhaps better to understand the words to mean, “when they had made a choice of elders,” that is, superintended such choice on the part of the disciples.

**and had prayed with fasting** — literally, “fastings,” thus setting them solemnly apart. This last clause confirms our interpretation of the former. For if “ordination” was by prayer and fasting (see <sup>441B</sup>Acts 13:3), why should it be said they first “ordained elders,” and after that “prayed with fasting?” Whereas if the first clause refer to the *choice* and the second to the *ordination*, all is natural.

**they commended** — “committed”

**them** — that is, all these churches.

**to the Lord** — Jesus.

**25. when they had preached the word in Perga** — now doing what, for some reason, they had not done on their former visit, but probably with no visible fruit.

**they went down into Attaila** — a seaport on the Gulf of Pamphylia, drawing to itself the commerce of Egypt and Syria.

**26. sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended** — (See on <sup>441B</sup>Acts 13:3).

**27. when they had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them**, etc. — As their call and mission had been solemn and formal, in the presence of and by the Church as well as the Holy Ghost, they dutifully, and no doubt with eager joy, convened the church and gave their report of “all that God had done with them,” that is, by and for them.

**and how** — in particular.

**he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles** — to such even as before had not been proselytes. (See on <sup>441B</sup>Acts 11:21; and on the language, see <sup>441B</sup>1 Corinthians 16:9 <sup>441B</sup>2 Corinthians 2:12 <sup>441B</sup>Colossians 4:3). The ascribing directly to God of such access to the Gentiles is to be noted.

**28. there they abode long time** — “no little time.” From the commencement of the mission till they left Antioch to go up to attend the council at Jerusalem, some four or five years elapsed; and as the missionary journey would probably occupy less than two years, the rest of the time would be the period of their stay at Antioch. (But see Chronological Table.)



# CHAPTER 15

## ~~<41E>~~ ACTS 15:1-35.

### COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM TO DECIDE ON THE NECESSITY OF CIRCUMCISION FOR THE GENTILE CONVERTS.

**1, 2. certain men** — See the description of them in ~~<41E>~~Galatians 2:4.

**2. Paul and Barnabas** — now the recognized heads of the Church at Antioch.

**had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined** — that is, the church did.

**that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them** — Titus was one (~~<41E>~~Galatians 2:1); probably as an uncircumcised Gentile convert endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. He is not mentioned in the Acts, but only in Second Corinthians, Galatians, Second Timothy, and the Epistle addressed to him [ALFORD].

**should go up to Jerusalem ... about this question** — That such a deputation should be formally despatched by the Church of Antioch was natural, as it might be called the mother church of Gentile Christianity.

**3-6. being brought on their way by the church** — a kind of official escort.

**they passed through Phenice** — (See on ~~<41E>~~Acts 11:19).

**and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles, and they caused great joy to the brethren** — As the converts in those parts were Jewish (~~<41E>~~Acts 11:19), their spirit contrasts favorably with that of others of their nation.

**4. And when they were come to Jerusalem** — This was Paul's THIRD VISIT TO JERUSALEM after his conversion, and *on this occasion took place what is related in* ~~<41E>~~Galatians 2:1-10. (See there).

**were received of the church, and the apostles and elders** — evidently at a meeting formally convened for this purpose: the deputation being one so influential, and from a church of such note.

**they declared all things that God had done with them** — (See on ~~444~~Acts 14:14-27).

**6. the apostles and elders came together to consider of this** — but in presence, as would seem, of the people (~~445~~Acts 15:12,22,23).

**7. Peter**, etc. — This is the last mention of him in the Acts, and one worthy of his standing, as formally pronouncing, from the divine decision of the matter already in his own case, in favor of the views which all of Paul's labors were devoted to establishing.

**a good while ago** — probably about fifteen years before this.

**made choice ... that the Gentiles by my mouth** — (See on ~~441~~Acts 11:21).

**8. God, which knoweth the hearts** — implying that the real question for admission to full standing in the visible Church is *the state of the heart*. Hence, though that cannot be known by men, no principle of admission to church privileges which *reverses* this can be sound.

**9. put no difference between us and them: purifying their hearts by faith** — "Purification" here refers to "sprinkling (of the conscience by the blood of Jesus) from dead works to serve the living God." (See on ~~441~~1 Corinthians 6:11). How rich is this brief description of the inward revolution wrought upon the genuine disciples of the Lord Jesus!

**10. why tempt** — "try," "provoke"

**ye God** — by standing in the way of His declared purpose.

**to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples**, etc. — He that was circumcised became thereby bound to keep the whole law. (See ~~444~~Galatians 5:1-6). It was not then the mere yoke of burdensome ceremonies, but of an obligation which the more earnest and spiritual men became, the more impossible they felt it to fulfill. (See ~~445~~Romans 3:5 ~~444~~Galatians 2:4, etc.).

**11. through the grace of the Lord Jesus** — that is, by that only.

**we shall be saved, even as they** — circumcision in our case being no advantage, and in their case uncircumcision no loss; but *grace* doing all for both, and the same for each.

**12. Then all ... gave audience to Barnabas and Paul** — On this order of the names here, see on ~~445~~Acts 15:25.

**declaring what miracles and signs God wrought among the Gentiles by them** — This detail of facts, immediately following up those which Peter had recalled to mind, would lead all who waited only for divine teaching to see that God had Himself pronounced the Gentile converts to be disciples in as full standing as the Jews, without circumcision; and the attesting *miracles* to which Paul here refers would tend, in such an assembly to silence opposition.

**13. James answered, saying,** etc. — Whoever this James was (see on ~~ROM~~ Galatians 1:19), he was the acknowledged head of the church at Jerusalem, and here, as president of the assembly, speaks last, winding up the debate. His decision, though given as his own judgment only, could not be of great weight with the opposing party, from his conservative reverence for all Jewish usages within the circle of Israelitish Christianity.

**14-17. Simeon** — a *Hebrew* variation of Simon, as in ~~ROM~~ 2 Peter 1:1; (*Greek*), the Jewish and family name of Peter.

**hath declared how God at the first** — answering to Peter's own expression "a good while ago" (~~ACTS~~ Acts 15:7).

**did visit the Gentiles to take out of them** — in the exercise of His adorable sovereignty.

**a people for his name** — the honor of his name, or for His glory.

**15. to this agree the words of the prophets** — generally; but those of Amos (~~AMOS~~ Amos 9:11) are specified (nearly as in the *Septuagint version*). The point of the passage lies in the predicted purpose of God, under the new economy, that "the heathen" or "Gentiles" should be "called by His name," or have "His name called upon them." By the "building again of the fallen tabernacle of David," or restoring its decayed splendor, is meant that only and glorious recovery which it was to experience under David's "son and Lord."

**18, 19. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning** — He who announced these things so long before, and He who had now brought them to pass, were one and the same; so that they were no novelty.

**19. Wherefore, my sentence** — or "judgment."

**is, that we trouble not** — with Jewish obligations.

**them which from among the Gentiles are turned to God** — rather, "are turning." The work is regarded as in progress, and indeed was rapidly advancing.

**20. But ... that they abstain from pollutions of idols** — that is, things polluted by having been offered in sacrifice to idols. The heathen were accustomed to give away or sell portions of such animals. From such food James would enjoin the Gentile converts to abstain, lest it should seem to the Jews that they were not entirely weaned from idolatry.

**and from fornication** — The characteristic sin of heathendom, unblushingly practiced by all ranks and classes, and the indulgence of which on the part of the Gentile converts would to Jews, whose Scriptures branded it as an abomination of the heathen, proclaim them to be yet joined to their old idols.

**and from things strangled** — which had the blood in them.

**and from blood** — in every form, as peremptorily forbidden to the Jews, and the eating of which, therefore, on the part of the Gentile converts, would shock their prejudices. See on <sup><4153></sup>Acts 15:28.

**21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him ... every sabbath day** — thus keeping alive in every Jew those feelings which such practices would shock, and which, therefore, the Gentile converts must carefully respect if the oneness of both classes in Christ was to be practically preserved. The wisdom of these suggestions commended itself to all present.

**22, 23. Judas surnamed Barsabas** — therefore not the apostle “Judas the brother of James” (<sup><4013></sup>Acts 1:13), surnamed “Thaddeus” (<sup><4008></sup>Matthew 10:3); nor can it be shown that he was a brother of “Joseph called Barsabas” (<sup><4023></sup>Acts 1:23). But nothing is known of him beyond what is here said.

**and Silas** — the same as “Silvanus” in the Epistles. He became Paul’s companion on his second missionary journey (<sup><4150></sup>Acts 15:40).

**chief men among the brethren** — selected purposely as such, to express the honor in which they held the church at Antioch, and the deputies they had sent to the council, and, as the matter affected all Gentile converts, to give weight to the written decision of this important assembly. They were “prophets,” <sup><4152></sup>Acts 15:32 (and see on <sup><4117></sup>Acts 11:27), and as such doubtless their eminence in the church at Jerusalem had been obtained.

**23. And they wrote ... by them** — This is the first mention in the New Testament history of *writing* as an element in its development. And the combination here of written and oral transmission of an important decision reminds us of the first occasion of writing mentioned in the Old Testament, where a similar combination occurs (<sup><1274></sup>Exodus 17:14). But whereas *there*

it is the deep *difference* between Israel and the Gentiles which is proclaimed, here it is the *obliteration of that difference* through faith in the Lord Jesus [BAUMGARTEN].

**greeting** — The only other place in the New Testament where this word occurs (except in the letter of Lysias, <sup><423></sup>Acts 23:26) is <sup><300></sup>James 1:1, which seems to show that both letters were drawn up by the same hand [BENGEL].

**the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia** — showing that churches then existed in Cilicia as well as Syria, which owed their existence, in all likelihood, to Paul's labors during the interval between his return to Tarsus (<sup><418></sup>Acts 9:30) and his departure in company with Barnabas for Antioch (see on <sup><412></sup>Acts 11:25).

**24-27. Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words** — without authority or even knowledge of the church at Jerusalem, though they belonged to it, and probably pretended to represent its views.

**subverting your souls** — Such strong language is evidently designed to express indignation at this attempt, by an unauthorized party, to bring the whole Christian Church under judicial and legal bondage.

**25. our beloved Barnabas and Paul** — Barnabas is put first here, and in <sup><415></sup>Acts 15:12, on account of his former superior position in the church at Jerusalem (see <sup><412></sup>Acts 9:27 11:22) — an evidence this that we have the document precisely as written, as also of the credibility of this precious history.

**26. Men that have hazarded** — literally, “rendered up,” as in *will* they did.

**their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ** — Noble testimony to those beloved men! It was doubtless prompted more immediately by the narrative they had just listened to from their own lips (<sup><415></sup>Acts 15:12), and judiciously inserted in this letter, to give them the highest weight as the bearers of it, along with their own deputies.

**Judas and Silas ... shall tell you the same ... by mouth** — Mark here how considerate and tender it was to send men who would be able to say of Barnabas and Paul what could not be expected to come from themselves.

**28, 29. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us**, etc. — The One, inwardly guiding to and setting His seal on the decision come to: the other, the external ecclesiastical authority devoutly embracing, expressing,

and conveying to the churches that decision: — a great principle this for the Church in all time.

**to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ... from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well** — The whole language of these prohibitions, and of ~~4150~~Acts 15:20,21, implies that they were designed as concessions to Jewish feelings on the part of the Gentile converts, and not as things which were all of unchanging obligation. The only cause for hesitation arises from “fornication” being mixed up with the other three things; which has led many to regard the whole as permanently prohibited. But the remarks on ~~4150~~Acts 15:20 may clear this (see on ~~4150~~Acts 15:20). The then state of heathen society in respect of all the four things seems the reason for so mixing them up.

**31-33. they rejoiced for the consolation** — As the same word is in ~~4150~~Acts 15:31 properly rendered “exhorted,” the meaning probably is “rejoiced for the exhortation” (*Margin*), or advice; so wise in itself and so contrary to the imposition attempted to be practiced upon them by the Judaizers.

**32. Judas and Silas, being prophets themselves** — that is, inspired teachers.

**exhorted the brethren with many words** — “much discourse.”

**and confirmed them** — opening up, no doubt, the great principle involved in the controversy now settled, of gratuitous salvation, or the purification of the heart by faith alone (as expressed by Peter, ~~4150~~Acts 15:9,11), and dwelling on the necessity of harmony in principle and affection between the Gentile disciples and their Jewish brethren.

**33. were let go in peace** — with peace, as the customary parting salutation.

**34, 35. it pleased Silas** — Silas determined.

**to abide there still** — (The authorities against the insertion of this verse are strong. It may have been afterwards added to explain ~~4150~~Acts 15:40). Doubtless the attraction to Antioch for Silas was Paul’s presence there, to whom he seems to have now formed that permanent attachment which the sequel of this book and Paul’s Epistles show to have existed.

**35. Paul ... and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching** — to the disciples.

**and preaching** — to those without.

**the word of the Lord, with many others** — other laborers.

**also** — How rich must Antioch at this time have been in the ministrations of the Gospel! (*For a painful scene on this occasion between Paul and Peter, see* ~~411~~ Galatians 2:11-14).

## ~~415~~ ACTS 15:36-46.

### DISSENSION BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS — THEY PART COMPANY TO PROSECUTE SEPARATE MISSIONARY TOURS.

**36. And some days after** — How long is a matter of conjecture.

**Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren** — the true reading is, “the brethren.”

**in every city where we have preached ... and see how they do** — whether they were advancing or declining, etc.: a pattern for churches and successful missionaries in every age. (“Reader, how stands it with thee?”) [BENGEL]. “Paul felt that he was not called to spend a peaceful, though laborious life at Antioch, but that his true work was far off among the Gentiles.” We notice here, for the first time, a trace of that tender solicitude for his converts, that earnest longing to see their faces, which appears in the letters which he wrote afterwards, as one of the most remarkable and attractive features of his character. He thought, doubtless, of the Pisidians and Lycaonians, as he thought afterwards at Athens and Corinth of the Thessalonians, from whom he had been lately “taken in presence, not in heart, night and day praying exceedingly that he might see their face and perfect that which was lacking in their faith” [HOWSON].

**37. Barnabas determined to take with them John ... Mark** — his nephew (~~504~~ Colossians 4:10).

**38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them who departed from them** — that is, who *had* departed; but the word is stronger than this — “who stood aloof” or “turned away” from them.

**from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work** — the work yet before them. The allusion is to what is recorded in ~~413~~ Acts 13:13 (see on ~~413~~ Acts 13:13).

**39. And the contention was so sharp between them** — such was the “irritation,” or “exacerbation.”

**that they departed asunder one from the other** — Said they not truly to the Lystrians that they were “men of like passions with them”; (~~44~~Acts 14:15). But *who was to blame?*

(1) That John Mark had either tired of the work or shrunk from the dangers and fatigues that yet lay before them, was undeniable; and Paul concluded that what he had done he might, and probably would, do again. Was he wrong in this? (See ~~4059~~Proverbs 25:19). But

(2) To this Barnabas might reply that no rule was without exception; that one failure, in a young Christian, was not enough to condemn him for life; that if near relationship might be thought to warp his judgment, it also gave him opportunities of knowing the man better than others; and that as he was himself anxious to be allowed another trial (and the result makes this next to certain), in order that he might wipe out the effect of his former failure and show what “hardness he could now endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ,” his petition ought not to be rejected. Now, since John Mark *did* retrieve his character in these respects, and a reconciliation took place between Paul and him, so cordial that the apostle expresses more than once the confidence he had in him and the value he set upon his services (~~5000~~Colossians 4:10,11 ~~5041~~2 Timothy 4:11), it may seem that events showed Barnabas to be in the right, and Paul too harsh and hasty in his judgment. But, in behalf of Paul, it may well be answered, that not being able to see into the future he had only the unfavorable past to judge by; that the gentleness of Barnabas (~~4065~~Acts 4:36 11:24) had already laid him open to imposition (see on ~~4063~~Galatians 2:13), to which near relationship would in this case make him more liable; and that in refusing to take John Mark on this missionary journey he was not judging his Christian character nor pronouncing on his fitness for future service, but merely providing in the meantime against being again put to serious inconvenience and having their hands weakened by a possible second desertion. On the whole, then, it seems clear that each of these great servants of — Christ had something to say for himself, in defense of the position which they respectively took up; that while Barnabas was quite able to appreciate the grounds on which Paul proceeded, Paul was not so competent to judge of the considerations which Barnabas probably urged; that while Paul had but one object in view, to see that the companion of their arduous work was one of thoroughly congenial spirit and sufficient nerve, Barnabas, over and above the same desire, might not unreasonably be afraid for the soul of his nephew, lest the refusal to allow him to accompany them on their journey might injure his Christian character and deprive the Church of a true servant of Jesus



Christ; and that while both sought only the glory of their common Master, each looked at the question at issue, to some extent, through the medium of his own temperament, which grace sanctifies and refines, but does not destroy — *Paul*, through the medium of absolute devotion to the cause and kingdom of Christ, which, warm and womanly as his affections were, gave a tinge of lofty sternness to his resolves where that seemed to be affected; *Barnabas*, through the medium of the same singleness of heart in Christ's service, though probably not in equal strength (~~cf.~~ Galatians 2:13), but also of a certain natural gentleness which, where a Christian relative was concerned, led him to attach more weight to what seemed for his spiritual good than Paul could be supposed to do. In these circumstances, it seems quite possible that they might have amicably "agreed to differ," each taking his own companion, as they actually did. But the "paroxysm" (as the word is), the "exacerbation" which is expressly given as the cause of their parting, shows but too plainly, that human infirmity amidst the great labors of the Church at Antioch at length sundered those who had sweetly and lovingly borne together the heat and burden of the day during a protracted tour in the service of Christ. "Therefore let no man glory in men" (~~cf.~~ 1 Corinthians 3:21). As for John Mark, although through his uncle's warm advocacy of his cause he was put in a condition to dissipate the cloud that hung over him, how bitter to him must have ever afterwards been the reflection that it was his culpable conduct which gave occasion to whatever was sinful in the strife between Paul and Barnabas, and to a separation in action, though no doubt with a mutual Christian regard, between those who had till then wrought nobly together! How watchful does all this teach Christians, and especially Christian ministers and missionaries, to be against giving way to rash judgment and hot temper towards each other, especially where on both sides the glory of Christ is the ground of difference! How possible is it that in such cases both parties may, on the question at issue, be more or less in the right! How difficult is it even for the most faithful and devoted servants of Christ, differing as they do in their natural temperament even under the commanding influence of grace, to see even important questions precisely in the same light! And if, with every disposition to yield what is unimportant, they still feel it a duty each to stand to his own point, how careful should they be to do it lovingly, each pursuing his own course without disparagement of his Christian brother! And how affectingly does the Lord overrule such difference of judgment and such manifestations of human infirmity, by making them "turn out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel"; as in this case is eminently seen in the two missionary parties instead of one, not travelling over the same ground and carrying their dispute over all

the regions of their former loving labors, but dividing the field between them!

**and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas** — (See on ~~4153~~ Acts 15:34) — going two and two, as the Twelve and the Seventy (~~4007~~ Mark 6:7 ~~4016~~ Luke 10:1).

**40. and departed, being recommended ... to the grace of God** — (No doubt by some solemn service; see ~~4113~~ Acts 13:3), as in ~~4113~~ Acts 14:26. It does not follow from the historian's silence that Barnabas was not so recommended, too; for this is the last mention of Barnabas in the history, whose sole object now is to relate the proceedings of Paul. Nor does it seem quite fair (with DE WETTE, MEYER, HOWSON, ALFORD, HACKET, WEBSTER and WILKINSON, etc.). to conclude from this that the Church at Antioch took that marked way of showing their sympathy with Paul in opposition to Barnabas.

**41. and he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches** — “It is very likely that Paul and Barnabas made a deliberate and amicable arrangement to divide the region of their first mission between them; Paul taking the *continental*, and Barnabas the *insular*, part of the proposed visitation. If Barnabas visited Salamis and Paphos, and if Paul (travelling westward), after passing through Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, went as far as Antioch in Pisidia, the whole circuit of the proposed visitation was actually accomplished, for it does not appear that any converts had been made at Perga and Attalia” [HOWSON]. “This second missionary tour appears to have proceeded at first solely from the desire of visiting the churches already planted. In the end, however, it took a much wider sweep, for it brought the apostle to Europe” [OLSHAUSEN].

# CHAPTER 16

**Paul's Second Missionary Journey.** ~~<4151>~~ Acts 15:41-18:22.

~~<4151>~~ **ACTS 15:41-16:5.**

## VISITATION OF THE CHURCHES FORMERLY ESTABLISHED, TIMOTHEUS HERE JOINING THE MISSIONARY PARTY.

**41. he went through Syria and Cilicia** — (See on ~~<4153>~~ Acts 15:23). Taking probably the same route as when despatched in haste from Jerusalem to Tarsus, he then went by land (see on ~~<4181>~~ Acts 9:30).

**1-5. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra; and, behold, a certain disciple was there** — that is, at Lystra (not Derbe, as some conclude from ~~<4101>~~ Acts 20:4).

**named Timotheus** — (See on ~~<4141>~~ Acts 14:20). As Paul styles him “his own son in the faith” (~~<5001>~~ 1 Timothy 1:2), he must have been gained to Christ at the apostle’s first visit; and as Paul says he “had fully known his persecutions which came on him at Lystra” (~~<5101>~~ 2 Timothy 3:10,11), he may have been in that group of disciples that surrounded the apparently lifeless body of the apostle outside the walls of Lystra, and that at a time of life when the mind receives its deepest impressions from the spectacle of innocent suffering and undaunted courage [HOWSON]. His would be one of “the souls of the disciples confirmed” at the apostle’s second visit, “exhorted to continue in the faith, and” warned “that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (~~<4141>~~ Acts 14:21,22).

**the son of a certain ... Jewess** — “The unfeigned faith which dwelt first in his grandmother Lois” descended to “his mother Eunice,” and thence it passed to this youth (~~<5002>~~ 2 Timothy 1:5), who “from a child knew the Holy Scriptures” (~~<5102>~~ 2 Timothy 3:15). His gifts and destination to the ministry of Christ had already been attested (~~<5008>~~ 1 Timothy 1:18 4:14); and though some ten years after this Paul speaks of him as still young (~~<5042>~~ 1 Timothy 4:12), “he was already well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium” (~~<4141>~~ Acts 16:2), and consequently must have been well known through all that quarter.

**but his father was a Greek** — Such mixed marriages, though little practiced, and disliked by the stricter Jews in Palestine, must have been very frequent among the Jews of the dispersion, especially in remote districts, where but few of the scattered people were settled [HOWSON].

**3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him** — This is in harmony with all we read in the Acts and Epistles of Paul's affectionate and confiding disposition. He had no relative ties which were of service to him in his work; his companions were few and changing; and though Silas would supply the place of Barnabas, it was no weakness to yearn for the society of one who might become, what Mark once appeared to be, a *son* in the Gospel [HOWSON]. And such he indeed proved to be, the most attached and serviceable of his associates (<sup><569></sup>Philippians 2:19-23 <sup><647></sup>1 Corinthians 4:17 16:10,11 <sup><506></sup>1 Thessalonians 3:1-6). His double connection, with the Jews by the mother's side and the Gentiles by the father's, would strike the apostle as a peculiar qualification for his own sphere of labor. "So far as appears, Timothy is the first Gentile who after his conversion comes before us as a regular missionary; for what is said of Titus (<sup><608></sup>Galatians 2:3) refers to a later period" [WIES]. But before his departure, Paul

**took and circumcised him** — a rite which every Israelite might perform.

**because of the Jews ... for they knew all that his father was a Greek** — This seems to imply that the father was no proselyte. Against the wishes of a Gentile father no Jewish mother was, as the Jews themselves say, permitted to circumcise her son. We thus see why all the religion of Timothy is traced to the female side of the family (<sup><506></sup>2 Timothy 1:5). "Had Timothy not been circumcised, a storm would have gathered round the apostle in his farther progress. His fixed line of procedure was to act on the cities through the synagogues; and to preach the Gospel to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. But such a course would have been impossible had not Timothy been circumcised. He must necessarily have been repelled by that people who endeavored once to murder Paul because they imagined he had taken a Greek into the temple (<sup><609></sup>Acts 21:29). The very intercourse of social life would have been almost impossible, for it was still "an abomination" for the circumcised to eat with the uncircumcised" [HOWSON]. In refusing to compel Titus afterwards to be circumcised (<sup><608></sup>Galatians 2:3) at the bidding of Judaizing Christians, as necessary to salvation, he only vindicated "the truth of the Gospel" (<sup><608></sup>Galatians 2:5); in circumcising Timothy, "to the Jews he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews." Probably Timothy's ordination took place now (<sup><504></sup>1 Timothy 4:14 <sup><506></sup>2 Timothy 1:6); and it was a service, apparently, of much solemnity — "before many witnesses" (<sup><506></sup>1 Timothy 6:12).

**4, 5. And as they went through the cities, they delivered ... the decrees ... And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily** — not the churches, but the number of their members, by this visit and the written evidence laid before them of the triumph of Christian liberty at Jerusalem, and the wise measures there taken to preserve the unity of the Jewish and Gentile converts.

## ~~<416>~~ ACTS 16:6-12.

**THEY BREAK NEW GROUND IN PHRYGIA AND GALATIA — THEIR COURSE IN THAT DIRECTION BEING MYSTERIOUSLY HEDGED UP, THEY TRAVEL WESTWARD TO TROAS, WHERE THEY ARE DIVINELY DIRECTED TO MACEDONIA — THE HISTORIAN HIMSELF HERE JOINING THE MISSIONARY PARTY, THEY EMBARK FOR NEAPOLIS, AND REACH PHILIPPI.**

**6-8. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia** — proceeding in a northwesterly direction. At this time must have been formed “the churches of Galatia” (~~<400>~~Galatians 1:2 ~~<601>~~1 Corinthians 16:1); founded, as we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians (particularly ~~<409>~~Galatians 4:19), by the apostle Paul, and which were already in existence when he was on his *third* missionary journey, as we learn from ~~<4182>~~Acts 18:23, where it appears that he was no less successful in Phrygia. *Why* these proceedings, so interesting as we should suppose, are not here detailed, it is not easy to say; for the various reasons suggested are not very satisfactory: for example, that the historian had not joined the party [ALFORD]; that he was in haste to bring the apostle to Europe [OLSHAUSEN]; that the main stream of the Church’s development was from Jerusalem to Rome, and the apostle’s labors in Phrygia and Galatia lay quite out of the line of that direction [BAUMGARTEN].

**and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost** — speaking by some prophet, see on ~~<4117>~~Acts 11:27.

**to preach the word in Asia** — not the great Asiatic continent, nor even the rich peninsula now called Asia Minor, but only so much of its western coast as constituted the Roman province of Asia.

**7. After they were come to Mysia** — where, as being part of Roman Asia, they were forbidden to labor (~~<4168>~~Acts 16:8).

**they assayed** — or attempted

**to go into** — or, towards.

**Bithynia** — to the northeast.

**but the Spirit** — speaking as before.

**suffered them not** — probably because,

(1) Europe was ripe for the labors of this missionary party; and

(2) other instruments were to be honored to establish the Gospel in the eastern regions of Asia Minor, especially the apostle Peter (see ~~ROM~~1 Peter 1:1). By the end of the first century, as testified by PLINY the governor, Bithynia was filled with Christians. “This is the first time that the Holy Ghost is expressly spoken of as determining the course they were to follow in their efforts to evangelize the nations, and it was evidently designed to show that whereas hitherto the diffusion of the Gospel had been carried on in unbroken course, connected by natural points of junction, it was now to take a leap to which it could not be impelled but by an immediate and independent operation of the Spirit; and though primarily, this intimation of the Spirit was only negative, and referred but to the immediate neighborhood, we may certainly conclude that Paul took it for a sign that a new epoch was now to commence in his apostolic labors” [BAUMGARTEN].

**8. came down to Troas** — a city on the northeast coast of the aegean Sea, the boundary of Asia Minor on the west; the region of which was the scene of the great Trojan war.

**9, 10. a vision appeared to Paul in the night** — while awake, for it is not called a dream.

**There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us** — Stretching his eye across the aegean Sea, from Troas on the northeast, to the Macedonian hills, visible on the northwest, the apostle could hardly fail to think this the destined scene of his future labors; and, if he retired to rest with this thought, he would be thoroughly prepared for the remarkable intimation of the divine will now to be given him. This visional Macedonian discovered himself by what he said. But it was a cry not of conscious *desire* for the Gospel, but of deep *need* of it and unconscious *preparedness* to receive it, not only in that region, but, we may well say, throughout all that western empire which Macedonia might be said to represent. It was a virtual confession “that the highest splendor of heathendom, which we must recognize in the arts of Greece and in the polity and imperial power of Rome, had arrived at the end of all its resources. God had left the Gentile peoples to walk in their own

ways (<sup>4412</sup>Acts 14:2). They had sought to gain salvation for themselves; but those who had carried it farthest along the paths of natural development were now pervaded by the feeling that all had indeed been vanity. This feeling is the simple, pure result of all the history of heathendom. And Israel, going along the way which God had marked out for him, had likewise arrived at his end. At last he is in a condition to realize his original vocation, by becoming the guide who is to lead the Gentiles unto God, the only Author and Creator of man's redemption; and Paul is in truth the very person in whom this vocation of Israel is now a present divine reality, and to whom, by this nocturnal apparition of the Macedonian, the preparedness of the heathen world to receive the ministry of Israel towards the Gentiles is confirmed" [BAUMGARTEN]. *This voice cries from heathendom still to the Christian Church, and never does the Church undertake the work of missions, nor any missionary go forth from it, in the right spirit, save in obedience to this cry.*

**10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia** — The "we," here first introduced, is a modest intimation that the historian himself had now joined the missionary party. (The modern objections to this are quite frivolous). Whether Paul's broken health had anything to do with this arrangement for having "the beloved physician" with him [WIES], can never be known with certainty; but that he would deem himself honored in taking care of so precious a life, there can be no doubt.

**11, 12. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came** — literally, "ran." **with a straight course** — that is, "ran before the wind."

**to Samothracia** — a lofty island on the Thracian coast, north from Troas, with an inclination westward. The wind must have set in strong from the south or south-southeast to bring them there so soon, as the current is strong in the opposite direction, and they afterwards took five days to what they now did in two (<sup>4416</sup>Acts 20:6) [HOWSON].

**next day to Neapolis** — on the Macedonian, or rather Thracian, coast, about sixty-five miles from Samothracia, and ten from Philippi, of which it is the harbor.

**12. Philippi ... the chief** — rather, perhaps, "the first"

**city of that part of Macedonia** — The meaning appears to be — the first city one comes to, proceeding from Neapolis. The sense given in our version hardly consists with fact.

**a colony** — that is, possessing all the privileges of Roman citizenship, and, as such, both exempted from scourging and (in ordinary cases) from arrest, and entitled to appeal from the local magistrate to the emperor. Though the Pisidian *Antioch* and *Troas* were also “colonies,” the fact is mentioned in this history of Philippi only on account of the frequent references to Roman privileges and duties in the sequel of the chapter.

## ~~44012~~ ACTS 16:12-34.

**AT PHILIPPI, LYDIA IS GAINED AND WITH HER  
HOUSEHOLD BAPTIZED — AN EVIL SPIRIT IS EXPELLED,  
PAUL AND SILAS ARE SCOURGED, IMPRISONED, AND  
MANACLED, BUT MIRACULOUSLY SET FREE, AND THE  
JAILER WITH ALL HIS HOUSEHOLD CONVERTED AND  
BAPTIZED.**

**12, 13. we were in that city abiding certain days** — waiting till the sabbath came round: their whole stay must have extended to some weeks. As their rule was to begin with the Jews and proselytes, they did nothing till the time when they knew that they would convene for worship.

**13. on the sabbath day** — the first after their arrival, as the words imply.

**we went out of the city** — rather, as the true reading is, “outside of the (city) gate.”

**by a river-side** — one of the small streams which gave name to the place ere the city was founded by Philip of Macedon.

**where prayer was wont to be made** — or a prayer-meeting held. It is plain there was no synagogue at Philippi (contrast ~~44016~~ Acts 17:1), the number of the Jews being small. The meeting appears to have consisted wholly of women, and these not all Jewish. The neighborhood of streams was preferred, on account of the ceremonial washings used on such occasions.

**we sat down and spake unto the women**, etc. — a humble congregation, and simple manner of preaching. *But here and thus were gathered the first-fruits of Europe unto Christ, and they were of the female sex*, of whose accession and services honorable mention will again and again be made.

**14, 15. Lydia** — a common name among the Greeks and Romans.



**a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira** — on the confines of Lydia and Phrygia. The Lydians, particularly the inhabitants of Thyatira, were celebrated for their dyeing, in which they inherited the reputation of the Tyrians. Inscriptions to this effect, yet remaining, confirm the accuracy of our historian. This woman appears to have been in good circumstances, having an establishment at Philippi large enough to accommodate the missionary party (<sup><4165></sup>Acts 16:15), and receiving her goods from her native town.

**which worshipped God** — that is, was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and as such present at this meeting.

**whose heart the Lord opened** — that is, the Lord Jesus (see <sup><4165></sup>Acts 16:15; and compare <sup><1245></sup>Luke 24:45 <sup><4172></sup>Matthew 11:27).

**that she attended to the things ... spoken by Paul** — “showing that the inclination of the heart towards the truth originates not in the will of man. The first disposition to turn to the Gospel is a work of grace” [OLSHAUSEN]. Observe here the place assigned to “giving attention” or “heed” to the truth — that species of attention which consists in having the whole mind engrossed with it, and in apprehending and drinking it in, in its vital and saving character.

**15. And when ... baptized ... and her household** — probably without much delay. The mention of baptism here for the first time in connection with the labors of Paul, while it was doubtless performed on all his former converts, indicates a special importance in this first European baptism. Here also is the first mention of a Christian *household*. Whether it included children, also in that case baptized, is not explicitly stated; but the presumption, as in other cases of household baptism, is that it did. Yet the question of infant baptism must be determined on other grounds; and such incidental allusions form only part of the historical materials for ascertaining the practice of the Church.

**she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord** — the Lord Jesus; that is, “By the faith on Him which ye have recognized in me by baptism.” There is a beautiful modesty in the expression.

**And she constrained us** — The word seems to imply that they were reluctant, but were overborne.

**16-18. as we went to prayer** — The words imply that it was *on their way to the usual place of public prayer*, by the river-side, that this took place; therefore not on the same day with what had just occurred.

**a ... damsel** — a female servant, and in this case a slave (~~<416>~~ Acts 16:19).

**possessed of a spirit of divination** — or, of Python, that is, a spirit supposed to be inspired by the Pythian Apollo, or of the same nature. The reality of this demoniacal possession is as undeniable as that of any in the Gospel history.

**17. These men are servants of the most high God**, etc. — Glorious testimony! But see on ~~<414>~~ Luke 4:41.

**this did she many days** — that is, on many successive occasions when on their way to their usual place of meeting, or when engaged in religious services.

**18. Paul being grieved** — for the poor victim; grieved to see such power possessed by the enemy of man's salvation, and grieved to observe the malignant design with which this high testimony was borne to Christ.

**19. when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas** — as the leading persons.

**and drew them into the market-place** — or Forum, where the courts were.

**to the magistrates, saying**, etc. — We have here a full and independent confirmation of the reality of this supernatural cure, since on any other supposition such conduct would be senseless.

**20. These men, being Jews** — objects of dislike, contempt, and suspicion by the Romans, and at this time of more than usual prejudice.

**do exceedingly trouble our city** — See similar charges, ~~<417>~~ Acts 17:6 24:5 ~~<1187>~~ 1 Kings 18:17. There is some color of truth in all such accusations, in so far as the Gospel, and generally the fear of God, as a reigning principle of human action, is in a godless world a thoroughly *revolutionary* principle ... How far external commotion and change will in any case attend the triumph of this principle depends on the breadth and obstinacy of the resistance it meets with.

**21. And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans** — Here also there was a measure of truth; as the introduction of new gods was forbidden by the laws, and this might be thought to apply to any change of religion. But the whole charge was pure hypocrisy; for as these men would have let the missionaries preach what religion they pleased if they had not dried up the source of their gains, so

they conceal the real cause of their rage under color of a zeal for religion, and law, and good order: so <sup><4176></sup>Acts 17:6,7 19:25,27.

**22. the multitude rose up together against them** — so <sup><4183></sup>Acts 19:28,34 21:30 <sup><4238></sup>Luke 23:18.

**the magistrates rent off their** — Paul's and Silas'

**clothes** — that is, ordered the lictors, or rod-bearers, to tear them off, so as to expose their naked bodies (see on <sup><4167></sup>Acts 16:37). The word expresses the roughness with which this was done to prisoners preparatory to whipping.

**and commanded to beat them** — without any trial (<sup><4167></sup>Acts 16:37), to appease the popular rage. Thrice, it seems, Paul endured this indignity (<sup><4125></sup>2 Corinthians 11:25).

**23, 24. when they had laid many stripes upon them** — the bleeding wounds from which they were not washed till it was done by the converted jailer (<sup><4163></sup>Acts 16:33).

**charged the jailer ... who ... thrust them into the inner prison** — “pestilential cells, damp and cold, from which the light was excluded, and where the chains rusted on the prisoners. One such place may be seen to this day on the slope of the Capitol at Rome” [HOWSON].

**24. made their feet fast in the stocks** — an instrument of torture as well as confinement, made of wood bound with iron, with holes for the feet, which were stretched more or less apart according to the severity intended. (ORIGEN at a later period, besides having his neck thrust into an iron collar, lay extended for many days with his feet apart in the rack). Though jailers were proverbially unfeeling, the manner in which the order was given in this case would seem to warrant all that was done.

**25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises** — literally, “praying, were singing praises”; that is, while engaged in pouring out their hearts in prayer, had broken forth into singing, and were hymning loud their joy. As the word here employed is that used to denote the Paschal hymn sung by our Lord and His disciples after their last Passover (<sup><4237></sup>Matthew 26:30), and which we know to have consisted of <sup><4181></sup>Psalms 113:1-118:29, which was chanted at that festival, it is probable that it was portions of the Psalms, so rich in such matter, which our joyous sufferers chanted forth; nor could any be more seasonable and inspiring to them than those very six Psalms, which every devout Jew would no doubt know by heart. “*He giveth songs in the night*” (<sup><4350></sup>Job 35:10). Though their bodies were still bleeding and tortured in the stocks, their spirits, under “the

expulsive power of a new affection,” rose above suffering, and made the prison wails resound with their song. “In these midnight hymns, by the imprisoned witnesses for Jesus Christ, the whole might of Roman injustice and violence against the Church is not only set at naught, but converted into a foil to set forth more completely the majesty and spiritual power of the Church, which as yet the world knew nothing of. And if the sufferings of these two witnesses of Christ are the beginning and the type of numberless martyrdoms which were to flow upon the Church from the same source, in like manner the unparalleled triumph of the Spirit over suffering was the beginning and the pledge of a spiritual power which we afterwards see shining forth so triumphantly and irresistibly in the many martyrs of Christ who were given up as a prey to the same imperial might of Rome” [NEANDER in BAUMGARTEN].

**and the prisoners heard them** — literally, “were listening to them,” that is, when the astounding events immediately to be related took place; not asleep, but wide awake and rapt (no doubt) in wonder at what they heard.

**26-28. And suddenly there was a great earthquake** — in answer, doubtless, to the prayers and expectations of the sufferers that, for the truth’s sake and the honor of their Lord, some interposition would take place.

**every one’s bands** — that is, the bands of all the prisoners.

**were loosed** — not by the earthquake, of course, but by a miraculous energy accompanying it. By this and the joyous strains which they had heard from the sufferers, not to speak of the change wrought on the jailer, these prisoners could hardly fail to have their hearts in some measure opened to the truth; and this part of the narrative seems the result of information afterwards communicated by one or more of these men.

**27. the keeper ... awaking ... drew ... his sword, and would have killed himself**, etc. — knowing that his life was forfeited in that case (~~4129~~ Acts 12:19; and compare ~~4129~~ Acts 27:42).

**28. But Paul cried with a loud voice** — the better to arrest the deed.

**Do thyself no harm, for we are all here** — What divine calmness and self-possession! No elation at their miraculous liberation, or haste to take advantage of it; but one thought filled the apostle’s mind at that moment — anxiety to save a fellow creature from sending himself into eternity, ignorant of the only way of life; and his presence of mind appears in the assurance which he so promptly gives to the desperate man, that his prisoners had none of them fled as he feared. But how, it has been asked by

skeptical critics, could Paul in his inner prison know what the jailer was about to do? In many conceivable ways, without supposing any supernatural communication. Thus, if the jailer slept at the door of “the inner prison,” which suddenly flew open when the earthquake shook the foundations of the building; if, too, as may easily be conceived, he uttered some cry of despair on seeing the doors open; and, if the clash of the steel, as the affrighted man drew it hastily from the scabbard, was audible but a few yards off, in the dead midnight stillness, increased by the awe inspired in the prisoners by the miracle — what difficulty is there in supposing that Paul, perceiving in a moment how matters stood, after crying out, stepped hastily to him, uttering the noble entreaty here recorded? Not less flat is the question, why the other liberated prisoners did not make their escape: — as if there were the smallest difficulty in understanding how, under the resistless conviction that there must be something supernatural in their instantaneous liberation without human hand, such wonder and awe should possess them as to take away for the time not only all desire of escape, but even all thought on the subject.

**29, 30. Then he called for a light, and sprang in ... and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said** — How graphic this rapid succession of minute details, evidently from the parties themselves, the prisoners and the jailer, who would talk over every feature of the scene once and again, in which the hand of the Lord had been so marvellously seen.

**30. Sirs, what must I do to be saved?** — If this question should seem in advance of any light which the jailer could be supposed to possess, let it be considered

(1) that the “trembling” which came over him could not have arisen from any fear for the safety of his prisoners, for they were all there; and if it had, he would rather have proceeded to secure them again than leave them, to fall down before Paul and Silas. For the same reason it is plain that his trembling had nothing to do with any account he would have to render to the magistrates. Only one explanation of it can be given — that he had become all at once alarmed about his spiritual state, and that though, a moment before, he was ready to plunge into eternity with the guilt of self-murder on his head, without a thought of the sin he was committing and its awful consequences, his unfitness to appear before God, and his need of salvation, now flashed full upon his soul and drew from the depths of his spirit the cry here recorded. If still it be asked how it could take such definite shape, let it be considered

(2) that the jailer could hardly be ignorant of the nature of the charges on which these men had been imprisoned, seeing they had been publicly whipped by order of the magistrates, which would fill the whole town with the facts of the case, including that strange cry of the demoniac from day to-day — “These men are the servants of the most high God, which *show unto us the way of salvation*” — words proclaiming not only the divine commission of the preachers, but the news of salvation they were sent to tell, the miraculous expulsion of the demon and the rage of her masters. All this, indeed, would go for nothing with such a man, until roused by the mighty earthquake which made the building to rock; then despair seizing him at the sight of the open doors, the sword of self-destruction was suddenly arrested by words from one of those prisoners such as he would never imagine could be spoken in their circumstances — words evidencing something divine about them. Then would flash across him the light of a new discovery; “That was a true cry which the Pythoness uttered, ‘These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation! That I now must know, and from them, as divinely sent to me, must I learn that way of salvation!’” “Substantially, this is the cry of every awakened sinner, though the degree of light and the depths of anxiety it expresses will be different in each case.

**31-34. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved** —

The brevity, simplicity, and directness of this reply are, in the circumstances, singularly beautiful. Enough at that moment to have his faith directed simply to the Savior, with the assurance that this would bring to his soul the needed and sought salvation — the *how* being a matter for after teaching.

**thou shalt be saved, and thy house** — (See on ~~290~~ Luke 19:10).

**32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord** — unfolding now, doubtless, more fully what “the Lord Jesus Christ” was to whom they had pointed his faith, and what the “salvation” was which this would bring him.

**and to all that were in his house** — who from their own dwelling (under the same roof no doubt with the prison) had crowded round the apostles, aroused first by the earthquake. (From their addressing the Gospel message “to all that were in the house” it is not necessary to infer that it contained no children, but merely that as it contained adults besides the jailer himself, so to all of these, as alone of course fit to be addressed, they preached the word).

**33. And he took them** — the word implies change of place.

the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes — in the well or fountain which was within or near the precincts of the prison [HOWSON]. The mention of “the same hour of the night” seems to imply that they had to go forth into the open air, which, unseasonable as the hour was, they did. These bleeding wounds had never been thought of by the indifferent jailer. But now, when his whole heart was opened to his spiritual benefactors, he cannot rest until he has done all in his power for their bodily relief.

**and was baptized, he and all his, straightway** — probably at the same fountain, since it took place “straightway”; the one washing on his part being immediately succeeded by the other on theirs.

**34. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing** — that is, as the expression implies, “rejoiced because he had believed.”

**in God** — as a converted heathen, for the faith of a *Jew* would not be so expressed [ALFORD].

**with all his house** — the wondrous change on himself and the whole house filling his soul with joy. “This is the second house which, in the Roman city of Philippi, has been consecrated by faith in Jesus, and of which the inmates, by hospitable entertainment of the Gospel witnesses, have been sanctified to a new beginning of domestic life, pleasing and acceptable to God. The first result came to pass in consequence simply of the preaching of the Gospel; the second was the fruit of a testimony sealed and ennobled by suffering” [BAUMGARTEN].

**35, 36. when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go** — The cause of this change can only be conjectured. When the commotion ceased, reflection would soon convince them of the injustice they had done, even supposing the prisoners had been entitled to no special privileges; and if rumor reached them that the prisoners were somehow under supernatural protection, they might be the more awed into a desire to get rid of them.

**36. the keeper** — overjoyed to have such orders to execute.

**told this ... to Paul ... now therefore ... go in peace** — Very differently did Paul receive such orders.

**37. Paul said unto them** — to the sergeants who had entered the prison along with the jailer, that they might be able to report that the men had departed.

**They have beaten us openly** — The *publicity* of the injury done them, exposing their naked and bleeding bodies to the rude populace, was evidently the most stinging feature of it to the apostle's delicate feeling, and to this accordingly he alludes to the Thessalonians, probably a year after: "Even after we had suffered before, and *were shamefully entreated* (or 'insulted') as ye know at Philippi" (~~300~~1 Thessalonians 2:2).

**uncondemned** — unconvicted on trial.

**being Romans** — (See on ~~4028~~Acts 22:28).

**and cast us into prison** — both illegal. Of Silas' citizenship, if meant to be included, we know nothing.

**and now do they thrust us out** — hurry us out — see ~~4038~~Mark 9:38, *Greek*.

**privily?** — Mark the intended contrast between the *public* insult they had inflicted and the *private* way in which they ordered them to be off.

**nay verily** — no, indeed.

**but let them come themselves and fetch us out** — by open and formal act, equivalent to a public declaration of their innocence.

**38. they feared when they heard they were Romans** — their authority being thus imperilled; for they were liable to an action for what they had done.

**39, 40. And they came** — in person.

**and besought them** — not to complain of them. What a contrast this suppliant attitude of the preachers of Philippi to the tyrannical air with which they had the day before treated the preachers! (See ~~2004~~Isaiah 60:14 ~~4039~~Revelation 3:9).

**brought them out** — conducted them forth from the prison into the street, as insisted on.

**and desired** — "requested."

**them to depart out of the city** — perhaps fearing again to excite the populace.

**40. And they went out of the prison** — Having attained their object — to vindicate their civil rights, by the infraction of which in this case the Gospel in their persons had been illegally affronted — they had no mind to carry the matter farther. Their citizenship was valuable to them only as a shield



against unnecessary injuries to their Master's cause. What a beautiful mixture of *dignity* and *meekness* is this! Nothing secular, which may be turned to the account of the Gospel, is morbidly disregarded; in any other view, nothing of this nature is set store by: — an example this for all ages.

**and entered into the house of Lydia** — as if to show by this leisurely proceeding that they had not been made to leave, but were at full liberty to consult their own convenience.

**and when they had seen the brethren** — not only her family and the jailer's, but probably others now gained to the Gospel.

**they comforted them** — rather, perhaps, “exhorted” them, which would include comfort. “*This assembly of believers in the house of Lydia was the first church that had been founded in Europe*” [BAUMGARTEN].

**and departed** — but not all; for two of the company remained behind (see on <sup><4174></sup>Acts 17:14): *Timotheus*, of whom the Philippians “learned the proof” that he honestly cared for their state, and was truly like-minded with Paul, “serving with him in the Gospel as a son with his father” (<sup><3639></sup>Philippians 2:19-23); and *Luke*, “whose praise is in the Gospel,” though he never praises himself or relates his own labors, and though we only trace his movements in connection with Paul, by the change of a pronoun, or the unconscious variation of his style. In the seventeenth chapter the narrative is again in the *third* person, and the pronoun is not changed to the *second* till we come to <sup><4215></sup>Acts 20:5. The modesty with which Luke leaves out all mention of his own labors need hardly be pointed out. We shall trace him again when he rejoins Paul in the same neighborhood. His vocation as a physician may have brought him into connection with these contiguous coasts of Asia and Europe, and he may (as MR. SMITH suggests, “Shipwreck,” etc.) have been in the habit of exercising his professional skill as a surgeon at sea [HOWSON].

# CHAPTER 17

## ACTS 17:1-15.

**AT THESSALONICA THE SUCCESS OF PAUL'S PREACHING ENDANGERING HIS LIFE, HE IS DESPATCHED BY NIGHT TO BEREA, WHERE HIS MESSAGE MEETS WITH ENLIGHTENED ACCEPTANCE — A HOSTILE MOVEMENT FROM THESSALONICA OCCASIONS HIS SUDDEN DEPARTURE FROM BEREA — HE ARRIVES AT ATHENS.**

**1. when they had passed through Amphipolis** — thirty-three miles southwest of Philippi, on the river Strymon, and at the head of the gulf of that name, on the northern coast of the aegean Sea.

**and Apollonia** — about thirty miles southwest of Amphipolis; but the exact site is not known.

**they came to Thessalonica** — about thirty-seven miles due west from Apollonia, at the head of the Thermaic (or Thessalonian) Gulf, at the northwestern extremity of the aegean Sea; the principal and most populous city in Macedonia. "We see at once how appropriate a place it was for one of the starting-points of the Gospel in Europe, and can appreciate the force of what Paul said to the Thessalonians within a few months of his departure from them: "From you, the word of the Lord sounded forth like a trumpet, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place,"" (<sup>1</sup>Thessalonians 1:8) [HOWSON].

**where was a synagogue of the Jews** — implying that (as at Philippi) there was none at Amphipolis and Apollonia.

**2-4. Paul, as his manner was** — always to begin with the Jews.

**went in unto them** — In writing to the converts but a few months after this, he reminds them of the courage and superiority to indignity, for the Gospel's sake, which this required after the shameful treatment he had so lately experienced at Philippi (<sup>1</sup>Thessalonians 2:2).

**3. Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered**, etc. — His preaching, it seems, was chiefly expository, and designed to establish from the Old Testament Scriptures

(1) that the predicted Messiah was to be a suffering and dying, and therefore a rising, Messiah;

(2) that this Messiah was none other than Jesus of Nazareth.

**4. consorted** — cast in their lot.

**with Paul and Silas** — Compare <sup><410></sup>2 Corinthians 8:5.

**of the chief women** — female proselytes of distinction. From the First Epistle to the Thessalonians it appears that the converts were nearly all Gentiles; not only such as had before been proselytes, who would be gained in the synagogue, but such as up to that time had been idolaters (<sup><410></sup>1 Thessalonians 1:9,10). During his stay, while Paul supported himself by his own labor (<sup><410></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:9 <sup><410></sup>2 Thessalonians 3:7-9), he received supplies once and again from the Philippians, of which he makes honorable acknowledgment (<sup><410></sup>Philippians 4:15,16).

**5-9. the Jews ... moved with envy** — seeing their influence undermined by this stranger.

**lewd fellows of the baser sort** — better, perhaps, “worthless market people,” that is, idle loungers about the market-place, of indifferent character.

**gathered a company** — rather, “having raised a mob.”

**assaulted the house of Jason** — with whom Paul and Silas abode (<sup><410></sup>Acts 17:7), one of Paul’s kinsmen, apparently (<sup><410></sup>Romans 16:21), and from his name, which was sometimes used as a *Greek* form of the word *Joshua* [GROTIUS], probably a Hellenistic Jew.

**sought to bring them** — Jason’s lodgers.

**6. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers** — literally, “the politarchs”; the very name given to the magistrates of Thessalonica in an inscription on a still remaining arch of the city — so minute is the accuracy of this history.

**crying, These that have turned the world upside down** — (See on <sup><410></sup>Acts 16:20).

**7. all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar**, etc. — meaning, probably, nothing but what is specified in the next words.

saying ... there is another king, *one* Jesus — (See on <sup><410></sup>John 19:12).

**9. And when they had taken security of Jason and of the other** — “the others” — probably making them deposit a money pledge that the preachers should not again endanger the public peace.

**10-12. the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night** — for it would have been as useless as rash to attempt any further preaching at that time, and the conviction of this probably made his friends the more willing to pledge themselves against any present continuance of missionary effort.

**unto Berea** — fifty or sixty miles southwest of Thessalonica; a town even still of considerable population and importance.

**11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica** — The comparison is between *the Jews* of the two places; for the triumphs of the Gospel at Thessalonica were mostly among the Gentiles. See on  ~~Acts~~ Acts 17:2-4.

**in that they received the word with all readiness of mind** — heard it not only without prejudice, but with eager interest, “in an honest and good heart” ( ~~Luke~~ Luke 8:17), with sincere desire to be taught aright (see  ~~John~~ John 7:17). Mark the “nobility” ascribed to this state of mind.

**searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so** — whether the *Christian* interpretation which the apostle put upon the Old Testament Scriptures was the true one.

**12. Therefore many of them believed** — convinced that Jesus of Nazareth whom Paul preached was indeed the great Promise and Burden of the Old Testament. From this it is undeniable,

(1) that *the people*, no less than the ministers of the Church, *are entitled and bound to search the Scriptures*;

(2) that *they are entitled and bound to judge, on their own responsibility, whether the teaching they receive from the ministers of the Church is according to the word of God*;

(3) that *no faith but such as results from personal conviction ought to be demanded, or is of any avail*.

**of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men** — which were Greeks.

**not a few** — “The upper classes in these European-Greek and Romanized towns were probably better educated than those of Asia Minor” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**13. the Jews of Thessalonica ... came thither also** — “like hunters upon their prey, as they had done before from Iconium to Lystra” [HOWSON].

**14. immediately the brethren** — the converts gathered at Berea.

**sent away Paul** — as before from Jerusalem (<sup><408></sup>Acts 9:30), and from Thessalonica (<sup><447></sup>Acts 17:10). How long he stayed at Berea we know not; but as we know that he longed and expected soon to return to the Thessalonians (<sup><517></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:17), it is probable he remained some weeks at least, and only abandoned his intention of revisiting Thessalonica at that time when the virulence of his enemies there, stimulated by his success at Berea, brought them down thither to counterwork him.

**to go as it were to the sea** — rather, perhaps, “in the direction of the sea.” Probably he delayed fixing his next destination till he should reach the coast, and the providence of God should guide him to a vessel bound for the destined spot. Accordingly, it was only on arriving at Athens, that the convoy of Berean brethren, who had gone thus far with him, were sent back to bid Silas and Timothy follow him thither.

**Silas and Timotheus abode there still** — “to build it up in its holy faith, to be a comfort and support in its trials and persecutions, and to give it such organization as might be necessary” [HOWSON]. Connecting this with the apostle’s leaving Timothy and Luke at Philippi on his own departure (see on <sup><416></sup>Acts 16:40), we may conclude that this was his fixed plan for cherishing the first beginning of the Gospel in European localities, and organizing the converts. Timotheus must have soon followed the apostle to Thessalonica, the bearer, probably, of one of the Philippian “contributions to his necessity” (<sup><505></sup>Philippians 4:15,16), and from thence he would with Silas accompany him to Berea.

**15. Silas and Timotheus to come to him with all speed** — He probably wished their company and aid in addressing himself to so new and great a sphere as Athens. Accordingly it is added that he “waited for them” there, as if unwilling to do anything till they came. That they did come, there is no good reason to doubt (as some excellent critics do). For though Paul himself says to the Thessalonians that he “thought it good to be left at Athens alone” (<sup><517></sup>1 Thessalonians 3:1), he immediately adds that he “sent Timotheus to establish and comfort them” (<sup><447></sup>Acts 17:2); meaning, surely, that he despatched him from Athens back to Thessalonica. He had indeed sent for him to Athens; but, probably, when it appeared that little fruit was to be reaped there, while Thessalonica was in too interesting a state to be left uncherished, he seems to have thought it better to send him back again. (The other explanations which have been suggested seem less satisfactory). Timotheus rejoined the apostle at Corinth (<sup><486></sup>Acts 18:5).

## ~~4176~~ ACTS 17:16-34.

### PAUL AT ATHENS.

**16, 17. wholly given to idolatry** — “covered with idols”; meaning the city, not the inhabitants. Petronius, a contemporary writer at Nero’s court, says satirically that it was easier to find a god at Athens than a man. This “stirred the spirit” of the apostle. “The first impression which the masterpieces of man’s taste for art left on the mind of St. Paul was a revolting one, since all this majesty and beauty had placed itself between man and his Creator, and bound him the faster to his gods, who were not God. Upon the first contact, therefore, which the Spirit of Christ came into with the sublimest creations of human art, the judgment of the Holy Ghost — through which they have all to pass — is set up as “the strait gate,” and this must remain the correct standard for ever” [BAUMGARTEN].

**17. Therefore disputed** — or, discussed.

**he in the synagogue with the Jews** — The sense is not, “Therefore went he to the Jews,” because the Gentile Athenians were steeped in idolatry; but, “Therefore set he himself to lift up his voice to the idol city, but, as his manner was, he began with the Jews.”

**and with the devout persons** — Gentile proselytes. After that,

**in the market** — the *Agora*, or place of public concourse.

**daily with them that met with him** — or “came in his way.”

**18-21. certain ... of the Epicureans** — a well-known school of *atheistic materialists*, who taught that pleasure was the chief end of human existence; a principle which the more rational interpreted in a refined sense, while the sensual explained it in its coarser meaning.

**and of the Stoics** — a celebrated school of *severe and lofty pantheists*, whose principle was that the universe was under the law of an iron necessity, the spirit of which was what is called the Deity: and that a passionless conformity of the human will to this law, unmoved by all external circumstances and changes, is the perfection of virtue. While therefore the Stoical was in itself superior to the Epicurean system, both were alike hostile to the Gospel. “The two enemies it has ever had to contend with are the two ruling principles of the Epicureans and Stoics — *Pleasure and Pride*” [HOWSON].

**What will this babbler say?** — The word, which means “a picker-up of seeds,” bird-like, is applied to a gatherer and retailer of scraps of knowledge, a prater; a general term of contempt for any pretended teacher.

**a setter forth of strange gods** — “demons,” but in the Greek (not Jewish) sense of “*objects of worship*.”

**because he preached Jesus and the resurrection** — Not as if they thought he made these to be two divinities: the strange gods were *Jehovah* and the *Risen Savior*, ordained to judge the world.

**19. they took him, and brought him to Areopagus** — “the hill where the most awful court of judicature had sat from time immemorial to pass sentence on the greatest criminals, and to decide on the most solemn questions connected with religion. No place in Athens was so suitable for a discourse on the mysteries of religion” [HOWSON]. The apostle, however, was not here on his *trial*, but to expound more fully what he had thrown out in broken conversations in the Agora.

**21. all the Athenians ... spent their time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing** — literally, “newer thing,” as if what was new becoming presently stale, they craved something still more new [BENGEL]. This lively description of the Athenian character is abundantly attested by their own writers.

**22. Then Paul stood ... and said** — more graphically, “standing in the midst of Mars’ hill, said.” This prefatory allusion to the position he occupied shows the writer’s wish to bring the situation vividly before us [BAUMGARTEN].

**I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious** — rather (with most modern interpreters and the ancient Greek ones), “in all respects extremely reverential” or “much given to religious worship,” a conciliatory and commendatory introduction, founded on his own observation of the symbols of devotion with which their city was covered, and from which all Greek writers, as well as the apostle, inferred the exemplary religiousness of the Athenians. (The authorized translation would imply that only *too much* superstition was wrong, and represents the apostle as repelling his hearers in the very first sentence; whereas the whole discourse is studiously courteous).

**23. as I passed by and beheld your devotions** — rather, “the objects of your devotion,” referring, as is plain from the next words, to their works of art consecrated to religion.

**I found an altar ... To the** — or, “an”

**unknown god** — erected, probably, to commemorate some divine interposition, which they were unable to ascribe to any known deity. That there were such altars, Greek writers attest; and on this the apostle skilfully fastens at the outset, as the text of his discourse, taking it as evidence of that dimness of religious conception which, in virtue of his better light, he was prepared to dissipate.

**Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship** — rather, “Whom, therefore, knowing Him not, ye worship,” alluding to “The Unknown God.”

**him declare** — announce.

**I unto you** — *This is like none of his previous discourses, save that to the idolaters of Lycaonia* (<sup>4445</sup>Acts 14:15-17). His subject is not, as in the synagogues, the Messiahship of Jesus, but THE LIVING GOD, in opposition to the materialistic and pantheistic polytheism of Greece, which subverted all true religion. Nor does he come with *speculation* on this *profound subject* — of which they had had enough from others — but an authoritative “announcement” of Him after whom they were groping not giving Him any name, however, nor even naming the Savior Himself but unfolding the true character of both as they were able to receive it.

**24, 25. God that made the world and all ... therein** — The most profound philosophers of Greece were unable to conceive any real distinction between God and the universe. Thick darkness, therefore, behooved to rest on all their religious conceptions. To dissipate this, the apostle sets out with a sharp statement of the fact of *creation* as the central principle of all true religion — not less needed now, against the transcendental idealism of our day.

**seeing he is Lord** — or Sovereign.

**of heaven and earth** — holding in free and absolute subjection all the works of His hands; presiding in august royalty over them, as well as pervading them all as the principle of their being. How different this from the blind Force or Fate to which all creatures were regarded as in bondage!

**dwelleth not in temples made with hands** — This thought, so familiar to Jewish ears (<sup>10027</sup>1 Kings 8:27 <sup>2301E</sup>Isaiah 66:1,2 <sup>4078</sup>Acts 7:48), and so elementary to Christians, would serve only more sharply to define to his heathen audience the spirituality of that living, personal God, whom he “announced” to them.

**25. Neither is worshipped with** — ministered unto, served by



**men's hands, as though he needed anything** — No less familiar as this thought also is to us, even from the earliest times of the Old Testament (<sup><13816></sup>Job 35:6,8 <sup><139612></sup>Psalms 16:2,3 50:12-14 <sup><23114></sup>Isaiah 40:14-18), it would pour a flood of light upon any candid heathen mind that heard it.

**seeing he** — He Himself.

**giveth to all life, and breath, and all things** — The Giver of all cannot surely be dependent for aught upon the receivers of all (<sup><13941></sup>1 Chronicles 29:14). This is the culminating point of a pure Theism.

**26, 27. and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth** — Holding with the Old Testament teaching, that in the blood is the life (<sup><10904></sup>Genesis 9:4 <sup><181711></sup>Leviticus 17:11 <sup><16123></sup>Deuteronomy 12:23), the apostle sees this life stream of the whole human race to be one, flowing from one source [BAUMGARTEN].

**and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation** — The apostle here opposes both Stoical Fate and Epicurean Chance, ascribing the *periods* and *localities* in which men and nations flourish to the sovereign will and prearrangements of a living God.

**27. That they should seek the Lord** — That is the high end of all these arrangements of Divine Power, Wisdom, and Love.

**if haply they might feel after him** — as men groping their way in the dark.

**and find him** — a lively picture of the murky atmosphere of Natural Religion.

**though he be not far from every one of us** — The difficulty of finding God outside the pale of revealed religion lies not in His distance from us, but in our distance from Him through the blinding effect of sin.

**28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being** — (or, more briefly, “exist”). — This means, not merely, “Without Him we have no *life*, nor that *motion* which every inanimate nature displays, nor even *existence* itself” [MEYER], but that God is the living, immanent Principle of all these in men.

**as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring** — the first half of the fifth line, word for word, of an astronomical poem of Aratus, a Greek countryman of the apostle, and his predecessor by about three centuries. But, as he hints, the same sentiment is to be found in other Greek poets. They meant it doubtless in a *pantheistic*

sense; but the truth which it expresses the apostle turns to his own purpose — to teach a pure, personal, spiritual Theism. (Probably during his quiet retreat at Tarsus. <sup><448></sup>Acts 9:30, revolving his special vocation to the Gentiles he gave himself to the study of so much Greek literature as might be turned to Christian account in his future work. Hence this and his other quotations from the Greek poets, <sup><453></sup>1 Corinthians 15:33 <sup><502></sup>Titus 1:12).

**29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think** — *The courtesy of this language is worthy of notice.*

**that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device** — (“graven by the art or device of man”). One can hardly doubt that the apostle would here point to those matchless monuments of the plastic art, in gold and silver and costliest stone, which lay so profusely beneath and around him. The more intelligent pagan Greeks no more pretended that these sculptured gods and goddesses were real deities, or even their actual likenesses. than Romanist Christians do their images; and Paul doubtless knew this; yet here we find him condemning all such efforts visibly to represent the invisible God. How shamefully inexcusable then are the Greek and Roman churches in paganizing the worship of the Christian Church by the encouragement of pictures and images in religious service! (In the eighth century, the second council of Nicea decreed that the image of God was as proper an object of worship as God Himself).

**30. the times of this ignorance God winked at** — literally (and far better), “overlooked,” that is, bore with, without interposing to punish it, otherwise than suffering the debasing tendency of such worship to develop itself (compare <sup><446></sup>Acts 14:16, and see on <sup><502></sup>Romans 1:24, etc.).

**but now** — that a new light was risen upon the world.

**commandeth** — “That duty — all along lying upon man estranged from his Creator, but hitherto only silently recommending itself and little felt — is now peremptory.”

**all men every where to repent** — (compare <sup><500></sup>Colossians 1:6,23 <sup><501></sup>Titus 1:11) — a tacit allusion to the narrow precincts of favored Judaism, within which immediate and entire repentance was ever urged. The word “repentance” is here used (as in <sup><423></sup>Luke 13:3,5 15:10) in its most comprehensive sense of “repentance unto life.”

**31. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world** — Such language beyond doubt teaches that the judgment will, in its

essence, be a solemn judicial assize held upon all mankind *at once*. “Aptly is this uttered on the Areopagus, the seat of judgment” [BENGEL].

**by that man whom he hath ordained** — compare ~~AK2~~ John 5:22,23,27  
~~AKC~~ Acts 10:42.

**whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead** — the most patent evidence to mankind at large of the judicial authority with which the Risen One is clothed.

**32-34. when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked** — As the Greek religion was but the glorification of the present life, by the worship of all its most beauteous forms, the Resurrection, which presupposes the vanity of the present life, and is nothing but life out of the death of all that sin has blighted, could have no charm for the true Greek. It gave the death blow to his fundamental and most cherished ideas; nor until these were seen to be false and fatal could the Resurrection, and the Gospel of which it was a primary doctrine, seem otherwise than ridiculous.

**others said, We will hear thee again of this** — “an idle compliment to Paul and an opiate to their consciences, such as we often meet with in our own day. They probably, like Felix, feared to hear more, lest they should be constrained to believe unwelcome truths” (~~AKB~~ Acts 24:25; and compare ~~AKB~~ Matthew 13:15) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**33. So Paul departed** — Whether he would have opened, to any extent, the Gospel scheme in this address, if he had not been interrupted, or whether he reserved this for exposition afterwards to earnest inquirers, we cannot tell. Only the speech is not to be judged of as quite complete.

**34. Howbeit certain men clave unto him** — Instead of mocking or politely waiving the subject, having listened eagerly, they joined themselves to the apostle for further instruction; and so they “believed.”

**Dionysius the Areopagite** — a member of that august tribunal. Ancient tradition says he was placed by the apostle over the little flock at Athens. “Certainly the number of converts there and of men fit for office in the Church was not so great that there could be much choice” [OLSHAUSEN].

**a woman named Damaris** — not certainly one of the apostle’s audience on the Areopagus, but won to the faith either before or after. Nothing else is known of her. Of any further labors of the apostle at Athens, and how long he stayed, we are not informed. Certainly he was not driven away. But “it is a serious and instructive fact that the mercantile populations of Thessalonica and Corinth received the message of God with greater readiness than the highly educated and polished Athenians. Two letters to the Thessalonians,

and two to the Corinthians, remain to attest the flourishing state of those churches. But we possess no letter written by Paul to the Athenians; and we do not read that he was ever in Athens again” [HOWSON].

# CHAPTER 18

## ~~418E~~ ACTS 18:1-22.

**PAUL'S ARRIVAL AND LABORS AT CORINTH, WHERE HE IS REJOINED BY SILAS AND TIMOTHY, AND, UNDER DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT, MAKES A LONG STAY — AT LENGTH, RETRACING HIS STEPS, BY EPHEBUS, CAESAREA, AND JERUSALEM, HE RETURNS FOR THE LAST TIME TO ANTIOCH, THUS COMPLETING HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.**

**1-4. came to Corinth** — rebuilt by Julius Caesar on the isthmus between the aegean and Ionian Seas; the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and the residence of the proconsul; a large and populous mercantile city, and the center of commerce alike for East and West; having a considerable Jewish population, larger, probably, at this time than usual, owing to the banishment of the Jews from Rome by Claudius Caesar (~~418E~~ Acts 18:2). Such a city was a noble field for the Gospel, which, once established there, would naturally diffuse itself far and wide.

**2. a Jew ... Aquila ... with his wife Priscilla** — From these *Latin* names one would conclude that they had resided so long in Rome as to lose their Jewish family names.

**born in Pontus** — the most easterly province of Asia Minor, stretching along the southern shore of the Black Sea. From this province there were Jews at Jerusalem on the great Pentecost (~~418E~~ Acts 2:9), and the Christians of it are included among “the strangers of the dispersion,” to whom Peter addressed his first Epistle (~~418E~~ 1 Peter 1:1). Whether this couple were converted before Paul made their acquaintance, commentators are much divided. They may have brought their Christianity with them from Rome [OLSHAUSEN], or Paul may have been drawn to them merely by like occupation, and, lodging with them, have been the instrument of their conversion [MEYER]. They appear to have been in good circumstances, and after travelling much, to have eventually settled at Ephesus. The Christian friendship now first formed continued warm and unbroken, and the highest testimony is once and again borne to them by the apostle.

**Claudius**, etc. — This edict is almost certainly that mentioned by SÜETONIUS, in his life of this emperor [*Lives of the Caesars*, “Claudius,” 25].

**3. tentmakers** — manufacturers, probably, of those hair-cloth tents supplied by the goats of the apostle’s native province, and hence. as sold in the markets of the Levant, called *cilicium*. Every Jewish youth, whatever the pecuniary circumstances of his parents, was taught some trade (see on ~~4002~~ Luke 2:42), and Paul made it a point of conscience to work at that which he had probably been bred to, partly that he might not be burdensome to the churches, and partly that his motives as a minister of Christ might not be liable to misconstruction. To both these he makes frequent reference in his Epistles.

**4. the Greeks** — that is, Gentile proselytes; for to the heathen, as usual, he only turned when rejected by the Jews (~~4016~~ Acts 18:6).

**5, 6. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia** — that is, from Thessalonica, whither Silas had probably accompanied Timothy when sent back from Athens (see on ~~4075~~ Acts 17:15).

**Paul was pressed in the spirit** — rather (according to what is certainly the true reading) “was pressed with the word”; expressing not only his zeal and assiduity in preaching it, but some inward *pressure* which at this time he experienced in the work (to convey which more clearly was probably the origin of the common reading). What that pressure was we happen to know, with singular minuteness and vividness of description, from the apostle himself, in his first Epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians (~~4011~~ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 ~~4016~~ 1 Thessalonians 3:1-10). He had come away from Athens, as he remained there, in a depressed and anxious state of mind, having there met, for the first time, with unwilling Gentile ears. He continued, apparently for some time, laboring alone in the synagogue of Corinth, full of deep and anxious solicitude for his Thessalonian converts. His early ministry at Corinth was colored by these feelings. Himself deeply humbled, his power as a preacher was more than ever felt to lie in demonstration of the Spirit. At length Silas and Timotheus arrived with exhilarating tidings of the faith and love of his Thessalonian children, and of their earnest longing again to see their father in Christ; bringing with them also, in token of their love and duty, a pecuniary contribution for the supply of his wants. This seems to have so lifted him as to put new life and vigor into his ministry. *He now wrote his FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS*, in which the “pressure” which resulted from all this strikingly appears. (See Introduction to First Thessalonians). Such emotions are known only to

the ministers of Christ, and, even of them, only to such as “travail in birth until Christ be formed in” their hearers.

**6. Your blood be upon your own heads**, etc. — See ~~2708~~Ezekiel 33:4,9.  
**from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles** — Compare ~~4136~~Acts 13:46.

**7, 8. he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus** — not changing his lodging, as if Aquila and Priscilla up to this time were with the opponents of the apostle [ALFORD], but merely ceasing any more to testify in the synagogue, and henceforth carrying on his labors in this house of Justus, which “joining hard to the synagogue,” would be easily accessible to such of its worshippers as were still open to light. Justus, too, being probably a proselyte, would more easily draw a mixed audience than the synagogue. From this time forth conversions rapidly increased.

**8. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house** — an event felt to be so important that the apostle deviated from his usual practice (~~4114~~1 Corinthians 1:14-16) and baptized him, as well as Caius (Gaius) and the household of Stephanas, with his own hand [HOWSON].

**many of the Corinthians ... believed and were baptized** — The beginning of the church gathered there.

**9-11. Then spake the Lord to Paul ... by a vision, Be not afraid ... no man shall set on thee to hurt thee**, etc. — From this it would seem that these signal successes were stirring up the wrath of the unbelieving Jews, and probably the apostle feared being driven by violence, as before, from this scene of such promising labor. He is reassured, however, from above.

**10. I have much people in this city** — “whom in virtue of their election to eternal life He already designates as His” (compare ~~4136~~Acts 13:48) [BAUMGARTEN].

**11. continued there a year and six months** — the whole period of this stay at Corinth, and not merely up to what is next recorded. *During some part of this period he wrote his SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.* (See Introduction to Second Thessalonians.)

**12-17. when Gallio was the deputy** — “the proconsul.” See on ~~4137~~Acts 13:7. He was brother to the celebrated philosopher SENECA, the tutor of Nero, who passed sentence of death on both.

**13. contrary to the** — Jewish

**law** — probably in not requiring the Gentiles to be circumcised.

**14. If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness** — any offense punishable by the magistrate.

**15. if it be a question of words and names, and of your law ... I will be no judge**, etc. — in this only laying down the proper limits of his office.

**16. drave them**, etc. — annoyed at such a case.

**17. all the Greeks** — the Gentile spectators.

**took Sosthenes** — perhaps the successor of Crispus, and certainly the head of the accusing party. It is very improbable that this was the same Sosthenes as the apostle afterwards calls “his brother” (~~1~~1 Corinthians 1:1).

**and beat him before the judgment-seat** — under the very eye of the judge.

**And Gallio cared for none of those things** — nothing loath, perhaps, to see these turbulent Jews, for whom probably he felt contempt, themselves getting what they hoped to inflict on another, and indifferent to whatever was beyond the range of his office and case. His brother eulogizes his loving and lovable manners. Religious indifference, under the influence of an easy and amiable temper, reappears from age to age.

**18. Paul ... tarried ... yet a good while** — During his long residence at Corinth, Paul planted other churches in Achaia (~~2~~2 Corinthians 1:1).

**then took ... leave of the brethren, and sailed ... into** — rather, “for”

**Syria** — to Antioch, the starting-point of all the missions to the Gentiles, which he feels to be for the present concluded.

**with him Priscilla and Aquila** — In this order the names also occur in ~~18:26~~Acts 18:26 (according to the true reading); compare ~~16:3~~Romans 16:3 ~~4:19~~2 Timothy 4:19, which seem to imply that the wife was the more prominent and helpful to the Church. Silas and Timotheus doubtless accompanied the apostle, as also Erastus, Gaius, and Aristarchus (~~19:22,29~~Acts 19:22,29). Of Silas, as Paul’s associate, we read no more. His name occurs last in connection with Peter and the churches of Asia Minor [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

having shorn *his* head in Cenchrea — the eastern harbor of Corinth, about ten miles distant, where a church had been formed (~~16:1~~Romans 16:1).

**for he** — Paul.



**had a vow** — That it was the Nazarite vow (~~Q08E~~ Numbers 6:1-27) is not likely. It was probably one made in one of his seasons of difficulty or danger, in prosecution of which he cuts off his hair and hastens to Jerusalem to offer the requisite sacrifice within the prescribed thirty days [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.15.1]. This explains the haste with which he leaves Ephesus (~~A08D~~ Acts 18:21), and the subsequent observance, on the recommendation of the brethren, of a similar vow (~~A02D~~ Acts 21:24). This one at Corinth was voluntary, and shows that even in heathen countries he systematically studied the prejudices of his Jewish brethren.

**19. he came to Ephesus** — the capital of the Roman province of Asia. (See Introduction to Ephesians). It was a sail, right across from the west to the east side of the aegæan Sea, of some eight or ten days, with a fair wind.

**left them there** — Aquila and Priscilla.

**but he himself entered into the synagogue** — merely taking advantage of the vessel putting in there.

**and reasoned with the Jews** — the *tense* here not being the usual one denoting *continuous* action (as in ~~A07D~~ Acts 17:2 18:4), but that expressing a *transient act*. He had been forbidden to preach the word in Asia (~~A06E~~ Acts 16:6), but he would not consider that as precluding this passing exercise of his ministry when Providence brought him to its capital; nor did it follow that the prohibition was still in force.

**20. when they desired him to tarry** — The Jews seldom rose against the Gospel till the successful preaching of it stirred them up, and there was no time for that here.

**21. I must ... keep this feast** — probably Pentecost, presenting a noble opportunity of preaching the Gospel.

**but I will return** — the fulfillment of which promise is recorded in ~~A09E~~ Acts 19:1.

**22. And when he had landed at Caesarea** — where he left the vessel.

**and gone up** — that is, to Jerusalem.

**and saluted the church** — In these few words does the historian despatch the apostle's FOURTH VISIT TO JERUSALEM after his conversion. The expression "going *up*" is invariably used of a journey to the metropolis; and thence he naturally "went *down* to Antioch." Perhaps the vessel reached too late for the feast, as he seems to have done nothing in Jerusalem beyond "saluting the Church," and privately offering the

sacrifice with which his vow (~~4488~~Acts 18:18) would conclude. It is left to be understood, as on his arrival from his first missionary tour, that “when he was come, and had gathered the church together, he rehearsed all that God had done with him” (~~4447~~Acts 14:27) on this his *second missionary journey*.

## ~~4483~~ACTS 18:23-21:16.

### PAUL’S THIRD AND LAST MISSIONARY JOURNEY — HE VISITS THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA AND PHRYGIA.

**23. And after he had spent some time there** — but probably not long.

**he departed** — little thinking, probably, he was never more to return to Antioch.

**went over all ... Galatia and Phrygia in order** — visiting the several churches in succession. See on ~~4466~~Acts 16:6. Galatia is mentioned first here, as he would come to it first from Antioch. It was on this visitation that he ordained the weekly collection (~~4601~~1 Corinthians 16:1,2), which has been since adopted generally, and converted into a public usage throughout Christendom. Timotheus and Erastus, Gaius and Aristarchus, appear to have accompanied him on this journey (~~4492~~Acts 19:22,29 ~~4008~~2 Corinthians 1:1), and from Second Corinthians we may presume, Titus also. The details of this visit, as of the former (~~4466~~Acts 16:6), are not given.

## ~~4483~~ACTS 18:24-28.

### EPISODE CONCERNING APOLLOS AT EPHESUS AND IN ACHAIA.

This is one of the most interesting and suggestive incidental narratives in this precious history.

**24, 25. a ... Jew named Apollos** — a contraction from Apollonius.

**born at Alexandria** — the celebrated city of Egypt on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean, called after its founder, Alexander the Great. Nowhere was there such a fusion of Greek, Jewish, and Oriental peculiarities, and an intelligent Jew educated in that city could hardly fail to manifest all these elements in his mental character.

**eloquent** — turning his Alexandrian culture to high account.

**and mighty in the scriptures** — his eloquence enabling him to express clearly and enforce skilfully what, as a Jew, he had gathered from a diligent study of the Old Testament Scriptures.

**came to Ephesus** — on what errand is not known.

**25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord ... knowing only the baptism of John** — He was instructed, probably, by some disciple of the Baptist, in the whole circle of John's teaching concerning Jesus, but no more: he had yet to learn the new light which the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost had thrown upon the Redeemer's death and resurrection; as appears from ~~418E~~ Acts 19:2,3.

**being fervent in the spirit** — His heart warm, and conscious, probably, of his gifts and attainments, he burned to impart to others the truth he had himself received.

**he spake and taught diligently** — rather, "accurately" (it is the same word as is rendered "perfectly" in ~~418F~~ Acts 18:26).

**26. speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquila and Priscilla heard** — joying to observe the extent of Scripture knowledge and evangelical truth which he displayed, and the fervency, courage, and eloquence with which he preached the truth.

**they took him unto them** — privately.

**and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly** — opening up those truths, to him as yet unknown, on which the Spirit had shed such glorious light. (In what appears to be the true reading of this verse, Priscilla is put before Aquila, as in ~~418G~~ Acts 18:18 [see on ~~418G~~ Acts 18:18]; she being probably the more intelligent and devoted of the two). One cannot but observe how providential it was that this couple should have been left at Ephesus when Paul sailed thence for Syria; and no doubt it was chiefly to pave the way for the better understanding of this episode that the fact is expressly mentioned by the historian in ~~418H~~ Acts 18:19. We see here also an example of not only *lay* agency (as it is called), but *female* agency of the highest kind and with the most admirable fruit. Nor can one help admiring the humility and teachableness of so gifted a teacher in sitting at the feet of a Christian woman and her husband.

**27, 28. And when he was disposed** — "minded," "resolved."

**to pass into Achaia** — of which Corinth, on the opposite coast (see on ~~418I~~ Acts 18:1), was the capital; there to proclaim that Gospel which he now more fully comprehended.

**the brethren** — We had not before heard of such gathered at Ephesus. But the desire of the Jews to whom Paul preached to retain him among them for some time (<sup><41820></sup>Acts 18:20), and his promise to return to them (<sup><41821></sup>Acts 18:21), seem to indicate some drawing towards the Gospel, which, no doubt, the zealous private labors of Priscilla and Aquila would ripen into discipleship.

**wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him** — a beautiful specimen of “letters of recommendation” (as <sup><41823></sup>Acts 15:23,25-27, and see <sup><41821></sup>2 Corinthians 3:1); by which, as well as by interchange of deputations, etc., the early churches maintained active Christian fellowship with each other.

**when he was come, helped them much** — was a great acquisition to the Achaian brethren.

**which believed through grace** — one of those incidental expressions which show that *faith's being a production of God's grace in the heart* was so current and recognized a truth that it was taken for granted, as a necessary consequence of the general system of grace, rather than expressly insisted on. (It is against the natural order of the words to read them, as BENGEL, MEYER, and others, do, “helped through grace those who believed”).

**28. For he mightily convinced the Jews** — The word is very strong: “stoutly bore them down in argument,” “vigorously argued them down,” and the *tense* in that he *continued* to do it, or that this was the characteristic of his ministry.

**showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ** — Rather, “that the Christ (or Messiah) was Jesus.” This expression, when compared with <sup><41825></sup>Acts 18:25, seems to imply a richer testimony than with his partial knowledge he was at first able to bear; and the power with which he bore down all opposition in argument is that which made him such an acquisition to the brethren. Thus his ministry would be as good as another visitation to the Achaian churches by the apostle himself (see <sup><41826></sup>1 Corinthians 3:6) and the more as, in so far as he was indebted for it to Priscilla and Aquila, it would have a decidedly *Pauline* cast.

# CHAPTER 19

## ~~<400>~~ ACTS 19:1-41.

### SIGNAL SUCCESS OF PAUL AT EPHESUS.

**1-3. while Apollos was at Corinth** — where his ministry was so powerful that a formidable party in the Church of that city gloried in his type of preaching in preference to Paul's (~~<402>~~ 1 Corinthians 1:12 3:4), no doubt from the marked infusion of Greek philosophic culture which distinguished it, and which the apostle studiously avoided (~~<401>~~ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

**Paul having passed through the upper coasts** — “parts,” the interior of Asia Minor, which, with reference to the seacoast, was elevated.

**came to Ephesus** — thus fulfilling his promise (~~<403>~~ Acts 18:21).

**finding certain disciples** — in the same stage of Christian knowledge as Apollos at first, newly arrived, probably, and having had no communication as yet with the church at Ephesus.

**2. Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?** — rather, “Received ye the Holy Ghost when ye believed?” implying, certainly, that the one did not of necessity carry the other along with it (see on ~~<404>~~ Acts 8:14-17). Why this question was asked, we cannot tell; but it was probably in consequence of something that passed between them from which the apostle was led to suspect the imperfection of their light.

**We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost** — This cannot be the meaning, since the personality and office of the Holy Ghost, in connection with Christ, formed an especial subject of the Baptist's teaching. Literally, the words are, “We did not even hear whether the Holy Ghost was (given)”; meaning, at the time of their baptism. That the word “given” is the right supplement, as in ~~<405>~~ John 7:39, seems plain from the nature of the case.

**4. Then said Paul, John ... baptized with the baptism of repentance** — water unto repentance.

**saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him** — that is, who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. The

point of contrast is not between John and Christ personally, but between the *water* baptism of John unto *repentance*, and the promised baptism of *the Spirit* from the hands of his coming Master unto *new life*. As to all the facts, or at least the significance, of this baptism, which made the whole life and work of Christ another thing from what it was conceived to be before it was vouchsafed, these simple disciples were unenlightened.

**5-7. When they heard this** — not the mere words reported in ~~4804~~ Acts 19:4, but *the subject expounded* according to the tenor of those words.

**they were baptized** — not however by Paul himself (~~4014~~ 1 Corinthians 1:14).

**in the name of the Lord Jesus** — into the whole fullness of the new economy, as now opened up to their believing minds.

**6. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them ... they spake with tongues**, etc. — See on ~~4104~~ Acts 10:44,45.

**8-10. he went into the synagogue and spake boldly for ... three months**, etc. — See on ~~4107~~ Acts 17:2,3.

**9. when divers** — “some.”

**were hardened**, etc. — implying that others, probably a large number, believed.

**spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed** — from the synagogue, as at Corinth (~~4180~~ Acts 18:7).

**and separated the disciples** — withdrawing to a separate place of meeting, for the sake both of the converts already made, and the unsophisticated multitude.

**disputing** — “discoursing” or “discussing.”

**daily in the school** — or lecture hall.

**of one Tyrannus** — probably a converted teacher of rhetoric or philosophy.

**10. this continued ... two years** — in addition to the former three months. See on ~~4181~~ Acts 20:31. But during some part of this period he must have paid a second unrecorded visit to Corinth, since the one next recorded (see on ~~4100~~ Acts 20:2,3) is twice called his *third* visit (~~4724~~ 2 Corinthians 12:14 13:1). See on ~~4015~~ 2 Corinthians 1:15,16, which might seem inconsistent with this. The passage across was quite a short one (see on ~~4180~~ Acts 18:19) — Towards the close of this long stay at Ephesus, as we learn from ~~4168~~ 1

Corinthians 16:8, he wrote his FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS; also (though on this opinions are divided) the EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS. (See Introduction to First Corinthians, and Introduction to Galatians). And just as at Corinth his greatest success was after his withdrawal to a separate place of meeting (<sup><418></sup>Acts 18:7-10), so at Ephesus.

**so that all they which dwelt in** — the Roman province of

**Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks** — This is the “great door and effectual opened unto him” while resident at Ephesus (<sup><466></sup>1 Corinthians 16:9), which induced him to make it his headquarters for so long a period. The unwearied and varied character of his labors here are best seen in his own subsequent address to the elders of Ephesus (<sup><407></sup>Acts 20:17, etc.). And thus Ephesus became the “ecclesiastical center for the entire region, as indeed it remained for a very long period” [BAUMGARTEN]. Churches arose at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis eastward, either through his own labors or those of his faithful helpers whom he sent out in different directions, Epaphras, Archippus, Philemon (<sup><500></sup>Colossians 1:7 4:12-17 <sup><502></sup>Philemon 1:23).

**11, 12. God wrought special** — no ordinary

**miracles by the hands of Paul** — implying that he had not been accustomed to work such.

**12. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons**, etc. — Compare <sup><455></sup>Acts 5:15,16, very different from the magical acts practiced at Ephesus. “*God wrought these miracles*” merely “*by the hands of Paul*”; and the very exorcists (<sup><493></sup>Acts 19:13), observing that the name of Jesus was the secret of all his miracles, hoped, by aping him in this, to be equally successful; while the result of all in the “magnifying of the Lord Jesus” (<sup><497></sup>Acts 19:17) showed that in working them the apostle took care to hold up Him whom he *preached* as the source of all the miracles which he *wrought*.

**13. vagabond Jews** — simply, “wandering Jews,” who went from place to place practicing exorcism, or the art of conjuring evil spirits to depart out of the possessed. That such a power did exist, for some time at least, seems implied in <sup><427></sup>Matthew 12:27. But no doubt this would breed imposture; and the present case is very different from that referred to in <sup><499></sup>Luke 9:49,50.

**We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth** — a striking testimony to the power of Christ’s name in Paul’s mouth.

**14-17. seven sons of ... Sceva ... chief of the priests** — head, possibly, of one of the twenty-four courts.

**15. the evil spirit answered, Jesus I know** — “recognize.”

**and Paul I know** — “know intimately,” in contrast to them, whom he altogether disowns.

**but who are ye?**

**16. And the man in whom the evil spirit was** — Mark the clear line of demarcation here between “*the evil spirit* which answered and said” and “*the man in whom the evil spirit was.*” The reality of such possessions could not be more clearly expressed.

**leaped on them ... so that they fled ... naked and wounded** — This was so appalling a testimony at once against those profane impostors and in favor of Paul and the Master whom he preached, that we wonder not that it spread to “all the Jews and Greeks at Ephesus, that fear fell on them,” and that “the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.”

**18-20. many that believed came and confessed ... their deeds** — the dupes of magicians, etc., acknowledging how shamefully they had been deluded, and how deeply they had allowed themselves to be implicated in such practices.

**19. Many of them ... which used curious arts** — The word signifies things “overdone”; significantly applied to arts in which laborious but senseless incantations are practiced.

**brought their books** — containing the mystic formularies.

**and burned them before all** — The *tense*, here used graphically, expresses progress and continuance of the conflagration.

counted the price ... and found *it* fifty thousand pieces of silver — probably about \$10,000 (presuming it to be the *drachma*). From their nature they would be costly, and books then bore a value above any standard we are familiar with. The scene must have been long remembered at Ephesus, as a strong proof of honest conviction on the part of the sorcerers and a striking triumph of Jesus Christ over the powers of darkness. The workers of evil were put to scorn, like Baal’s priests on Carmel, and the word of God mightily grew and prevailed [HOWSON].

**21, 22. After these things were ended** — completed, implying something like a natural finish to his long period of labor at Ephesus.



**Paul purposed ... when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem ... After I have been there, I must also see Rome** — Mark here the vastness of the apostle's missionary plans. They were all fulfilled, though he "saw Rome" only as a prisoner.

**22. So he sent into Macedonia ... Timotheus and Erastus** — as his pioneers, in part to bring "them into remembrance of his ways which were in Christ" (~~4017~~ 1 Corinthians 4:17 16:10), partly to convey his mind on various matters. After a brief stay he was to return (~~4018~~ 1 Corinthians 16:11). It is very unlikely that this Erastus was "the chamberlain of the city" of Corinth, of that name (~~4019~~ Romans 16:23).

**he himself stayed in** — the province of

**Asia for a season** — that is, at Ephesus, its chief city. (Asia is mentioned in contrast with Macedonia in the previous clause).

**23. the same time** — of Paul's proposed departure.

**about that** — "the"

**way** — So the new religion seemed then to be designated (~~4020~~ Acts 9:2 22:4 24:14).

**24-26. silver shrines for** — "of"

**Diana** — small models of the Ephesian temple and of the shrine or chapel of the goddess, or of the shrine and statue alone, which were purchased by visitors as memorials of what they had seen, and were carried about and deposited in houses as a charm. (The models of the chapel of *our Lady of Loretto*, and such like, which the Church of Rome systematically encourages, are such a palpable imitation of this heathen practice that it is no wonder it should be regarded by impartial judges as *Christianity paganized*).

**gain to the craftsmen** — the master-artificers.

**25. Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation** — rather, "with the workmen (or fabricators) of such articles," meaning the artisans employed by the master-artificers, all who manufactured any kind of memorial of the temple and its worship for sale.

**26. ye see and hear** — The evidences of it were to be seen, and the report of it was in everybody's mouth.

**that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath ... turned away much people** — Noble testimony this to the extent of Paul's influence!

**saying that they be no gods which are made with hands** — The universal belief of *the people* was that they were gods, though the more intelligent regarded them only as habitations of Deity, and some, probably, as mere aids to devotion. It is exactly so in the Church of Rome.

**27. So that not only this our craft is in danger ... but,** etc. — that is, “that indeed is a small matter; but there is something far worse.” So the masters of the poor Pythoness put forward the *religious revolution* which Paul was attempting to effect at Philippi, as the sole cause of their zealous alarm, to cloak the self-interest which they felt to be touched by his success (~~41109~~ Acts 16:19-21). In both cases religious zeal was the hypocritical pretext; self-interest, the real moving cause of the opposition made.

**also the temple of the great goddess Diana ... despised, and her magnificence ... destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth** — It was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. It was built about 550 B.C., of pure white marble, and though burned by a fanatic on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great, 356 B.C., was rebuilt with more splendor than before. It was four hundred twenty-five feet long by two hundred twenty broad, and the columns, one hundred twenty-seven in number, were sixty feet in height, each of them the gift of a king, and thirty-six of them enriched with ornament and color. It was constantly receiving new decorations and additional buildings, statues, and pictures by the most celebrated artists, and kindled unparalleled admiration, enthusiasm, and superstition. *Its very site is now a matter of uncertainty.* The little wooden image of Diana was as primitive and rude as its shrine was sumptuous; not like the *Greek* Diana, in the form of an imposing huntress, but quite Asiatic, in the form of a many-breasted female (emblematic of the manifold ministrations of Nature to man), terminating in a shapeless block. Like some other far-famed idols, it was believed to have fallen from heaven (~~41185~~ Acts 19:35), and models of it were not only sold in immense numbers to private persons, but set up for worship in other cities [HOWSON]. What power must have attended the preaching of that one man by whom the death blow was felt to be given to their gigantic and witching superstition!

**28, 29. Great is Diana of the Ephesians** — the civic cry of a populace so proud of their temple that they refused to inscribe on it the name of Alexander the Great, though he offered them the whole spoil of his Eastern campaign if they would do it [STRABO in HOWSON].

**29. having caught Gaius and Aristarchus** — disappointed of Paul, as at Thessalonica (<sup>407b</sup>Acts 17:5,6). They are mentioned in <sup>400b</sup>Acts 20:4 27:2 <sup>512b</sup>Romans 16:23 <sup>401a</sup>1 Corinthians 1:14; and probably <sup>600b</sup>3 John 1:1. If it was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla that he found an asylum (see <sup>600b</sup>1 Corinthians 16:9), that would explain <sup>512b</sup>Romans 16:3,4, where he says of them that “for his life they laid down their own necks” [HOWSON].

**rushed ... into the theater** — a vast pile, whose ruins are even now a wreck of immense grandeur [SIR C. FELLOWES, *Asia Minor*, 1839].

**30-34. when Paul would have entered in** — with noble forgetfulness of self.

**unto the people** — the *demos*, that is, the people met in public assembly.

**the disciples suffered him not** — The *tense* used implies only that they were *using their efforts* to restrain him; which might have been unavailing but for what follows.

**31. And certain of the chief of Asia** — literally, “And certain also of the Asiarchs.” These were wealthy and distinguished citizens of the principal towns of the Asian province, chosen annually, and ten of whom were selected by the proconsul to preside over the games celebrated in the month of May (the same month which Romanism dedicates to *the Virgin*). It was an office of the highest honor and greatly coveted. Certain of these, it seems, were favorably inclined to the Gospel, at least were Paul’s “friends,” and knowing the passions of a mob, excited during the festivals, “sent (a message) to him desiring him not to adventure himself into the theater.”

**33. they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward** — rather, “some of the multitude urged forward Alexander, the Jews thrusting him forward.” As the blame of such a tumult would naturally be thrown upon the Jews, who were regarded by the Romans as the authors of all religious disturbances, they seem to have put forward this man to clear them of all responsibility for the riot. (BENGEL’S conjecture, that this was Alexander the coppersmith, <sup>5300a</sup>2 Timothy 4:14, has little to support it).

**beckoned with the hand** — compare <sup>413b</sup>Acts 13:16 21:40.

**would have made his defense** — “offered to speak in defense.”

**34. But when they knew he was a Jew, all with one voice, for the space of two hours, cried out, Great is Diana**, etc. — The very appearance of a Jew had the opposite effect to that intended. To prevent him obtaining a

hearing, they drowned his voice in one tumultuous shout in honor of their goddess, which rose to such frantic enthusiasm as took two hours to exhaust itself.

**35-41. when the town-clerk** — keeper of the public archives, and a magistrate of great authority.

**had appeased** — “calmed.”

**the people** — “the multitude,” which the very presence of such an officer would go far to do.

**he said ... what man ... knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana** — literally, the *neocoros* or “warden.” The word means “temple-sweeper”; then, “temple-guardian.” Thirteen cities of Asia had an interest in the temple, but Ephesus was honored with the charge of it. (Various cities have claimed this title with reference to *the Virgin* or certain *saints*) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter — “from the sky” or “from heaven.” See on ~~41807~~ Acts 19:27. “With this we may compare various legends concerning images and pictures in the Romish Church, such as the traditional likenesses of Christ, which were said to be “not made with hands”” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**36. Seeing that these things cannot be spoken against**, etc. — Like a true legal man, he urges that such was notoriously the constitution and fixed character of the city, with which its very existence was all but bound up. Did they suppose that all this was going to be overturned by a set of itinerant orators? Ridiculous! What did they mean, then, by raising such a stir?

**37. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches** — “temple-plunderers,” or sacrilegious persons.

**nor yet blasphemers of your goddess** — This is a remarkable testimony, showing that the apostle had, in preaching against idolatry, studiously avoided (as at Athens) insulting the feelings of those whom he addressed — a lesson this to missionaries and ministers in general.

**38. if Demetrius have a matter** — of complaint.

**against any man, the law is open** — rather, “the court days are being held.”

**and there are deputies** — literally “proconsuls” (see on ~~41807~~ Acts 13:7); that is, probably, the proconsul and his council, as a court of appeal.

**39. if ye inquire** — “have any question.”

**concerning other matters** — of a public nature.

**40. For we** — the public authorities.

**are in danger of being called in question** — by our superiors.

# CHAPTER 20

## ~~<401>~~ ACTS 20:1-12.

### PAUL FULFILS HIS PURPOSE OF PROCEEDING AGAIN TO MACEDONIA AND GREECE — RETURNING THENCE, ON HIS ROUTE FOR JERUSALEM, HE REVISITS PHILIPPI AND TROAS — HIS MINISTRATIONS AT TROAS.

This section of the apostle's life, though peculiarly rich in material, is related with great brevity in the History. Its details must be culled from his own Epistles.

**1, 2. departed** — after Pentecost (~~<408>~~1 Corinthians 16:8).

**to go into Macedonia** — in pursuance of the *first* part of his plan (~~<402>~~Acts 19:21). From his Epistles we learn;

(1) That, as might have been expected from its position on the coast, he revisited Troas (~~<402>~~2 Corinthians 2:12; see on ~~<408>~~Acts 16:8).

(2) That while on his former visit he appears to have done no missionary work there, he now went expressly “to preach Christ’s Gospel,” and found “a door opened unto him of the Lord” there, which he entered so effectually as to lay the foundation of a church there (~~<406>~~Acts 20:6,7).

(3) That he would have remained longer there but for his uneasiness at the non-arrival of Titus, whom he had despatched to Corinth to finish the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem (~~<401>~~1 Corinthians 16:1,2 ~~<406>~~2 Corinthians 8:6), but still more, that he might bring him word what effect his first Epistle to that church had produced. (He had probably arranged that they should meet at Troas).

(4) That in this state of mind, afraid of something wrong, he “took leave” of the brethren at Troas, and went from thence into Macedonia. It was, no doubt, the city of PHILIPPI that he came to (landing at Nicopolis, its seaport, see on ~~<401>~~Acts 16:11,12), as appears by comparing ~~<402>~~2 Corinthians 11:9, where “Macedonia” is named, with ~~<405>~~Philippians 4:15, where it appears that Philippi is meant. Here he found the brethren, whom he had left on his former visit in circumstances of such

deep interest, a consolidated and thriving church, generous and warmly attached to their father in Christ; under the superintendence, probably, of our historian, “the beloved physician” (see on ~~4460~~ Acts 16:40). All that is said by our historian of this Macedonian visit is that “he went over those parts and gave them much exhortation.”

(5) Titus not having reached Philippi as soon as the apostle, “his flesh had no rest, but he was troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears” (~~4002~~ 2 Corinthians 7:5).

(6) At length Titus arrived, to the joy of the apostle, the bearer of better tidings from Corinth than he had dared to expect (~~4006~~ 2 Corinthians 7:6,7,13), but checkered by painful intelligence of the efforts of a hostile party to undermine his apostolic reputation there (~~4008~~ 2 Corinthians 10:1-18).

(7) Under the mixed feelings which this produced, he wrote — from Macedonia, and probably Philippi — *his* SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS (see Introduction to Second Corinthians); despatching Titus with it, and along with him two other unnamed deputies, expressly chosen to take up and bring their collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and to whom he bears the beautiful testimony, that they were “the glory of Christ” (~~4022~~ 2 Corinthians 8:22,23).

(8) It must have been at this time that he penetrated as far as to the confines of “Illyricum,” lying along the shores of the Adriatic (~~4559~~ Romans 15:19). He would naturally wish that his second Letter to the Corinthians should have some time to produce its proper effect ere he revisited them, and this would appear a convenient opportunity for a northwestern circuit, which would enable him to pay a passing visit to the churches at Thessalonica and Berea, though of this we have no record. On his way southward to Greece, he would preach the Gospel in the intermediate regions of Epirus, Thessaly, and Boeotia (see ~~4559~~ Romans 15:19), though of this we have no record.

**2. he came into Greece** — or Achaia, in pursuance of the *second* part of his plan (~~4482~~ Acts 19:21).

**3. And there abode three months** — Though the province only is here mentioned, it is the city of CORINTH that is meant, as the province of “Macedonia” (~~4408~~ Acts 20:1) meant the city of Philippi. Some rough work he anticipated on his arrival at Corinth (~~4002~~ 2 Corinthians 10:1-8,11 13:1-10) though he had reason to expect satisfaction on the whole; and as we know there were other churches in Achaia besides that at Corinth (~~4005~~ 2 Corinthians 1:1 11:10), he would have time enough to pay them all a brief

visit during the three months of his stay there. This period was rendered further memorable by the despatch of *the* EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, written during his stay at Corinth and sent by “Phoebe, a servant [deaconess] of the Church at Cenchrea” (see on <sup><418></sup>Acts 18:3), a lady apparently of some standing and substance, who was going thither on private business. (See on <sup><510></sup>Romans 16:1 and see Introduction to Romans).

**And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria** — He had intended to embark, probably at Cenchrea, the eastern harbor of the city, for Palestine, on his route to Jerusalem, the *third* part of his plan (<sup><412></sup>Acts 19:21). But having detected some conspiracy against his life by his bitter Jewish enemies as at Damascus (<sup><412></sup>Acts 9:22-25) and Jerusalem (<sup><412></sup>Acts 9:29,30), he changed his plan and determined “to return” as he had come, “through Macedonia.” As he was never more to return to Corinth, so this route would bring him, for the last time, face to face with the attached disciples of *Berea*, *Thessalonica*, and *Philippi*.

**4, 5. there accompanied him into Asia** — the province of Asia.

**Sopater of Berea** — The true reading, beyond doubt, is, “Sopater [the son] of Pyrrhus of Berea.” Some think this mention of his father was to distinguish him from Sosipater (the same name in fuller form), mentioned in <sup><512></sup>Romans 16:21. But that they were the same person seems more probable.

**of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus** — (See on <sup><412></sup>Acts 19:29).

**and Secundus** — of whom nothing else is known.

**Gaius of Derbe** — Though the Gaius of <sup><412></sup>Acts 19:29 is said to be of “Macedonia,” and this one “of Derbe,” there is no sufficient reason for supposing them different persons; on the contrary, <sup><512></sup>Romans 16:23 (compare with <sup><501></sup>3 John 1:1, where there is hardly any reason to doubt that the same Gaius is addressed) seems to show that though he spent an important part of his Christian life away from his native Derbe, he had latterly retired to some place not very far from it.

**and Timotheus** — not probably of Derbe, as one might suppose from this verse, but of Lystra (see on <sup><412></sup>Acts 16:1); both being so associated in his early connection with the apostle that the mention of the one in the previous clause would recall the other on the mention of his name.

**and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus** — The latter was an Ephesian, and probably the former also. They seem to have put themselves, from this time forward, at the apostle’s disposal, and to the very last been a great comfort to him (<sup><412></sup>Ephesians 6:21,22 <sup><510></sup>Colossians 4:7,8 <sup><412></sup>Acts 21:29



2 Timothy 4:12,20). From the mention of the places to which each of these companions belonged, and still more the order in which they occur, we are left to conclude that they were deputies from their respective churches, charged with taking up and bringing on the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, first at Berea, next at Thessalonica, then at Philippi [HOWSON], *where we gather that our historian himself rejoined the party* (from the resumption at <sup>4015</sup>Acts 20:5 of the “us,” dropped at <sup>4167</sup>Acts 16:17), by whom the Philippian collection would naturally be brought on.

**5, 6. These going before** — perhaps to announce and prepare for the apostle’s coming.

**tarried for us at Troas.**

**6. And we sailed ... from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread** — (that is, the Passover). This, compared with <sup>4168</sup>1 Corinthians 16:8, shows that the three months spent at Corinth (<sup>4015</sup>Acts 20:3) were the winter months.

**came ... to Troas** — for the third and last time. (See on <sup>4168</sup>Acts 16:8 and <sup>4015</sup>Acts 20:1).

**in the five days** — As it might have been done in two days, the wind must have been adverse. The vivid style of one now present will be here again observed.

**where we abode seven days** — that is, arriving on a Monday, they stayed over the Jewish sabbath and the Lord’s Day following; Paul occupying himself, doubtless, in refreshing and strengthening fellowship with the brethren during the interval.

**7. upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together** — This, compared with <sup>4169</sup>1 Corinthians 16:2, and other similar allusions, plainly indicates that the Christian observance of the day afterwards distinctly called “the Lord’s Day,” was already a fixed practice of the churches.

**Paul preached** — discoursed. The *tense* implies continued action — “kept discoursing.”

**8. there were many lights in the upper chamber** — not a mere piece of graphic detail by an eye-witness [HACKETT, HOWSON], but mentioned, probably, as increasing the heat and contributing to drowsiness [WEBSTER and WILKINSON], as the next clause seems to show.

**9. in a** — “the.”

**window** — or window seat, or recess.

**fell down from the third loft** — “story.”

**and was taken up dead** — “The window projected (according to the side of the room where it was situated) either over the street or over the interior court; so that in either case he fell on the hard earth or pavement below.”

**10-12. Paul ... fell on him** — like Elisha (~~1064~~ 2 Kings 4:34).

**his life is in him** — now restored; compare ~~1059~~ Mark 5:39.

**11. broken bread and eaten** — with what a mixture of awe and joy after such an occurrence! “And eaten” — denoting a common repast, as distinguished from the breaking of the eucharistic bread. and talked a long while, even till break of day. How lifelike this record of dear Christian fellowship, as free and gladsome as it was solemn! (See ~~2007~~ Ecclesiastes 9:7).

## ~~4013~~ ACTS 20:13-38.

### CONTINUING HIS ROUTE TO JERUSALEM HE REACHES MILETUS, WHENCE HE SENDS FOR THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS — HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THEM.

**13, 14. we ... sailed** — from Troas.

**unto Assos; there ... to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot** — “to go by land.” (See on ~~4068~~ Mark 6:33). In sailing southward from Troas to Assos, one has to round Cape Lectra, and keeping due east to run along the northern shore of the Gulf of Adramyttium, on which it lies. This is a sail of nearly forty miles; whereas by land, cutting right across, in a southeasterly direction, from sea to sea, by that excellent Roman road which then existed, the distance was scarcely more than half. The one way Paul wished his companions to take, while he himself, longing perhaps to enjoy a period of solitude, took the other, joining the ship, by appointment, at Assos.

**14. came to Mitylene** — the capital of the beautiful and classical island of Lesbos, which lies opposite the eastern shore of the aegean Sea, about thirty miles south of Assos; in whose harbor they seem to have lain for the night.

**15, 16. came the next day over against Chios** — now Scio: one of the most beautiful of those islands between which and the coast the sail is so charming. They appear not to have touched at it.

next *day* we arrived — “touched” or “put in.”

**at Samos** — another island coming quite close to the mainland, and about as far south of Chios as it is south of Lesbos.

**tarried** — for the night.

**at Trogyllium** — an anchorage on the projecting mainland, not more than a mile from the southern extremity of the island of Samos.

**next day we came to Miletus** — on the mainland; the ancient capital of Ionia, near the mouth of the Meander.

**16. For Paul had determined to sail by** — or “sail past.”

**Ephesus** — He was right opposite to it when approaching Chios.

**because he would not spend time in Asia** — the Asian province of which Ephesus was the chief city.

**for he hasted, if ... possible ... to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost** — as a suitable season for giving in the great collection from all the western churches, for keeping the feast, and clearing his apostolic position with the Church, then represented in large number at Jerusalem. The words imply that there was considerable ground to doubt if he would attain this object — for more than three of the seven weeks from Passover to Pentecost had already expired — and they are inserted evidently to explain why he did not once more visit Ephesus.

**17. from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church** — As he was now some forty miles south of Ephesus, we might think that more time would be lost by sending thus far for the elders to come to him, than by going at once to Ephesus itself, when so near it. But if unfavorable winds and stormy weather had overtaken them, his object could not have been attained, and perhaps he was unwilling to run the risk of detention at Ephesus by the state of the church and other causes. Those here called “*elders*” or “*presbyters*,” are in ~~408~~ Acts 20:28 called “*bishops*.” (See on ~~408~~ Acts 20:28). The identity of presbyters and bishops in the New Testament is beyond all reasonable dispute.

**18. Ye know ... after what manner I have been with you at all seasons** — For the Christian integrity and fidelity of his whole official intercourse with them he appeals to themselves.

## 19. **Serving the Lord** — Jesus.

**with all humility ... and many tears and temptations** — Self-exaltation was unknown to him, and ease of mind: He “sowed in tears,” from anxieties both on account of the converts from whom he “travailed in birth,” and of the Jews, whose bitter hostility was perpetually plotting against him, interrupting his work and endangering his life.

**20. kept back** — timidly withheld from fear of consequences.

**nothing that was profitable** — edification directing all.

**have taught you publicly, and from house to house** — Did an *apostle*, whose functions were of so wide a range, not feel satisfied without *private* as well as public ministrations? How then must *pastors* feel? [BENGEL].

**21. Testifying both to Jews and ... Greeks** — laboring under a common malady, and recoverable only by a common treatment.

**repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ** — (See on <sup>4453</sup>Acts 5:31). REPENTANCE, as distinguished from *faith*, is that state of the “honest and good heart” which arises from a discovery of one’s contrariety to the righteous demands of the divine law. This is said to be “*toward God*,” because seeing Him to be the party dishonored by sin, it feels all its acknowledgments and compunctions to be properly due to Him, as the great Lawgiver, and directs them to Him accordingly; condemning, humbling itself, and grieving before Him, looking also to Him as its only Hope of deliverance. FAITH is said to be “*toward our Lord Jesus Christ*,” because in that frame of mind just described it eagerly credits the testimony of relief divinely provided in Christ, gladly embraces the overtures of reconciliation in Him, and directs all its expectations of salvation, from its first stage to its last, to Him as the one appointed Medium of all grace from God to a sinful world. Thus we have here a brief summary of all Gospel preaching. And it is easy to see why repentance is here put before faith; for the former must of necessity precede the latter. There is a repentance subsequent to faith, the fruit of felt pardon and restoration. It was this which drew the tears with which the Savior’s feet were once so copiously moistened. (<sup>4473</sup>Luke 7:37,38,47; and compare <sup>2365</sup>Ezekiel 16:63). But that is not the light in which it is here presented.

**22, 23. And now, behold, I** — “I” is emphatic here.

**bound in the spirit** — compare <sup>4452</sup>Acts 19:21. This internal pressure, unattended with any knowledge of “what was to befall him there,” was the result of that higher guidance which shaped all his movements.

**23. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city**, etc. — by prophetic utterances from city to city, as in <sup><4104></sup>Acts 11:4 21:10,11. Analogous premonitions of coming events are not unknown to the general method of God's providence. They would tend to season the apostle's spirit.

**24. But none of these things move me, neither**, etc. — In this noble expression of absolute dedication to the service of Christ and preparedness for the worst that could befall him in such a cause, note

(1) his jealousy for the peculiar character of his mission, as *immediately from Christ Himself* on which all the charges against him turned;

(2) the burden of that Gospel which he preached — GRACE; it was “the Gospel of the Grace of God.”

**25-27. I know that ye all ... shall see my face no more** — not an inspired prediction of what was certainly to be, but what the apostle, in his peculiar circumstances, fully expected. Whether, therefore, he ever did see them again, is a question to be decided purely on its own evidence.

**26. I am pure from the blood of all men** — (<sup><4186></sup>Acts 18:6; and compare <sup><6123></sup>1 Samuel 12:3,5 <sup><4187></sup>Ezekiel 3:17-21 33:8,9).

**27. For I have not shunned to declare ... all the counsel of God** — God's way of salvation, and His kingdom of souls saved by His Son Jesus Christ. See <sup><4173></sup>Luke 7:30.

**28. Take heed ... unto yourselves** — Compare <sup><4182></sup>1 Timothy 3:2-7 4:16 6:11.

**and to all the flock** — Compare <sup><4187></sup>Hebrews 13:17. Observe here how the *personal* is put before the *pastoral* care.

**over ... which the Holy Ghost hath made you** — Compare <sup><4182></sup>John 20:22,23 <sup><4188></sup>Ephesians 4:8,11,12 <sup><4189></sup>Revelation 3:1. (<sup><4183></sup>Acts 14:23 shows that the apostle did not mean to exclude *human* ordination).

**overseers** — or, as the same word is *everywhere else* rendered in our version, “bishops.” The *English Version* has hardly dealt fair in this case with the sacred text, in rendering the word “overseers,” whereas it ought here, as in all other places, to have been “bishops,” in order that the fact of elders and bishops having been originally and apostolically synonymous, might be apparent to the ordinary English reader, which now it is not [ALFORD]. The distinction between these offices cannot be certainly traced till the second century, nor was it established till late in that century.

**to feed the church of God** — or, “the Church of the Lord.” Which of these two readings of the text is the true one, is a question which has divided the best critics. The evidence of manuscripts preponderates in favor of “THE LORD”; some of the most ancient Versions, though not all, so read; and ATHANASIUS, the great champion of the supreme Divinity of Christ early in the fourth century, says the expression “Church of God” is unknown to the Scriptures. Which reading, then, does the *internal* evidence favor? As “Church of God” occurs nine times elsewhere in Paul’s writings, and “Church of the Lord” nowhere, the probability, it is said, is that he used his wonted phraseology here also. But if he did, it is extremely difficult to see how so many early transcribers should have altered it into the quite unusual phrase, “Church of the Lord”; whereas, if the apostle did use this latter expression, and the historian wrote it so accordingly, it is easy to see how transcribers might, from being so accustomed to the usual phrase, write it “Church of God.” On the whole, therefore, we accept the *second* reading as most probably the true one. But see what follows.

**which he hath purchased** — “made His own,” “acquired.”

**with his own blood** — “His own” is emphatic: “That glorified Lord who from the right hand of power in the heavens is gathering and ruling the Church, and by His Spirit, through human agency, hath set you over it, cannot be indifferent to its welfare in your hands, seeing He hath given for it His own most precious blood, thus making it His own by the dearest of all ties.” The transcendent sacredness of the Church of Christ is thus made to rest on the dignity of its Lord and the consequent preciousness of that blood which He shed for it. And as the sacrificial atoning character of Christ’s death is here plainly *expressed*, so His supreme dignity is *implied* as clearly by the second reading as it is *expressed* by the first. What a motive to *pastoral fidelity* is here furnished!

**29, 30. after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you** — Two classes of coming enemies are here announced, the one more external to themselves, the other bred in the bosom of their own community; both were to be teachers, but the one, “grievous wolves,” not sparing, that is, making a prey of the flock; the other (~~4000~~ Acts 20:30), simply sectarian “perverters” of the truth, with the view of drawing a party after them. Perhaps the one pointed to that subtle poison of Oriental Gnosticism which we know to have very early infected the Asiatic churches; the other to such Judaizing tendencies as we know to have troubled nearly all the early churches. See the Epistles to the *Ephesians*, *Colossians*, and *Timothy*, also those to the seven churches of Asia (~~4000~~ Revelation 2:1-3:22). But watchfulness against *all* that tends to injure and corrupt the Church is the duty of its pastors in every age.

**31. by the space of three years** — speaking in round numbers; for it was nearer three than two years.

**I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears** — What an appeal to be able to make! “And if this was an apostle’s part, how much more a pastor’s!” [BENGEL].

**32-35. I commend you to God** — the almighty Conservator of His people.

**and to the word of his grace** — that message of His pure grace (<sup><404></sup>Acts 20:24) by the faith of which He keeps us (<sup><405></sup>1 Peter 1:5).

**which** — that is, God.

**is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance**, etc. — Observe how salvation — not only in its *initial stages* of pardon and regeneration, but in all its *subsequent stages* of “up-building,” even to its *consummation* in the final inheritance — is here ascribed to the “ability” of God to bestow it, as in <sup><405></sup>Romans 16:25 <sup><406></sup>Ephesians 3:20; particularly <sup><404></sup>Jude 1:24; and compare <sup><402></sup>2 Timothy 1:12, where *the same thing is ascribed to Christ*.

**among all them which are sanctified** — Sanctification is here viewed as the final character and condition of the heirs of glory, regarded as one saved company.

**34. these hands** — doubtless holding them up, as before Agrippa in chains (<sup><403></sup>Acts 26:29).

**have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me** — See <sup><403></sup>Acts 18:3 <sup><402></sup>1 Corinthians 4:12 9:6, written from Ephesus; also <sup><403></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:9.

**35. that so laboring** — as I have done for others as well as myself.

**ye ought to support the weak to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he** — “how Himself.”

**said, It is more blessed to give than to receive** — This golden saying, snatched from oblivion, and here added to the Church’s abiding treasures, is apt to beget the wish that more of what issued from those Lips which “dropped as an honeycomb,” had been preserved to us. But see on <sup><402></sup>John 21:25.

**36-38. he kneeled down and prayed with them all**, etc. — Nothing can be more touching than these three concluding verses, leaving an indelible impression of rare ministerial fidelity and affection on the apostle’s part,

and of warm admiration and attachment on the part of these Ephesian presbyters. Would to God that such scenes were more frequent in the Church!



# CHAPTER 21

## ~~<420>~~ ACTS 21:1-16.

**SAILING FROM EPHESUS, THEY LAND AT TYRE, AND  
THENCE SAILING TO PTOLEMAIS, THEY PROCEED BY  
LAND TO CAESAREA AND JERUSALEM.**

**1. we were gotten** — “torn.”

**from them** — expressing the difficulty and pain of the parting.

**with a straight course** — running before the wind, as ~~<441>~~ Acts 16:11.

**unto Coos** — Cos, an island due south from Miletus, which they would reach in about six hours, and coming close to the mainland.

**the day following unto Rhodes** — another island, some fifty miles to the southeast, of brilliant classic memory and beauty.

**thence unto Patara** — a town on the magnificent mainland of Lycia, almost due east from Rhodes. It was the seat of a celebrated oracle of Apollo.

**2. And finding a ship** — their former one going no farther, probably.

**to Phoenicia** — (See on ~~<441>~~ Acts 11:19).

**went abroad** — One would almost think this extracted from a journal of the voyage, so graphic are its details.

**3. when we ... discovered** — “sighted,” as the phrase is.

**Cyprus, we left it on the left hand** — that is, steered southeast of it, leaving it on the northwest.

**sailed into** — “unto”

**Syria, and landed at Tyre** — the celebrated seat of maritime commerce for East and West. It might be reached from Patara in about two days.

**there the ship was to unlade her burden** — which gave the apostle time for what follows.

**4-6. finding disciples** — finding out the disciples, implying some search. They would expect such, from what is recorded, <sup><4119></sup>Acts 11:19. Perhaps they were not many; yet there were gifted ones among them.

**who said to Paul ... that he should not go up to Jerusalem** — (See on <sup><4023></sup>Acts 20:23; also see on <sup><4011></sup>Acts 21:11-14).

**5. they all brought us on our way with wives and children ... and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed** — (See on <sup><4036></sup>Acts 20:36).

Observe here that the *children* of these Tyrian disciples not only were taken along with their parents, but must have joined in this act of solemn worship. See on <sup><4001></sup>Ephesians 6:1.

**7. when we had finished our course** — completing the voyage

**from Tyre, we came** — which they would do the same day.

**to Ptolemais** — anciently called Accho (<sup><0031></sup>Judges 1:31), now St. Jean d'Acre, or Acre.

**and saluted the brethren, and abode**, etc. — disciples gathered probably as at Tyre, on the occasion mentioned (<sup><4119></sup>Acts 11:19).

**8-10. next day we that were of Paul's company departed** — (The words "the were of Paul's company" are omitted in the best manuscripts. They were probably added as the connecting words at the head of some church lessons).

**and came to Caesarea** — a run along the coast, southward, of some thirty miles.

**Philip the evangelist** — a term answering apparently very much to our *missionary* [HOWSON], by whose ministry such joy had been diffused over Samaria and the Ethiopian eunuch had been baptized (<sup><4004></sup>Acts 8:4-40).

**one of the seven** — deacons, who had "purchased to himself a good degree" (<sup><5013></sup>1 Timothy 3:13). He and Paul now meet for the first time, some twenty-five years after that time.

**9. the same man had four daughters ... which did prophesy** — fulfilling <sup><0128></sup>Joel 2:28 (see <sup><4118></sup>Acts 2:18). This is mentioned, it would seem, merely as a high distinction divinely conferred on so devoted a servant of the Lord Jesus, and probably indicates the high tone of religion in his family.

**10. tarried there many** — "a good many"

**days** — Finding himself in good time for Pentecost at Jerusalem, he would feel it a refreshing thing to his spirit to hold Christian communion for a few days with such a family.

**there came down from Judea** — the news of Paul's arrival having spread.

**a certain prophet ... Agabus** — no doubt the same as in <sup><4112></sup>Acts 11:28.

**11-14. So shall the Jews bind the man that owneth this girdle**, etc. — For though the Romans did it, it was at the Jews' instigation (<sup><4213></sup>Acts 21:33 <sup><4217></sup>Acts 28:17). Such dramatic methods of announcing important future events would bring the old prophets to remembrance. (Compare <sup><2310></sup>Isaiah 20:2, etc. <sup><4231></sup>Jeremiah 13:1, and <sup><2010></sup>Ezekiel 5:1, etc.). This prediction and that at Tyre (<sup><4214></sup>Acts 21:4) were intended, not to prohibit him from going, but to put his courage to the test and when he stood the test, to deepen and mature it.

**12. we and they at that place** — the Caesarean Christians.

**besought him** — even with tears, <sup><4213></sup>Acts 21:13.

**not to go to Jerusalem.**

**13. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart** — Beautiful union of manly resoluteness and womanly tenderness, alike removed from mawkishness and stoicism!

**I am ready not to be bound only** — "If that is all, let it come."

**but to die**, etc. — It was well he could add this, for he had that also to do.

**15, 16. we took up our carriages** — "our baggage."

**and went up to Jerusalem** — for the *fifth* time after his conversion, thus concluding *his third missionary tour*, which proved his *last*, so far as recorded; for though he accomplished the fourth and last part of the missionary plan sketched out (<sup><4121></sup>Acts 19:21) — "After I have been at Jerusalem, I must also see Rome" — it was as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ."

**16. went with us ... and brought with them** — rather, "brought us to."

**One Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple**, etc. — not an "aged" disciple, but probably "a disciple of old standing," perhaps one of the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost, or, more likely still, drawn to the Savior Himself during His lifetime. He had come, probably, with the other

Cyprians (~~4410~~ Acts 11:20), to Antioch, “preaching the Lord Jesus unto the Grecians,” and now he appears settled at Jerusalem.

## ~~4217~~ ACTS 21:17-40.

**PAUL REPORTS THE EVENTS OF HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY — IN THE TEMPLE, PURIFYING HIMSELF FROM A JEWISH VOW, HE IS SEIZED BY A MOB AND BEATEN TO THE DANGER OF HIS LIFE — THE UPROAR BECOMING UNIVERSAL, THE ROMAN COMMANDANT HAS HIM BROUGHT IN CHAINS TO THE FORTRESS, FROM THE STAIRS OF WHICH HE IS PERMITTED TO ADDRESS THE PEOPLE.**

The apostle was full of anxiety about this visit to Jerusalem, from the numerous prophetic intimations of danger awaiting him, and having reason to expect the presence at this feast of the very parties from whose virulent rage he had once and again narrowly escaped with his life. Hence we find him asking the Roman Christians to wrestle with him in prayer, “for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, *that he might be delivered from them that believed not in Judea*,” as well as “that his service which he had for Jerusalem (the great collection for the poor saints there) might be accepted of the saints” (~~6150~~ Romans 15:30,31).

**17-19. the brethren received us gladly** — the disciples generally, as distinguished from the official reception recorded in ~~4218~~ Acts 21:18.

**18. Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present** — to “report himself” formally to the acknowledged head of the church at Jerusalem, and his associates in office. See on ~~4153~~ Acts 15:13. Had any other of the apostles been in Jerusalem on that occasion, it could hardly fail to have been noted.

**19. he declared particularly** — in detail.

**what God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry** — as on previous occasions (~~4447~~ Acts 14:27; and see ~~6151~~ Romans 15:15); no doubt referring to the insidious and systematic efforts of the Judaizing party in a number of places to shrivel the Church of Christ into a Jewish sect, and his own counter-procedure.

**20-25. they glorified the Lord**, etc. — constrained to justify his course, notwithstanding the Jewish complexion of the Christianity of Jerusalem.

**21. they are informed ... that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles** — those residing in heathen countries.

**to forsake Moses**, etc. — This calumny of the unbelieving Jews would find easy credence among the Christian zealots for Judaism.

**23. we have four men** — Christian Jews, no doubt.

**which have a vow** — perhaps kept ready on purpose.

**24. be at charges with them** — that is, defray the expense of the sacrifices legally required of them, along with his own, which was deemed a mark of Jewish generosity.

**25. touching the Gentiles ... we have written and concluded that they observe no such things**, etc. — This shows that with all their conciliation to Jewish prejudice, the Church of Jerusalem was taught to adhere to the decision of the famous council held there (<sup>4459</sup>Acts 15:19-29).

**26. to signify** — that is, announce to the priest.

**the accomplishment of the days of purification**, etc. — (See on <sup>4034</sup>Numbers 6:14-21).

**27-30. the Jews ... of Asia** — in all likelihood those of *Ephesus* (since they recognized Trophimus apparently as a townsman, <sup>4073</sup>Acts 21:29), embittered by their discomfiture (<sup>4409</sup>Acts 19:9, etc.).

**29. Trophimus** — (See on <sup>4406</sup>Acts 20:4).

**30. took Paul, and drew him out of the temple; and forthwith the doors were shut** — that the murder they meant to perpetrate might not pollute that holy place.

**31. tidings came** — literally, “went up,” that is, to the fortress of Antonia, where the commandant resided. See on <sup>4073</sup>Acts 21:32. This part of the narrative is particularly graphic.

**32. the chief captain** — “the chiliarch,” or tribune of the Roman cohort, whose full number was one thousand men.

**33. commanded him to be bound with two chains** — (See on <sup>4426</sup>Acts 12:6).

**34. some cried one thing** — The difficulty would be so to state his crimes as to justify their proceedings to a Roman officer.

**to be carried into the castle** — rather, perhaps, “the barracks,” or that part of the fortress of Antonia appropriated to the soldiers. The fort was built by Herod on a high rock at the northwest corner of the great temple area, and called after Mark Antony.

**35, 36. Away with him** — as before of his Lord (~~4238~~ Luke 23:18 ~~4815~~ John 19:15).

**37-40. Art not thou that Egyptian**, etc. — The form of the question implies that the answer is to be in the negative, and is matter of some surprise: “Thou art not then?” etc.

**38. madest an uproar**, etc. — The narrative is given in JOSEPHUS [*Wars of the Jews*, 2.8.6; 13.5], though his two allusions and ours seem to refer to different periods of the rebellion.

**39. a citizen of no mean city** — (See on ~~4467~~ Acts 16:37).

**40. stood on the stairs** — “What nobler spectacle than that of Paul at this moment! There he stood, bound with two chains, ready to make his defense to the people. The Roman commander sits by, to enforce order by his presence. An enraged populace look up to him from below. Yet in the midst of so many dangers, how self-possessed is he, how tranquil!” [CHRYSOSTOM (or in his name) in HACKETT].

**a great silence** — the people awed at the permission given him by the commandant, and seeing him sitting as a listener.

**in the Hebrew tongue** — the *Syro-Chaldaic*, the vernacular tongue of the Palestine Jews since the captivity.

# CHAPTER 22

## ~~<421>~~ ACTS 22:1-30.

**PAUL'S DEFENSE FROM THE STAIRS OF THE FORTRESS — THE RAGE OF THE AUDIENCE BURSTING FORTH, THE COMMANDANT HAS HIM BROUGHT INTO THE FORT TO BE EXAMINED BY SCOURGING, BUT LEARNING THAT HE IS A ROMAN, HE ORDERS HIS RELEASE AND COMMANDS THE SAMHEDRIM TO TRY HIM.**

**2. when they heard ... the Hebrew tongue** — (See on ~~<424>~~ Acts 21:40).

**they kept the more silence** — They could have understood him in *Greek*, and doubtless fully expected the renegade to address them in that language, but the sound of their holy mother tongue awed them into deeper silence.

**3. a Jew of Tarsus, brought up in this city, at the feet** — (See on ~~<429>~~ Luke 10:39).

**of Gamaliel** — (See on ~~<434>~~ Acts 5:34); a fact of great importance in the apostle's history, standing in the same relation to his future career as Moses' education in the Egyptian court to the work for which he was destined.

**the perfect manner of the law of the fathers** — the strictest form of traditional Judaism.

**zealous** — “a zealot.”

**toward God as ye all are this day** — his own former murderous zeal against the disciples of the Lord Jesus being merely reflected in their present treatment of himself.

**4. I persecuted,** etc. — (See on ~~<440>~~ Acts 9:1,2; ~~<445>~~ Acts 9:5-7).

**5. the high priest** — still alive.

**doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders** — the whole Sanhedrim.

**8. Jesus of Nazareth** — the Nazarene. See on ~~<445>~~ Acts 9:5.

**9-11. they that were with me** — (See on <sup><4007></sup>Acts 9:7, etc.)

**12. Ananias, a devout man, according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there** — One would not know from this description of Ananias that he was a Christian at all, the apostles object being to hold him up as unexceptionable, even to the most rigid Jews.

**13-15. The God of our fathers hath chosen thee** — studiously linking the new economy upon the old, as but the sequel of it; both having one glorious Author.

**14. that thou shouldest ... see that** — “the”

**Just One** — compare <sup><4084></sup>Acts 3:14 7:52.

**hear the voice of his mouth** — in order to place him on a level with the other apostles, who had “seen the [risen] Lord.”

**16. be baptized and wash away thy sins** — This way of speaking arises from baptism being the visible seal of remission.

**calling on the name of the Lord** — rather, “having called,” that is, *after* having done so; referring to the confession of Christ which *preceded* baptism, as <sup><4082></sup>Acts 8:37.

**17-21. it came to pass**, etc. — This thrilling dialogue between the glorified Redeemer and his chosen vessel is nowhere else related.

**when I was come again to Jerusalem** — on the occasion mentioned in <sup><4085></sup>Acts 9:26-29.

**while I prayed in the temple** — He thus calls their attention to the fact that after his conversion he kept up his connection with the temple as before.

**18. get ... quickly out of Jerusalem** — compare <sup><4102></sup>Acts 9:29.

**for they will not receive thy testimony ... And I said, Lord, they know**, etc. — “Can it be, Lord, that they will resist the testimony of one whom they knew so well as among the bitterest of all against Thy disciples, and whom nothing short of resistless evidence could have turned to Thee?”

**21. depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles** — that is, “Enough; thy testimony is not to be thrown away upon Jerusalem; the Gentiles, afar off, are thy peculiar sphere.”

**22, 23. gave him audience to this word ... then ... Away with such a fellow from the earth**, etc. — Their national prejudices lashed into fury at the mention of a mission to the Gentiles, they would speedily have done to



him as they did to Stephen, but for the presence and protection of the Roman officer.

**24-26. examined by scourging** — according to the Roman practice.

**that he might know wherefore they cried so** — Paul's speech being to him in an unknown tongue, he concluded from the horror which it kindled in the vast audience that he must have been guilty of some crime.

**25. Paul said to the centurion that stood by** — to superintend the torture and receive the confession expected to be wrung from him.

**Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman**, etc. — See on ~~4167~~ Acts 16:37.

**27-29. art thou a Roman?** — showing that this being of Tarsus, which he had told him before (~~4173~~ Acts 21:39) did not necessarily imply that he was a Roman citizen.

**28. With a great sum obtained I this freedom** — Roman citizenship was bought and sold in the reign of Claudius, we know, at a high price: at a subsequent date, for next to nothing. But to put in a false claim to this privilege was a capital crime.

**I was free born** — born to it, by purchase, or in reward of services, on the part of his father or some ancestor.

**29. chief captain also was afraid**, etc. — See on ~~4183~~ Acts 16:38.

**30. commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear** — that is, the Sanhedrim to be formally convened. Note here the power to order a Sanhedrim to try this case, assumed by the Roman officers and acquiesced in on their part.

# CHAPTER 23

## ⌵ ACTS 23:1-10.

### PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE SAMHEDRIM DIVIDES THE RIVAL FACTIONS, FROM WHOSE VIOLENCE THE COMMANDANT HAS THE APOSTLE REMOVED INTO THE FORTRESS.

**1. Paul, earnestly beholding the council** — with a look of conscious integrity and unfaltering courage, perhaps also recognizing some of his early fellow pupils.

**I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day** — The word has an indirect reference to the “polity” or “commonwealth of Israel,” of which he would signify that he had been, and was to that hour, an honest and God-fearing member.

**2. the high priest ... commanded ... to smite him on the mouth** — a method of silencing a speaker common in the East to this day [HACKET]. But for a judge thus to treat a prisoner on his “trial,” for merely prefacing his defense by a protestation of his integrity, was infamous.

**3, 4. God shall smite thee** — as indeed He did; for he was killed by an assassin during the Jewish war [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 2.17.9].

*thou whited wall* — that is, hypocrite (⌵ Matthew 23:27). This epithet, however correctly describing the man, must not be defended as addressed to a judge, though the remonstrance which follows — “for sittest thou,” etc. — ought to have put him to shame.

**5. I wist not ... that he was the high priest** — All sorts of explanations of this have been given. The high priesthood was in a state of great confusion and constant change at this time (as appears from JOSEPHUS), and the apostle's long absence from Jerusalem, and perhaps the manner in which he was habited or the seat he occupied, with other circumstances to us unknown, may account for such a speech. But if he was thrown off his guard by an insult which touched him to the quick, “what can surpass the grace with which he recovered his self-possession, and the frankness with which he acknowledged his error? If his conduct in yielding to the momentary impulse was not that of Christ Himself under a similar

provocation (<sup><4182></sup>John 18:22,23), certainly the manner in which he atoned for his fault was *Christ-like*” [HACKET].

**6-9. when Paul perceived** — from the discussion which plainly had by this time arisen between the parties.

**that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out** — raising his voice above both parties.

**I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee** — The true reading seems to be, “the son of Pharisees,” that is, belonging to a family who from father to son had long been such.

**of the hope and resurrection of the dead** — that is, not the vague hope of immortality, but the definite expectation of the resurrection.

**I am called in question** — By this adroit stroke, Paul engages the whole Pharisaic section of the council in his favor; the doctrine of a resurrection being common to both, though they would totally differ in their *application* of it. This was, of course, quite warrantable, and the more so as it was already evident that no impartiality in trying his cause was to be looked for from such an assembly.

**8. the Sadducees say ... there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit** — (See on <sup><4218></sup>Luke 20:37).

**the scribes ... of the Pharisees' part ... strove, saying, We find no evil in this man, but** — as to those startling things which he brings to our ears.

**if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him** — referring, perhaps, to his trance in the temple, of which he had told them (<sup><4217></sup>Acts 22:17). They put this favorable construction upon his proceedings for no other reason than that they had found him one of their own party. They care not to inquire into the *truth* of what he alleged, over and above their opinions, but only to explain it away as something not worth raising a noise about. (The following words, “Let us not fight against God,” seem not to belong to the original text, and perhaps are from <sup><4159></sup>Acts 5:39. In this case, either the meaning is, “If he has had some divine communication, *what of that?*” or, the conclusion of the sentence may have been drowned in the hubbub, which <sup><4230></sup>Acts 23:10 shows to have been intense).

**10. the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled to pieces ... commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force,** etc. — This shows that the commandant was not himself present, and further, that instead of the Sanhedrim trying the cause, the proceedings

quickly consisted in the one party attempting to seize the prisoner, and the other to protect him.

## ~~4281~~ ACTS 23:11-35.

**IN THE FORTRESS PAUL IS CHEERED BY A NIGHT VISION — AN INFAMOUS CONSPIRACY TO ASSASSINATE HIM IS PROVIDENTIALLY DEFEATED, AND HE IS DESPATCHED BY NIGHT WITH A LETTER FROM THE COMMANDANT TO FELIX AT CAESAREA, BY WHOM ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE FOR A HEARING OF HIS CAUSE.**

**11. the night following** — his heart perhaps sinking, in the solitude of his barrack ward, and thinking perhaps that all the predictions of danger at Jerusalem were now to be fulfilled in his death there.

**the Lord** — that is, Jesus.

**stood by him ... Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou ... also at Rome** — that is, “Thy work in Jerusalem is done, faithfully and well done; but thou art not to die here; thy purpose next to ‘see Rome’ (~~4402~~ Acts 19:21) shall not be disappointed, and there also must thou bear witness of Me.” As this vision was not unneeded now, so we shall find it cheering and upholding him throughout all that befell him up to his arrival there.

**12-14. bound themselves under a curse ... that they would neither eat ... fill they had killed Paul** — Compare ~~4085~~ 2 Samuel 3:35 ~~0943~~ 1 Samuel 14:24.

**15. Now ... ye with the council signify to the chief captain ... as though,** etc. — That these high ecclesiastics fell in readily with this infamous plot is clear. What will not unscrupulous and hypocritical religionists do under the mask of religion? The narrative bears unmistakable internal marks of truth.

**or ever he come near** — Their plan was to assassinate him on his way down from the barracks to the council. The case was critical. but He who had pledged His word to him that he should testify for Him at Rome provided unexpected means of defeating this well-laid scheme.

**16-22. Paul’s sister’s son** — (See on ~~4480~~ Acts 9:30). If he was at this time residing at Jerusalem for his education, like Paul himself, he may have got at the schools those hints of the conspiracy on which he so promptly acted.

**17. Then Paul called one of the centurions** — Though divinely assured of safety, he never allows this to interfere with the duty he owed to his own life and the work he had yet to do. (See on ~~4072~~ Acts 27:22-25; ~~4073~~ Acts 27:31).

**19. took him by the hand** — This shows that he must have been quite in his boyhood, and throws a pleasing light on the kind-hearted impartiality of this officer.

**21. and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee** — Thus, as is so often the case with God's people, not till the last moment, when the plot was all prepared, did deliverance come.

**23, 24. two hundred soldiers** — a formidable guard for such an occasion; but Roman officials felt their honor concerned in the preservation of the public peace, and the danger of an attempted rescue would seem to require it. The force at Jerusalem was large enough to spare this convoy.

**the third hour of the night** — nine o'clock.

**24. beasts ... set Paul on** — as relays, and to carry baggage.

**unto Felix, the governor** — the procurator. See on ~~4081~~ Acts 24:24,25.

**26-30. Claudius** — the Roman name he would take on purchasing his citizenship.

**Lysias** — his Greek family name.

**the most excellent governor** — an honorary title of office.

**27. came I with an army** — rather, "with the military."

**29. perceived to be accused of questions of their law**, etc. — Amidst all his difficulty in getting at the charges laid against Paul, enough, no doubt, come out to satisfy him that the whole was a question of religion, and that there was no case for a civil tribunal.

**30. gave commandment to his accusers ... to say before thee** — This was not done when he wrote, but would be before the letter reached its destination.

**31, 32. brought him ... to Antipatris** — nearly forty miles from Jerusalem, on the way to Caesarea; so named by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater.

**32. On the morrow they** — the infantry.

**left the horsemen** — themselves no longer needed as a guard. The remaining distance was about twenty-five or twenty-six miles.

**34, 35. asked of what province he was** — the letter describing him as a Roman citizen.

**35. I will hear thee** — The word means, “give thee a full hearing.”

**to be kept in Herod’s judgment hall** — “praetorium,” the palace built at Caesarea by Herod, and now occupied by the Roman procurators; in one of the buildings attached to which Paul was ordered to be kept.

# CHAPTER 24

## ~~<401>~~ ACTS 24:1-27.

**PAUL, ACCUSED BY A PROFESSIONAL PLEADER BEFORE FELIX, MAKES HIS DEFENSE, AND IS REMANDED FOR A FURTHER HEARING. AT A PRIVATE INTERVIEW FELIX TREMBLES UNDER PAUL'S PREACHING, BUT KEEPS HIM PRISONER FOR TWO YEARS, WHEN HE WAS SUCCEEDED BY FESTUS.**

**1. after five days** — or, on the fifth day from their departure from Jerusalem.

**Ananias ... with the elders** — a deputation of the Sanhedrim.

**a certain orator** — one of those Roman advocates who trained themselves for the higher practice of the metropolis by practicing in the provinces, where the *Latin* language, employed in the courts, was but imperfectly understood and Roman forms were not familiar.

**informed ... against Paul** — “laid information,” that is, put in the charges.

**2-4. Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness**, etc. — In this fulsome flattery there was a semblance of truth: nothing more. Felix acted with a degree of vigor and success in suppressing lawless violence [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.8.4; confirmed by TACITUS, *Annals*, 12.54].

**by thy providence** — a phrase applied to the administration of the emperors.

**5-8. a pestilent fellow** — a plague, or pest.

**and a mover of sedition among all the Jews** — by exciting disturbances among them.

**throughout the world** — (See on ~~<401>~~ Luke 2:1). This was the *first* charge; and true only in the sense explained on ~~<413>~~ Acts 16:20.

**a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes** — the *second* charge; and true enough.

**6. hath gone about** — attempted.

**to profane the temple** — the *third* charge; and entirely false.

**we ... would have judged according to our law.**

**7. But ... Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him out of our hands** — a wilful falsehood and calumnious charge against a public officer. He had commanded the Sanhedrim to meet for no other purpose than to “judge him according to their law”; and only when, instead of doing so, they fell to disputing among themselves, and the prisoner was in danger of being “pulled in pieces of them” (<sup><4230></sup>Acts 23:10) — or as his own letter says “killed of them” (<sup><4237></sup>Acts 23:27) — did he rescue him, as was his duty, “by force” out of their hands.

**8. Commanding his accusers to come unto thee** — Here they insinuate that, instead of troubling Felix with the case, he ought to have left it to be dealt with by the Jewish tribunal; in which case his life would soon have been taken.

**by examining whom** — Lysias, as would seem (<sup><422></sup>Acts 24:22).

**thyself mayest**, etc. — referring all, as if with confidence, to Felix.

**9. the Jews assented**, etc. — See on <sup><4235></sup>Acts 23:15.

**10. thou hast been many years a judge to this nation** — He had been in this province for six or seven years, and in Galilee for a longer period. Paul uses no flattery, but simply expresses his satisfaction at having to plead before one whose long official experience of Jewish matters would enable him the better to understand and appreciate what he had to say.

**11. thou mayest understand** — canst easily learn.

**that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem** — namely,

1. The day of his arrival in Jerusalem (<sup><4215></sup>Acts 21:15-17);

2. The interview with James (<sup><4218></sup>Acts 21:18-26);

3. The assumption of the vow (<sup><4216></sup>Acts 21:26);

4, 5, 6. Continuance of the vow, interrupted by the arrest (<sup><4217></sup>Acts 21:27, etc.);

7. Arrest of Paul (<sup><4217></sup>Acts 21:27);

8. Paul before the Sanhedrim (<sup><4231></sup>Acts 22:30 23:1-10);



**9.** Conspiracy of the Jews and defeat of it (<sup>402</sup>Acts 23:12-24), and despatch of Paul from Jerusalem on the evening of the same day (<sup>403</sup>Acts 23:23,31);

**10, 11, 12, 13.** The remaining period referred to (<sup>404</sup>Acts 24:1) [MEYER]. This short period is mentioned to show how unlikely it was that he should have had time to do what was charged against him.

**for to worship** — a very different purpose from that imputed to him.

**12, 13. they neither found me ... Neither can they prove the things,** etc. — After specifying several particulars, he challenges proof of any one of the charges brought against him. So much for the charge of *sedition*.

**14, 15. But this I confess to thee** — in which Felix would see no crime.

**that after the way they call heresy** — literally, and better, “a sect.”

**so worship I the God of my fathers** — the ancestral God. Two arguments are contained here:

(1) Our nation is divided into what they call *sects* — the sect of the Pharisees, and that of the Sadducees — all the difference between them and me is, that I belong to neither of these, but to another sect, or religious section of the nation, which from its Head they call *Nazarenes*: for this reason, and this alone, am I hated.

(2) The Roman law allows every nation to worship its own deities; I claim protection under that law, worshipping the God of my ancestors, even as they, only of a different sect of the common religion.

**believing all,** etc. — Here, disowning all opinions at variance with the Old Testament Scriptures, he challenges for the Gospel which he preached the authority of the God of their fathers. So much for the charge of *heresy*.

**15. And have hope ... as they themselves ... allow, that there shall be a resurrection,** etc. — This appeal to the faith of his accusers shows that they were chiefly of the *Pharisees*, and that the favor of that party, to which he owed in some measure his safety at the recent council (<sup>405</sup>Acts 23:6-9), had been quite momentary.

**16. And herein** — On this account, accordingly; that is, looking forward to that awful day (compare <sup>406</sup>2 Corinthians 5:10).

**I exercise myself** — The “I” here is emphatic; “Whatever they do, this is my study.”

**to have always a conscience void of offense**, etc. — See ~~Acts~~ Acts 23:1 ~~and~~ 2 Corinthians 1:12 2:17, etc.; that is, “These are the great principles of my life and conduct — how different from turbulence and sectarianism!”

**17. Now after many** — several

**years absence from Jerusalem** — I came to bring alms to my of Macedonia and Greece, which he had taken such pains to gather. This only allusion in the Acts to what is dwelt upon so frequently in his own Epistles (~~Romans~~ Romans 15:25,26 ~~1 Corinthians~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 ~~2 Corinthians~~ 2 Corinthians 8:1-4), throws a beautiful light on the truth of this History. (See PALEY’S *Horae Paulinae*).

**and offerings** — connected with his Jewish vow: see ~~Acts~~ Acts 24:18.

**18-21. found me purified in the temple** — not polluting it, therefore, by my own presence, and neither gathering a crowd nor raising a stir: If then these Asiatic Jews have any charge to bring against me in justification of their arrest of me, why are they not here to substantiate it?

**20. Or else let these ... here say** — “Or, passing from all that preceded my trial, let those of the Sanhedrim here present say if I was guilty of aught there.” No doubt his hasty speech to the high priest might occur to them, but the provocation to it on his own part was more than they would be willing to recall.

**21. Except ... this one voice ... Touching the resurrection**, etc. — This would recall to the Pharisees present their own inconsistency, in befriending him then and now accusing him.

**22, 23. having more perfect knowledge of that** — “the”

**way** — (See on ~~Acts~~ Acts 19:23; and ~~Acts~~ Acts 24:14).

**When Lysias ... shall come ... I will how**, etc. — Felix might have dismissed the case as a tissue of unsupported charges. But if from his interest in the matter he really wished to have the presence of Lysias and others involved, a brief delay was not unworthy of him as a judge. Certainly, so far as recorded, neither Lysias nor any other parties appeared again in the case. ~~Acts~~ Acts 24:23, however, seems to show that *at that time* his prepossessions in favor of Paul were strong.

**24, 25. Felix ... with his wife Drusilla ... a Jewess** — This beautiful but infamous woman was the third daughter of Herod Agrippa I, who was eaten of worms (see on ~~Acts~~ Acts 12:1), and a sister of Agrippa II, before whom Paul pleaded, ~~Acts~~ Acts 26:1, etc. She was “given in marriage to

Azizus, king of the Emesenes, who had consented to be circumcised for the sake of the alliance. But this marriage was soon dissolved, after this manner: When Festus was procurator of Judea, he saw her, and being captivated with her beauty, persuaded her to desert her husband, transgress the laws of her country, and marry himself" [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.7.1,2]. Such was this "wife" of Felix.

**he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ** —

Perceiving from what he had heard on the trial that the new sect which was creating such a stir was represented by its own advocates as but a particular development of the Jewish faith, he probably wished to gratify the curiosity of his Jewish wife, as well as his own, by a more particular account of it from this distinguished champion. And no doubt Paul would so far humor this desire as to present to them the great leading features of the Gospel. But from ~~405~~ Acts 24:25 it is evident that his discourse took an entirely practical turn, suited to the life which his two auditors were notoriously leading.

**25. And as he reasoned of righteousness** — with reference to the *public* character of Felix.

**temperance** — with reference to his immoral life.

**and judgment to come** — when he would be called to an awful account for both.

**Felix trembled** — and no wonder. For, on the testimony of TACITUS, the Roman Annalist [*Annals*, 9; 12.54], he ruled with a mixture of cruelty, lust, and servility, and relying on the influence of his brother Pallas at court, he thought himself at liberty to commit every sort of crime with impunity. How noble the fidelity and courage which dared to treat of such topics in such a presence, and what withering power must have been in those appeals which made even a Felix to tremble!

**Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee** — Alas for Felix! This was his golden opportunity, but — *like multitudes still* — he missed it. Convenient seasons in abundance he found to call for Paul, but never again to "hear him concerning the faith in Christ," and writhe under the terrors of the wrath to come. Even in those moments of terror he had no thought of submission to the Cross or a change of life. The Word discerned the thoughts and intents of his heart, but that heart even then clung to its idols; even as Herod, who "did many things and heard John gladly," but in his best moments was enslaved to his lusts. How many Felixes have appeared from age to age!

**26. He hoped ... that money should have been given him ... wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him** — Bribery in a judge was punishable by the Roman law, but the spirit of a slave (to use the words of TACITUS) was in all his acts, and his communing with Paul” — as if he cared for either him or his message — simply added hypocrisy to meanness. The position in life of Paul’s Christian visitors might beget the hope of extracting something from them for the release of their champion; but the apostle would rather lie in prison than stoop to this!

**27. after two years** — What a trial to this burning missionary of Christ, to suffer such a tedious period of inaction! How mysterious it would seem! But this repose would be medicine to his spirit; he would not, and could not, be entirely inactive, so long as he was able by pen and message to communicate with the churches; and he would doubtless learn the salutary truth that even he was not essential to his Master’s cause. That Luke wrote his Gospel during this period, under the apostle’s superintendence, is the not unlikely conjecture of able critics.

**Porcius Festus** — Little is known of him. He died a few years after this [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.8.9-9.1].

**came into Felix’ room** — He was recalled, on accusations against him by the Jews of Caesarea, and only acquitted through the intercession of his brother at court [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.8,10].

**Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure** — “to earn the thanks of the Jews,” which he did not.

**left Paul bound** — (~~4029~~ Acts 26:29) — which does not seem to have been till then.

# CHAPTER 25

## ~~<421>~~ ACTS 25:1-12.

**FESTUS, COMING TO JERUSALEM, DECLINES TO HAVE PAUL BROUGHT THITHER FOR JUDGMENT, BUT GIVES THE PARTIES A HEARING ON HIS RETURN TO CAESAREA — ON FESTUS ASKING THE APOSTLE IF HE WOULD GO TO JERUSALEM FOR ANOTHER HEARING BEFORE HIM, HE IS CONSTRAINED IN JUSTICE TO HIS CAUSE TO APPEAL TO THE EMPEROR.**

**1-3. Festus ... after three days ... ascended ... to Jerusalem** — to make himself acquainted with the great central city of his government without delay.

**2. Then the high priest** — a successor of him before whom Paul had appeared (~~<421>~~ Acts 23:2).

**and the chief of the Jews** — and “the whole multitude of the Jews” (~~<423>~~ Acts 25:24) clamorously.

**informed him against Paul ...**

**3. desired favor** — in ~~<425>~~ Acts 25:15, “judgment.”

**against him** — It would seem that they had the insolence to ask him to have the prisoner executed even without a trial (~~<425>~~ Acts 25:16).

**laying wait ... to kill him** — How deep must have been their hostility, when two years after the defeat of their former attempt, they thirst as keenly as ever for his blood! Their plea for having the case tried at Jerusalem, where the alleged offense took place, was plausible enough; but from ~~<425>~~ Acts 25:10 it would seem that Festus had been made acquainted with their causeless malice, and that in some way which Paul was privy to.

**4-6. answered that Paul should be kept** — rather, “is in custody.”  
**at Caesarea, and ... himself would depart shortly thither.**

**5. Let them ... which among you are able, go down** — “your leading men.”

**7. the Jews ... from Jerusalem** — clamorously, as at Jerusalem; see ~~Acts~~ Acts 25:24.

**many and grievous complaints against Paul** — From his reply, and Festus' statement of the case before Agrippa, these charges seem to have been a jumble of political and religious matter which they were unable to substantiate, and vociferous cries that he was unfit to live. Paul's reply, not given in full, was probably little more than a challenge to prove any of their charges, whether political or religious.

**9, 10. Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure** — to ingratiate himself with them.

**said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and ... be judged ... before me** — or, "under my protection." If this was meant in earnest, it was temporizing and vacillating. But, possibly, anticipating Paul's refusal, he wished merely to avoid the odium of refusing to remove the trial to Jerusalem.

**10. Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat** — that is, I am already before the proper tribunal. This seems to imply that he understood Festus to propose handing him over to the Sanhedrim for judgment (and see on ~~Acts~~ Acts 25:11), with a mere promise of protection from him. But from going to Jerusalem at all he was too well justified in shrinking, for there assassination had been quite recently planned against him.

**to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou knowest very well** — literally, "better," that is, (perhaps), better than to press such a proposal.

**if there be none of these things ... no man may deliver me unto them** — The word signifies to "surrender in order to gratify" another.

**11. I appeal to Caesar** — The right of appeal to the supreme power, in case of life and death, was secured by an ancient law to every Roman citizen, and continued under the empire. Had Festus shown any disposition to pronounce final judgment, Paul, strong in the consciousness of his innocence and the justice of a Roman tribunal, would not have made this appeal. But when the only other alternative offered him was to give his own consent to be transferred to the great hotbed of plots against his life, and to a tribunal of unscrupulous and bloodthirsty ecclesiastics whose vociferous cries for his death had scarcely subsided, no other course was open to him.

**12. Festus** — little expecting such an appeal, but bound to respect it.

**having conferred with the council** — his assessors in judgment, as to the admissibility of the appeal.

**said, Hast thou** — for “thou hast.”

**to Caesar shalt thou go** — as if he would add perhaps “and see if thou fare better.”

## ~~40513~~ ACTS 25:13-27.

### **HEROD AGRIPPA II ON A VISIT TO FESTUS, BEING CONSULTED BY HIM ON PAUL’S CASE, DESIRES TO HEAR THE APOSTLE, WHO IS ACCORDINGLY BROUGHT FORTH.**

**13. King Agrippa** — great-grandson of Herod the Great, and Drusilla’s brother (see on ~~4001~~ Acts 24:24). On his father’s awful death (~~41223~~ Acts 12:23), being thought too young (seventeen) to succeed, Judea, was attached to the province of Syria. Four years after, on the death of his uncle Herod, he was made king of the northern principalities of Chalcis, and afterwards got Batanea, Iturea, Trachonitis, Abilene, Galilee, and Perea, with the title of king. He died A.D. 100, after reigning fifty-one years.

**and Bernice** — his sister. She was married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, on whose death she lived with her brother Agrippa — not without suspicion of incestuous intercourse, which her subsequent licentious life tended to confirm.

**came to salute Festus** — to pay his respects to him on his accession to the procuratorship.

**14, 15. when there many** — “several”

**days, Festus declared Paul’s cause** — taking advantage of the presence of one who might be presumed to know such matters .better than himself; though the lapse of “several days” ere the subject was touched on shows that it gave Festus little trouble.

**16-21. to deliver any man to die** — On the word “deliver up,” see on ~~40511~~ Acts 25:11.

**18. as I supposed** — “suspected” — crimes punishable by civil law.

**19. questions ... of their own superstition** — rather, “religion” (see on ~~41722~~ Acts 17:22). It cannot be supposed that Festus would use the word in any discourteous sense in addressing his Jewish guest.

**one Jesus** — “Thus speaks this miserable Festus of Him to whom every knee shall bow” [BENGEL].

**whom Paul affirmed** — “kept affirming.”

**to be alive** — showing that the resurrection of the Crucified One had been the burden, as usual, of Paul’s pleading. The insignificance of the whole affair in the eyes of Festus is manifest.

**20. because I doubted of such manner of questions** — The “I” is emphatic. “I,” as a Roman judge, being at a loss how to deal with such matters.

**21. the hearing of Augustus** — the imperial title first conferred by the Roman Senate on Octavius.

**22-27. I would also hear** — “should like to hear.”

**the man myself** — No doubt Paul was fight when he said, “The king knoweth of these things ... for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner” (<sup>493b</sup>Acts 26:26). Hence his curiosity to see and hear the man who had raised such commotion and was remodelling to such an extent the whole Jewish life.

**23. when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp** — in the same city in which their father, on account of his pride, had perished, eaten up by worms [WETST].

**with the chief captains** — (See on <sup>4213</sup>Acts 21:32). JOSEPHUS [*Wars of the Jews*, 3.4.2] says that five cohorts, whose full complement was one thousand men, were stationed at Caesarea.

**principal men of the city** — both Jews and Romans. “This was the most dignified and influential audience Paul had yet addressed, and the prediction (<sup>4495</sup>Acts 9:15) was fulfilled, though afterwards still more remarkably at Rome (<sup>4472b</sup>Acts 27:24 <sup>5046</sup>2 Timothy 4:16,17) [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**26. I have no certain** — “definite”

**thing to write my lord** — Nero. “The writer’s accuracy should be remarked here. It would have been ... a mistake to apply this term (“lord”) to the emperor a few years earlier. Neither Augustus nor Tiberius would let himself be so called, as implying the relation of master and slave. But it had now come (rather, “was coming”) into use as one of the imperial titles” [HACKET].



# CHAPTER 26

## ⌄121⌄ ACTS 26:1-32.

### PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIMSELF BEFORE KING AGRIPPA, WHO PRONOUNCES HIM INNOCENT, BUT CONCLUDES THAT THE APPEAL TO CAESAR MUST BE CARRIED OUT.

This speech, though in substance the same as that from the fortress stairs of Jerusalem (⌄121⌄ Acts 22:1-29), differs from it in being less directed to meet the charge of apostasy from the Jewish faith, and giving more enlarged views of his remarkable change and apostolic commission, and the divine support under which he was enabled to brave the hostility of his countrymen.

**1-3. Agrippa said** — Being a king he appears to have presided.

**Paul stretched forth the hand** — chained to a soldier (⌄122⌄ Acts 26:29, and see on ⌄122⌄ Acts 12:6).

3. *I know* thee to be expert, etc. — His father was zealous for the law, and he himself had the office of president of the temple and its treasures, and the appointment of the high priest [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 20.1.3].

**hear me patiently** — The idea of “indulgently” is also conveyed.

**4, 5. from my youth, which was at the first ... at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning** — plainly showing that he received his education, even from early youth, at Jerusalem. See on ⌄123⌄ Acts 22:3.

**5. if they would** — “were willing to”

**testify** — but this, of course, they were not, it being a strong point in his favor.

**after the most straitest** — “the strictest.”

**sect** — as the Pharisees confessedly were. This was said to meet the charge, that as a Hellenistic Jew he had contracted among the heathen lax ideas of Jewish peculiarities.

**6, 7. I ... am judged for the hope of the promise made ... to our fathers** — “for believing that the promise of Messiah, the Hope of the Church (<sup><413></sup>Acts 13:32 28:20) has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth risen from the dead.”

**7. Unto which promise** — the fulfillment of it.

**our twelve tribes** — (<sup><500></sup>James 1:1; and see on <sup><413></sup>Luke 2:36).

**instantly** — “intently”; see on <sup><413></sup>Acts 12:5.

serving *God* — in the sense of religious worship; on “ministered,” see on <sup><413></sup>Acts 13:2.

**day and night, hope to come** — The apostle rises into language as catholic as the thought — representing his despised nation, all scattered thought it now was, as twelve great branches of one ancient stem, in all places of their dispersion offering to the God of their fathers one unbroken worship, reposing on one great “promise” made of old unto their fathers, and sustained by one “hope” of “coming” to its fulfillment; the single point of difference between him and his countrymen, and the one cause of all their virulence against him, being, that his hope had found rest in One already come, while theirs still pointed to the future.

**For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews** — “I am accused of Jews, O king” (so the true reading appears to be); of all quarters the most surprising for such a charge to come from. The charge of *sedition* is not so much as alluded to throughout this speech. It was indeed a mere pretext.

**8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible ... that God should raise the dead?** — rather, “Why is it judged a thing incredible if God raises the dead?” the case being viewed as an accomplished *fact*. No one dared to call in question the overwhelming evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, which proclaimed Him to be the Christ, the Son of God; the only way of getting rid of it, therefore, was to pronounce it incredible. But *why*, asks the apostle, *is it so judged?* Leaving this pregnant question to find its answer in the breasts of his audience, he now passes to his personal history.

**9-15.** (See on <sup><413></sup>Acts 9:1, etc. and compare <sup><413></sup>Acts 22:4, etc.)

**16-18. But rise**, etc. — Here the apostle appears to condense into one statement various sayings of his Lord to him in visions at different times, in order to present at one view the grandeur of the commission with which his Master had clothed him [ALFORD].

**a minister ... both of these things which thou hast seen** — putting him on a footing with those “eye-witnesses and ministers of the word” mentioned in <sup><400></sup>Luke 1:2.

**and of those in which I will appear to thee** — referring to visions he was thereafter to be favored with; such as <sup><400></sup>Acts 18:9,10 22:17-21 23:11 <sup><400></sup>2 Corinthians 12:1-10, etc. (<sup><400></sup>Galatians 1:12).

**17. Delivering thee from the people** — the Jews.

and *from* the Gentiles — He was all along the object of Jewish malignity, and was at that moment in the hands of the Gentiles; yet he calmly reposes on his Master’s assurances of deliverance from both, at the same time taking all precautions for safety and vindicating all his legal rights.

**unto whom now I send thee** — The emphatic “I” here denotes the authority of the Sender [BENGEL].

**18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light** — rather, “that they may turn” (as in <sup><400></sup>Acts 26:20), that is, as the effect of their eyes being opened. The whole passage leans upon <sup><400></sup>Isaiah 61:1 (<sup><400></sup>Luke 4:18).

**and from the power of Satan** — Note the connection here between being “turned from darkness” and “from the power of Satan,” whose whole power over men lies in keeping them *in the dark*: hence he is called “the ruler of the darkness of this world.” See on <sup><400></sup>2 Corinthians 4:4.

**that they may receive forgiveness ... and inheritance among the sanctified by faith that is in me** — *Note: Faith* is here made the instrument of salvation at once in its first stage, *forgiveness*, and its last, *admission to the home of the sanctified*; and the faith which introduces the soul to all this is emphatically declared by the glorified Redeemer to *rest upon Himself* — “FAITH, even THAT WHICH IS IN ME.” And who that believes this can refrain from casting his crown before Him or resist offering Him supreme worship?

**19-21. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision** — This musical and elevated strain, which carries the reader along with it, and doubtless did the hearers, bespeaks the lofty region of thought and feeling to which the apostle had risen while rehearsing his Master’s communications to him from heaven.

**20. showed ... to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem** — omitting Arabia; because, beginning with the Jews, his object was to mention first the places where his former hatred of the name of Christ was best known:

the mention of the Gentiles, so unpalatable to his audience, is reserved to the last.

**repent and return to God, and do works meet for repentance** — a brief description of conversion and its proper fruits, suggested, probably, by the Baptist's teaching (~~407~~ Luke 3:7,8).

**22, 23. having obtained help** — "succor."

**from God** — "that [which cometh] from God."

**I continue** — "stand," "hold my ground."

**unto this day, witnessing**, etc. — that is, This life of mine, so marvellously preserved, in spite of all the plots against it, is upheld for the Gospel's sake; therefore I "witnessed," etc.

**23. That Christ should suffer**, etc. — The construction of this sentence implies that in regard to the question "whether the Messiah is a suffering one, and whether, rising first from the dead, he should show light to the (Jewish) people and to the Gentiles," he had only said what the prophets and Moses said should come.

**24. Festus said with a loud voice** — surprised and bewildered.

**Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning doth make thee mad** — "is turning thy head." The union of flowing *Greek*, deep acquaintance with the sacred writings of his nation, reference to a resurrection and other doctrines to a Roman utterly unintelligible, and, above all, lofty religious earnestness, so strange to the cultivated, cold-hearted skeptics of that day — may account for this sudden exclamation.

**25, 26. I am not mad, most noble Festus, but**, etc. — Can anything surpass this reply, for readiness, self-possession, calm dignity? Every word of it refuted the rude charge, though Festus, probably, did not intend to hurt the prisoner's feelings.

**26. the king knoweth**, etc. — (See on ~~408~~ Acts 26:1-3).

**27-29. believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest** — The courage and confidence here shown proceeded from a vivid persuasion of Agrippa's knowledge of the *facts* and faith in the *predictions* which they verified; and the king's reply is the highest testimony to the correctness of these presumptions and the immense power of such bold yet courteous appeals to conscience.

**28. Almost** — or, "in a little time."

**thou persuadest me to be a Christian** — Most modern interpreters think the ordinary translation inadmissible, and take the meaning to be, “Thou thinkest to make me with little persuasion (or small trouble) a Christian” — but I am not to be so easily turned. But the apostle’s *reply* can scarcely suit any but the sense given in our authorized version, which is that adopted by CHRYSOSTOM and some of the best scholars since. The objection on which so much stress is laid, that the word “Christian” was at that time only a term of contempt, has no force except on the other side; for taking it in that view, the sense is, “Thou wilt soon have me one of that despised sect.”

**29. I would to God**, etc. — What unequalled magnanimity does this speech breathe! Only his Master ever towered above this.

**not only ... almost ... but altogether** — or, “whether soon or late,” or “with little or much difficulty.”

**except these bonds** — doubtless holding up his two chained hands (see on <sup>41216</sup>Acts 12:6): which in closing such a noble utterance must have had an electrical effect.

**30-32. when he had thus spoken, the king rose** — not over-easy, we may be sure.

**32. This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar** — It would seem from this that such appeals, once made, behooved to be carried out.

# CHAPTER 27

## ~~<4270>~~ ACTS 27:1-44.

### THE VOYAGE TO ITALY — THE SHIPWRECK AND SAFE LANDING AT MALTA.

**1. we should sail**, etc. — The “we” here reintroduces the historian as one of the company. Not that he had left the apostle from the time when he last included himself (~~<4218>~~ Acts 21:18), but the apostle was parted from him by his arrest and imprisonment, until now, when they met in the ship.

**delivered Paul and certain other prisoners** — State prisoners going to be tried at Rome; of which several instances are on record.

**Julius** — who treats the apostle throughout with such marked courtesy (~~<4273>~~ Acts 27:3,43 ~~<4286>~~ Acts 28:16), that it has been thought [BENGEL] he was present when Paul made his defense before Agrippa (see ~~<4273>~~ Acts 25:23), and was impressed with his lofty bearing.

**a centurion of Augustus’ band** — the Augustan cohort, an honorary title given to more than one legion of the Roman army, implying, perhaps, that they acted as a bodyguard to the emperor or procurator, as occasion required.

**2. a ship of** — belonging to.

**Adramyttium** — a port on the northeast coast of the aegæan Sea. Doubtless the centurion expected to find another ship, bound for Italy, at some of the ports of Asia Minor, without having to go with this ship all the way to Adramyttium; and in this he was not disappointed. See on ~~<4276>~~ Acts 27:6.

**meaning to sail by the coasts** — “places.”

**of Asia** — a coasting vessel, which was to touch at the ports of proconsular Asia.

*one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us — rather, “Aristarchus the Macedonian,” etc. The word “one” should not have been introduced here by our translators, as if this name had not occurred before; for we find him seized by the Ephesian mob as a “man of *Macedonia* and

Paul's companion in travel" (~~448B~~ Acts 19:29) and as a "*Thessalonian*" accompanying the apostle from Ephesus on his voyage back to Palestine (~~440B~~ Acts 20:4). Here both these places are mentioned in connection with his name. After this we find him at Rome with the apostle (~~504D~~ Colossians 4:10 ~~502B~~ Philemon 1:24).

**3. next day we touched at Sidon** — To reach this ancient and celebrated Mediterranean port, about seventy miles north from Caesarea, in one day, they must have had a fair wind.

**Julius courteously** — (See on ~~427B~~ Acts 27:1).

**gave him liberty to go to his friends** — no doubt disciples, gained, it would seem, by degrees, all along the Phoenician coast since the first preaching there (see on ~~441B~~ Acts 11:19 and ~~427B~~ Acts 21:4).

**to refresh himself** — which after his long confinement would not be unnecessary. Such small personal details are in this case extremely interesting.

**4. when we had launched** — "set sail."

**from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary** — The wind blowing from the westward, probably with a touch of the north, which was adverse, they sailed *under the lee* of Cyprus, keeping it on their *left*, and steering between it and the mainland of Phoenicia.

**5. when we had sailed over the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia** — coasts with which Paul had been long familiar, the one, perhaps, from boyhood, the other from the time of his first missionary tour.

**we came to Myra, a city of Lycia** — a port a little east of Patara (see on ~~427B~~ Acts 21:1).

**6. there ... found a ship of Alexandria, sailing into Italy, and he put us therein** — (See on ~~427B~~ Acts 27:2). As Egypt was the granary of Italy, and this vessel was laden with wheat (~~427B~~ Acts 27:35), we need not wonder it was large enough to carry two hundred seventy-six souls, passengers and crew together (~~427B~~ Acts 27:37). Besides, the Egyptian merchantmen, among the largest in the Mediterranean, were equal to the largest merchantmen in our day. It may seem strange that on their passage from Alexandria to Italy they should be found at a Lycian port. But even still it is not unusual to stand to the north towards Asia Minor, for the sake of the current.

**7. sailed slowly many days** — owing to contrary winds.

**and scarce** — “with difficulty.”

**were come over against Cnidus** — a town on the promontory of the peninsula of that name, having the island of Coos (see on ~~4200~~ Acts 21:1) to the west of it. But for the contrary wind they might have made the distance from Myra (one hundred thirty miles) in one day. They would naturally have put in at Cnidus, whose larger harbor was admirable, but the strong westerly current induced them to run south.

**under** — the lee of

**Crete** — (See on ~~5009~~ Titus 1:5).

**over against Salmone** — the cape at the eastern extremity of the island.

**8. And hardly passing it** — “with difficulty coasting along it,” from the same cause as before, the westerly current and head winds.

**came to ... the Fair Havens** — an anchorage near the center of the south coast, and a little east of Cape Matala, the southern most point of the island.

**nigh whereunto was the city Lasea** — identified by the REVEREND GEORGE BROWN [SMITH, *Voyages and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, Appendix 3, Second Edition, 1856]. (To this invaluable book commentators on this chapter, and these notes, are much indebted).

**9, 10. when much time was spent** — since leaving Caesarea. But for unforeseen delays they might have reached the Italian coast before the stormy season.

**and when sailing** — the navigation of the open sea.

**was now dangerous, because the fast was now ... past** — that of the day of atonement, answering to the end of *September* and beginning of *October*, about which time the navigation is pronounced unsafe by writers of authority. Since all hope of completing the voyage during that season was abandoned, the question next was, whether they should winter at Fair Havens, or move to Port Phenice, a harbor about forty miles to the westward. Paul assisted at the consultation and strongly urged them to winter where they were.

**10. Sirs, I perceive, that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage**, etc. — not by any divine communication, but simply in the exercise of a good judgment aided by some experience. The event justified his decision.



**11. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and owner ... more than ... Paul** — He would naturally think them best able to judge, and there was much to say for their opinion, as the bay at Fair Havens, being open to nearly one-half of the compass, could not be a good winter harbor.

**12. Phenice** — “Phenix,” now called *Lutro*.

**which lieth toward the southwest and northwest** — If this means that it was open to the west, it would certainly not be good anchorage! It is thought therefore to mean that a *wind from* that quarter would lead into it, or that it lay in an *easterly* direction from such a wind [SMITH]. <sup><40713></sup>Acts 27:13 seems to confirm this.

**13. when the south wind blew softly, supposing they had attained their purpose** — With such a wind they had every prospect of reaching their destination in a few hours.

**14, 15. a tempestuous** — “typhonic”

**wind** — that is, like a *typhon* or tornado, causing a whirling of the clouds, owing to the meeting of opposite currents of air.

**called Euroclydon** — The true reading appears to be *Euro-aquilo*, or east-northeast, which answers all the effects here ascribed to it.

**15. could not bear up into** — “face”

**the wind, we let her drift** — before the gale.

**16, 17. under** — the lee of.

**a certain** — “small”

**island ... Claudia** — southwest of Crete, now called *Gonzo*; about twenty-three miles to leeward.

**we had much work to come by** — that is, to hoist up and secure.

**the boat** — now become necessary. But why was this difficult? Independently of the gale, raging at the time, the boat had been towed between twenty and thirty miles after the gale sprang up, and could scarcely fail to be filled with water [SMITH].

**17. undergirding the ship** — that is, passing four or five turns of a cable-laid rope round the hull or frame of the ship, to enable her to resist the violence of the seas, an operation rarely resorted to in modern seamanship.

**fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands** — “be cast ashore” or “stranded upon the Syrtis,” the *Syrtis Major*, a gulf on the African coast, southwest of Crete, the dread of mariners, owing to its dangerous shoals.

**they strake** — “struck”

**sail** — This cannot be the meaning, for to strike sail would have driven them directly towards the Syrtis. The meaning must be, “lowered the gear” (appurtenances of every kind); here, perhaps, referring to the lowering of the heavy mainyard with the sail attached to it [SMITH].

**19, 20. cast out with our own hands** — passengers and crew together.

**the tackling of the ship** — whatever they could do without that carried weight. This further effort to lighten the ship seems to show that it was now in a *leaking* condition, as will presently appear more evident.

**20. neither sun nor stars appeared in many** — “several”

**days** — probably most of the fourteen days mentioned in ~~4073~~ Acts 27:27. This continued thickness of the atmosphere prevented their making the necessary observations of the heavenly bodies by day or by night; so that they could not tell where they were.

**all hope that we should be saved was taken away** — “Their exertions to subdue the leak had been unavailing; they could not tell which way to make for the nearest land, in order to run their ship ashore, the only resource for a sinking ship: but unless they did make the land, they must founder at sea. Their apprehensions, therefore, were not so much caused by the fury of the tempest, as by the state of the ship” [SMITH]. From the inferiority of ancient to modern naval architecture, leaks were sprung much more easily, and the means of repairing them were fewer than now. Hence the far greater number of shipwrecks from this cause.

**21-26. But after long abstinence** — (See on ~~4073~~ Acts 27:33). “The hardships which the crew endured during a gale of such continuance, and their exhaustion from laboring at the pumps and hunger, may be imagined, but are not described” [SMITH].

**Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened to me**, etc. — not meaning to reflect on them for the past, but to claim their confidence for what he was now to say:

**23. there stood by me this night the angel of God** — as in ~~4069~~ Acts 16:9 23:11.

**whose I am** — (~~4069~~ 1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

**and whom I serve** — in the sense of *worship* or *religious consecration* (see on ~~CHIEF~~ Acts 13:2).

**24. saying, Fear not, Paul: thou must be brought before Caesar and, lo, God hath given thee all ... that sail with thee** — While the crew were toiling at the pumps, Paul was wrestling in prayer, not for himself only and the cause in which he was going a prisoner to Rome, but with true magnanimity of soul for all his shipmates; and God heard him, “giving him” (remarkable expression!) all that sailed with him. “When the cheerless day came he gathered the sailors (and passengers) around him on the deck of the laboring vessel, and raising his voice above the storm” [HOWSON], reported the divine communication he had received; adding with a noble simplicity, “*for I believe God* that it shall be even as it was told me,” and encouraging all on board to “be of good cheer” in the same confidence. What a contrast to this is the speech of Caesar in similar circumstances to his pilot, bidding him keep up his spirit because he carried Caesar and Caesar’s fortune! [PLUTARCH]. The Roman general knew no better name for the Divine Providence, by which he had been so often preserved, than *Caesar’s fortune* [HUMPHRY]. From the explicit particulars — that the ship would be lost, but not one that sailed in it, and that they “must be cast on a certain island” — one would conclude a visional representation of a total wreck, a mass of human beings struggling with the angry elements, and one and all of those whose figures and countenances had daily met his eye on deck, standing on some unknown island shore. From what follows, it would seem that Paul from this time was regarded with a deference akin to awe.

**27-29. when the fourteenth night was come** — from the time they left Fair Havens.

**as we were driven** — drifting

**up and down in Adria** — the *Adriatic*, that sea which lies between Greece and Italy.

**about midnight the shipmen deemed** — no doubt from the peculiar sound of the breakers.

**that they drew near some country** — “that some land was approaching them.” This nautical language gives a graphic character to the narrative.

**29. they cast four anchors out of the stern** — The ordinary way was to cast the anchor, as now, from the *bow*: but ancient ships, built with both ends alike, were fitted with hawseholes in the stern, so that in case of need they could anchor either way. And when the fear was, as here, that they

might fall on the rocks *to leeward*, and the intention was to run the ship ashore as soon as daylight enabled them to fix upon a safe spot, the very best thing they could do was to anchor by the stern [SMITH]. In stormy weather two anchors were used, and we have instances of four being employed, as here.

**and wished** — “anxiously” or “devoutly wished.”

**for day** — the remark this of one present, and with all his shipmates alive to the horrors of their condition. “The ship might go down at her anchors, or the coast to leeward might be iron-bound, affording no beach on which they could land with safety. Hence their anxious longing for day, and the ungenerous but natural attempt, not peculiar to ancient times, of the seamen to save their own lives by taking to the boat” [SMITH].

**30. as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship** — under cover of night.

**when they had let down the boat ... as though they would ... cast anchors out of the foreship** — “bow” — rather, “carry out” anchors, to hold the ship fore as well as aft. “This could have been of no advantage in the circumstances, and as the pretext could not deceive a seaman, we must infer that the officers of the ship were parties to the unworthy attempt, which was perhaps detected by the nautical skill of St. Luke, and communicated by him to St. Paul” [SMITH].

**31. Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers** — the only parties now to be trusted, and whose own safety was now at stake.

**except ye abide in the ship ye cannot be saved** — The soldiers and passengers could not be expected to possess the necessary seamanship in so very critical a case. The flight of the crew, therefore, might well be regarded as certain destruction to all who remained. *In full assurance of ultimate safety, in virtue of a DIVINE pledge, to all in the ship, Paul speaks and acts throughout this whole scene in the exercise of a sound judgment as to the indispensable HUMAN conditions of safety*; and as there is no trace of any feeling of inconsistency between these two things in his mind, so even the centurion, under whose orders the soldiers acted on Paul’s views, seems never to have felt perplexed by the twofold aspect, divine and human, in which the same thing presented itself to the mind of Paul. *Divine agency and human instrumentality are in all the events of life quite as much as here*. The only difference is that the one is for the most part shrouded from view, while the other is ever naked and open to the senses.

**32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat** — already lowered.

**and let her fall off** — let the boat drift away.

**33-37. while day was coming on** — “until it should be day”; that is, in the interval between the cutting off of the boat and the approach of day, which all were “anxiously looking for” (~~4073~~ Acts 27:29).

**Paul** — now looked up to by all the passengers as the man to direct them.

**besought them all to take meat** — “partake of a meal.”

**saying, This is the fourteenth day ye have tarried** — “waited for a breathing time.”

**having eaten nothing** — that is, taken no regular meal. The impossibility of cooking, the occupation of all hands to keep down leakage, etc., sufficiently explain this, which is indeed a common occurrence in such cases.

**34. I pray you to take some meat, for this is for your health, for there shall not a hair fall from ... any of you** — On this beautiful union of confidence in the divine pledge and care for the whole ship’s health and safety see on ~~4073~~ Acts 27:31.

**35. when he had thus spoken he took bread** — assuming the lead.

**and gave thanks to God in presence of them all** — an impressive act in such circumstances, and fitted to plant a testimony for the God he served in the breasts of all.

**when he had broken it, he began to eat** — not understood by the Christians in the ship as a love-feast, or celebration of the Lord’s Supper, as some think, but a meal to recruit exhausted nature, which Paul shows them by his own example how a Christian partakes of.

**36. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat** — “took food”; the first full meal since the commencement of the gale. Such courage in desperate circumstances as Paul here showed is wonderfully infectious.

**38-40. when they had eaten enough**, etc. — With fresh strength after the meal, they make a third and last effort to lighten the ship, not only by pumping, as before, but by throwing the whole cargo of wheat into the sea (see on ~~4076~~ Acts 27:6).

**39. when it was day they knew not the land** — This has been thought surprising in sailors accustomed to that sea. But the scene of the wreck is remote from the great harbor, and possesses no marked features by which

it could be recognized, even by a native if he came unexpectedly upon it [SMITH], not to speak of the rain pouring in torrents (<sup><408></sup>Acts 28:2), which would throw a haze over the coast even after day broke. Immediately on landing they knew where they were (<sup><408></sup>Acts 28:1).

**discovered a creek with a shore** — Every creek of course, must have a shore; but the meaning is, a *practicable* shore, in a nautical sense, that is, one with a smooth beach, in contradistinction to a rocky coast (as <sup><404></sup>Acts 27:41 shows).

**into which they were minded, if ... possible, to thrust the ship** — This was their one chance of safety.

**40. taken up the anchors, they committed themselves to the sea** — The *Margin* is here evidently right, “cut the anchors (away), they left them in the sea.”

**loosed the rudder bands** — Ancient ships were steered by two large paddles, one on each quarter. When anchored by the stern in a gale, it would be necessary to lift them out of the water and secure them by lashings or rudder bands, and to loose these when the ship was again got under way [SMITH].

**hoised up the mainsail** — her, “the foresail,” the best possible sail that be set in the circumstances. How necessary must the crew have been to execute all these movements, and how obvious the foresight which made their stay indispensable to the safety of all on board (see on <sup><407></sup>Acts 27:31)!

**41. falling into a place where two seas met** — SMITH thinks this refers to the channel, not more than one hundred yards broad, which separates the small island of Salmone from Malta, forming a communication between the sea inside the bay and that outside.

**the fore part stuck fast, and remained immovable** — “The rocks of Malta disintegrate into extremely minute particles of sand and clay, which, when acted upon by the currents or surface agitation, form a deposit of tenacious clay; but, in still waters, where these causes do not act, mud is formed; but it is only in creeks, where there are no currents, and at such a depth as to be undisturbed by the waves, that the mud occurs. A ship, therefore, impelled by the force of a gale, into a creek, with such a bottom, would strike a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself, and be held fast, while the stern was exposed to the force of the waves” [SMITH].

**hinder part was broken** — The *continued action* denoted by the tense here is to be noted — “was fast breaking,” going to pieces.

**42-44. the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any ... should escape** — Roman cruelty, which made the keepers answerable for their prisoners with their own lives, is here reflected in this cruel proposal.

**43. the centurion**, etc. — Great must have been the influence of Paul over the centurion's mind to produce such an effect. All followed the swimmers in committing themselves to the deep, and according to the divine pledge and Paul's confident assurance given them, every soul got safe to land — yet without miracle. (While the graphic minuteness of this narrative of the shipwreck puts it beyond doubt that the narrator was himself on board, the great number of *nautical phrases*, which all critics have noted, along with the *unprofessional* air which the whole narrative wears, agrees singularly with all we know and have reason to believe of “the beloved physician”; see on ~~4460~~ Acts 16:40).

# CHAPTER 28

## ~~406~~ ACTS 28:1-31.

### THE WINTERING AT MALTA, AND NOTABLE OCCURRENCES THERE — PROSECUTION OF THE VOYAGE TO ITALY AS FAR AS PUTEOLI, AND LAND JOURNEY THENCE TO ROME — SUMMARY OF THE APOSTLE’S LABORS THERE FOR THE TWO FOLLOWING YEARS.

**1. knew the island was called Melita** — (See on ~~407a~~ Acts 27:39). The opinion that this island was not Malta to the south of Sicily, but Meleda in the Gulf of Venice — which till lately had respectable support among Competent judges — is now all but exploded; examination of all the places on the spot, and of all writings and principles bearing on the question, by gentlemen of the highest qualification, particularly SMITH (see on ~~407b~~ Acts 27:41), having set the question, it may now be affirmed, at rest.

**2. the barbarous people** — so called merely as speaking neither the *Greek* nor the *Latin* language. They were originally Phoenician colonists.

**showed us no little** — “no ordinary”

**kindness, for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain** — “the rain that was on us” — not now first falling, but then falling heavily.

**and because of the cold** — welcomed us all, drenched and shivering, to these most seasonable marks of friendship. In this these “barbarians” contrast favorably with many since bearing the Christian name. The lifelike style of the narrative here and in the following verses gives it a great charm.

**3. when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks** — “a quantity of dry sticks.” The vigorous activity of Paul’s character is observable in this comparatively trifling action [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat** — Having laid itself up among the sticks on the approach of the cold winter season, it had suddenly recovered from its torpor by the heat.

**and fastened** — its fangs.



**on his hand** — Vipers dart at their enemies sometimes several feet at a bound. They have now disappeared from Malta, owing to the change which cultivation has produced.

**4-6. No doubt this man is a murderer** — His chains, which they would see, might strengthen the impression.

**whom ... vengeance suffereth not to live** — They believed in a *Supreme, Resistless, Avenging Eye and Hand*, however vague their notions of *where* it resided.

**5. shook off the beast and felt no harm** — See <sup><4168></sup>Mark 16:18.

**6. they looked** — “continued looking.”

**when he should have swollen or fallen down dead** — familiar with the effects of such bites.

**and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said ... he was a god** — from “a murderer” to “a god,” as the Lycaonian greeting of Paul and Silas from “sacrificing to them” to “stoning them” (<sup><4443></sup>Acts 14:13,19). What has not the Gospel done for the uncultivated portion of the human family, while its effects on the educated and refined, though very different, are not less marvellous! Verily it is God’s chosen restorative for the human spirit, in all the multitudinous forms and gradations of its lapsed state.

**7, 8. possessions of the chief man** — “the first man.”

**of the island** — He would hardly be so styled in the lifetime of his father, if his distinction was that of the *family*. But it is now ascertained that this was the proper *official* title of the Maltese representative of the Roman praetor to Sicily, to whose province Malta belonged; two inscriptions having been discovered in the island, one in *Greek*, the other in *Latin*, containing the same words which Luke here employs.

**who received us** — of Paul’s company, but doubtless including the “courteous” Julius.

**and lodged us three days courteously** — till proper winter lodgings could be obtained for them.

**8. the father of Publius lay sick of a fever** — “fevers.” The word was often thus used in the plural number, probably to express *recurring attacks*.

**and of a bloody flux** — “of dysentery.” (The *medical* accuracy of our historian’s style has been observed here.)

**to whom Paul entered in, and prayed** — thereby precluding the supposition that any charm resided in himself.

**and laid his hands on him, and healed him** — Thus, as our Lord rewarded Peter for the use of his boat (<sup>4008</sup>Luke 5:3,4, etc.), so Paul richly repays Publius for his hospitality. Observe the fulfillment here of two things predicted in <sup>4168</sup>Mark 16:18 — the “taking up serpents,” and “recovering of the sick by laying hands on them.”

**9. this ... done, others ... came and were healed** — “kept coming to [us] and getting healed,” that is, during our stay, not all at once [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**10. who also honored us ... and when we departed they laded us**, etc. — This was not taking hire for the miracles wrought among them (<sup>4008</sup>Matthew 10:8), but such grateful expressions of feeling, particularly in providing what would minister to their comfort during the voyage, as showed the value they set upon the presence and labors of the apostle among them, and such as it would have hurt their feelings to refuse. Whether any permanent effects of this three months’ stay of the greatest of the apostles were left at Malta, we cannot certainly say. But though little dependence is to be placed upon the tradition that Publius became bishop of Malta and afterwards of Athens, we may well believe the accredited tradition that the beginnings of the Christian Church at Malta sprang out of this memorable visit.

**11. we departed in a ship of Alexandria** — (See on <sup>4276</sup>Acts 27:6).

**which had wintered in the isle** — no doubt driven in by the same storm which had wrecked on its shores the apostle’s vessel — an incidental mark of consistency in the narrative.

**whose sign** — or “figurehead”; the figure, carved or painted on the bow, which gave name to the vessel. Such figureheads were anciently as common as now.

**was Castor and Pollux** — the tutelar gods of mariners, to whom all their good fortune was ascribed. St. Anthony is substituted for them in the modern superstitions of Mediterranean (Romanist) sailors. They carry his image in their boats and ships. It is highly improbable that two ships of Alexandria should have been casually found, of which the owners were able and willing to receive on board such a number of passengers (<sup>4276</sup>Acts 27:6). We may then reasonably conceive that it was compulsory on the owners to convey soldiers and state travelers [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**12, 13. landing at Syracuse** — the ancient and celebrated capital of Sicily, on its eastern coast, about eighty miles, or a day's sail, north from Malta.

we tarried *there* three days — probably from the state of the wind. Doubtless Paul would wish to go ashore, to find out and break ground among the Jews and proselytes whom such a mercantile center would attract to it; and if this was allowed at the outset of the voyage (<sup>407B</sup>Acts 27:3), much more readily would it be now when he had gained the reverence and confidence of all classes with whom he came in contact. At any rate we cannot wonder that he should be regarded by the Sicilians as the founder of the Church of that island.

**13. from thence we fetched a compass** — that is, proceeded circuitously, or *tacked*, working to windward probably, and availing themselves of the sinuosities of the coast, the wind not being favorable [SMITH]. What follows confirms this.

**and came to Rhegium** — now *Reggio*, a seaport on the southwest point of the Italian coast, opposite the northeast point of Sicily, and at the entrance of the narrow straits of Messina.

**after one day the south wind blew** — a south wind having sprung up; being now favored with a fair wind, for want of which they had been obliged first to stay three days at Syracuse, and then to tack and put in for a day at Rhegium.

**the next day to Puteoli** — now *Pozzuoli*, situated on the northern part of the magnificent bay of Naples about one hundred eighty miles north of Rhegium, a distance which they might make, running before their “south wind,” in about twenty-six hours. The Alexandrian corn ships enjoyed a privilege peculiar to themselves, of not being obliged to strike their topsail on landing. By this they were easily recognized as they hove in sight by the crowds that we find gathered on the shore on such occasions [HOWSON].

**14, 15. Where we found brethren** — not “*the* brethren” (see on <sup>420B</sup>Acts 21:4), from which one would conclude they did not expect to find such [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

**and were desired** — “requested.”

**to tarry with them seven days** — If this request came from Julius, it may have proceeded partly from a wish to receive instructions from Rome and make arrangements for his journey thither, partly from a wish to gratify Paul, as he seems studiously and increasingly to have done to the last. One can hardly doubt that he was influenced by both considerations. However this may be, the apostle had thus an opportunity of spending a Sabbath with

the Christians of the place, all the more refreshing from his long privation in this respect, and as a seasoning for the unknown future that lay before him at the metropolis.

**so we went toward Rome.**

**15. And from thence, when the brethren** — of Rome

**heard of us** — by letter from Puteoli, and probably by the same conveyance which took Julius' announcement of his arrival.

**they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum** — a town forty-one miles from Rome.

**and the Three Taverns** — thirty miles from Rome. Thus they came to greet the apostle in two parties, one stopping short at the nearer, the other going on to the more distant place.

**whom when Paul saw, he thanked God** — for such a welcome. How sensitive he was to such Christian affection all his Epistles show (~~4009~~Romans 1:9, etc.).

**and took courage** — his long-cherished purpose to “see Rome” (~~4421~~Acts 19:21), there to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the divine pledge that in this he should be gratified (~~4421~~Acts 23:11), being now about to be auspiciously realized.

**16. when we came to Rome** — the renowned capital of the ancient world, situated on the Tiber.

**the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard** — the *Praetorian Prefect*, to whose custody, as commander of the Praetorian guard, the highest military authority in the city, were committed all who were to come before the emperor for trial. Ordinarily there were two such prefects; but from A.D. 51 to 62, one distinguished general — *Burrus Aframus*, who had been Nero's tutor — held that office; and as our historian speaks of “*the captain*,” as if there were but one, it is thought that this fixes the apostle's arrival at Rome to be not later than the year 62 [WIES]. But even though there had been two when Paul arrived, he would be committed only to one of them, who would be “*the captain*” who got charge of him. (At most, therefore, this can furnish no more than confirmation to the chronological evidence otherwise obtained).

**but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a** — “the”

**soldier that kept him** — “guarded” him. (See on ~~44126~~Acts 12:6). This privilege was allowed in the case of the better class of prisoners, not

accused of any flagrant offense, on finding security — which in Paul's case would not be difficult among the Christians. The extension of this privilege to the apostle may have been due to the terms in which Festus wrote about him; but far more probably it was owing to the high terms in which Julius spoke of him, and his express intercession in his behalf. It was overruled, however, for giving the fullest scope to the labors of the apostle compatible with confinement at all. As the soldiers who kept him were relieved periodically, he would thus make the personal acquaintance of a great number of the Praetorian guard; and if he had to appear before the Prefect from time to time, the truth might thus penetrate to those who surrounded the emperor, as we learn, from <sup>3112</sup>Philippians 1:12,13, that it did.

**17-20. Paul called the chief of the Jews together** — Though banished from the capital by Claudius, the Jews enjoyed the full benefit of the toleration which distinguished the first period of Nero's reign, and were at this time in considerable numbers, wealth, and influence settled at Rome. We have seen that long before this a flourishing Christian Church existed at Rome, to which Paul wrote his Epistle (see on <sup>4018</sup>Acts 20:3), and the first members of which were probably Jewish converts and proselytes. (See Introduction to Romans.)

**yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans** — the Roman authorities, Felix and Festus.

**19. I was constrained to appeal ... not that I had ought to accuse my nation of** — "I am here not as their accuser, but as my own defender, and this not of choice but necessity." His object in alluding thus gently to the treatment he had received from the Jews was plainly to avoid whatever might irritate his visitors at the first; especially as he was not aware whether any or what information against him had reached their community.

**20. For this cause ... have I called for you ... because ... for the hope of Israel** — (See on <sup>4018</sup>Acts 26:6,7).

**I am bound with this chain** — "This cause is not so much mine as yours; it is the nation's cause; all that is dear to the heart and hope of Israel is bound up with this case of mine." From the touching allusions which the apostle makes to his chains, before Agrippa first, and here before the leading members of the Jewish community at Rome, at his first interview with them, one would gather that his great soul felt keenly his being in such a condition; and it is to this keenness of feeling, under the control of Christian principle, that we owe the noble use which he made of it in these two cases.

**21, 22. We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee,** etc. — We need not suppose (with THOLUCK and others) that there was any dishonest concealment here. The distinction made between himself, against whom they heard nothing, and his “sect,” as “everywhere spoken against,” is a presumption in favor of their sincerity; and there is ground to think that as the case took an unexpected turn by Paul’s appealing to Caesar, so no information on the subject would travel from Jerusalem to Rome in advance of the apostle himself.

**22. we desire** — “deem it proper”

**to hear of thee what thou thinkest** — what are thy sentiments, views, etc. The apparent freedom from prejudice here expressed may have arisen from a prudent desire to avoid endangering a repetition of those dissensions about Christianity to which, probably, SÜETONIUS alludes, and which had led to the expulsion of the Jews under Claudius [HUMPHRY]. See on <sup>483B</sup>Acts 18:2.

**23, 24. there came many** — “considerable numbers”

into *his* lodging — The word denotes one’s place of stay as a *guest* (<sup>5000</sup>Philemon 1:1:22), not “his own hired house,” mentioned in <sup>483B</sup>Acts 28:30. Some Christian friends — possibly Aquila and Priscilla, who had returned to Rome (<sup>5108</sup>Romans 16:3), would be glad to receive him, though he would soon find himself more at liberty in a house of his own.

**to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God** — opening up the great spiritual principles of that kingdom in opposition to the contracted and secular views of it entertained by the Jews.

**persuading them concerning Jesus** — as the ordained and predicted Head of that kingdom.

**out of the law ... and the prophets** — drawing his materials and arguments from a source mutually acknowledged.

**from morning till evening** — “Who would not wish to have been present?” exclaims BENGEL; but virtually we *are* present while *listening* to those Epistles which he *dictated* from his prison at Rome, and to his other epistolary expositions of Christian truth against the Jews.

**24. and some believed ... some not** — What simplicity and candor are in this record of a result repeated from age to age where the Gospel is presented to a promiscuous assemblage of sincere and earnest inquirers after truth, frivolous worldlings, and prejudiced bigots!

**25-29. when they** — the Jews.

**agreed not among themselves** — the discussion having passed into one between the two parties into which the visitors were now divided, respecting the arguments and conclusions of the apostle.

**they departed** — the material of discussion being felt by both parties to be exhausted.

**after Paul had spoken one word** — one solemn parting testimony, from those Scriptures regarded by both alike as “the Holy Ghost speaking” to Israel.

**26. Hearing, ye shall hear**, etc. — (See on <sup><4133></sup>Matthew 13:13-15 and <sup><4128></sup>John 12:38-40). With what pain would this stern saying be wrung from him whose “heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel was that they might be saved,” and who “had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart” on their account (<sup><4101></sup>Romans 10:1 9:2)!

**28. the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear** — (See on <sup><4134></sup>Acts 13:44-48). “This departure to the Gentiles” he had intimated to the perverse Jews at *Antioch* (<sup><4136></sup>Acts 13:46), and at *Corinth* (<sup><4106></sup>Acts 18:6); now at *Rome*: thus in *Asia*, *Greece*, and *Italy*” [BENGEL].

**29. the Jews departed, and had great** — “much”

**reasoning among themselves** — “This verse is wanting in many manuscripts [and omitted by several recent editors], but certainly without reason. Probably the words were regarded as superfluous, as they seem to tell us what we were told before, that Paul “departed” (see <sup><4025></sup>Acts 28:25). But in <sup><4025></sup>Acts 28:25 it is the breaking off of the discourse that is meant, here the final departure from the house” [OLSHAUSEN].

**30. in his own hired house** — (See on <sup><4023></sup>Acts 28:23), yet still in custody, for he only “received all that *came to him*”; and it is not said that he went to the synagogue or anywhere else.

**31. with all confidence, no man forbidding him** — enjoying, in the uninterrupted exercise of his ministry, all the liberty of a *guarded* man.

Thus closes this most precious monument of the beginnings of the Christian Church in its march from east to west, among the Jews first, whose center was Jerusalem; next among the Gentiles, with Antioch for its headquarters; finally, its banner is seen waving over imperial Rome, foretokening its universal triumphs. That distinguished apostle whose conversion, labors, and sufferings for “the faith which once he destroyed”



occupy more than half of this History, it leaves a prisoner, unheard, so far as appears, for two years. His accusers, whose presence was indispensable, would have to await the return of spring before starting for the capital, and might not reach it for many months; nor, even when there, would they be so sanguine of success — after Felix, Festus, and Agrippa had all pronounced him innocent — as to be impatient of delay. And if witnesses were required to prove the charge advanced by Tertullus, that he was “a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the [Roman] world” (<sup>4015</sup>Acts 24:5), they must have seen that unless considerable time was allowed them the case would certainly break down. If to this be added the capricious delays which the emperor himself might interpose, and the practice of Nero to hear but one charge at a time, it will not seem strange that the historian should have no proceedings in the case to record for two years. Begun, probably, before the apostle’s arrival, its progress at Rome under his own eye would furnish exalted employment, and beguile many a tedious hour of his two years’ imprisonment. Had the case come on for hearing during this period, much more if it had been disposed of, it is hardly conceivable that the History should have closed as it does. But if, at the end of this period, the Narrative only wanted the decision of the case, while hope deferred was making the heart sick (<sup>4132</sup>Proverbs 13:12), and if, under the guidance of that Spirit whose seal was on it all, it seemed of more consequence to put the Church at once in possession of this History than to keep it back indefinitely for the sake of what might come to be otherwise known, we cannot wonder that it should be wound up as it is in its two concluding verses. All that we know of the apostle’s proceedings and history beyond this must be gathered from the *Epistles of the Imprisonment* — Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon — written during this period, and the *Pastoral Epistles* — to Timothy and Titus, which, in our judgment, are of subsequent date. From the former class of Epistles we learn the following particulars:

(1) That the trying restraint laid upon the apostle’s labors by his imprisonment had only turned his influence into a new channel; the Gospel having in consequence penetrated even into the palace, and pervaded the city, while the preachers of Christ were emboldened; and though the Judaizing portion of them, observing his success among the Gentiles, had been led to inculcate with fresh zeal their own narrower Gospel, even this had done much good by extending the truth common to both (See on <sup>5012</sup>Philippians 1:12-18; <sup>5022</sup>Philippians 4:22);

(2) That as in addition to all his other labors, “the care of all the churches pressed upon him from day to-day” (<sup>47128</sup>2 Corinthians 11:28), so with these churches he kept up an active correspondence by means



of letters and messages, and on such errands he lacked not faithful and beloved brethren enough ready to be employed — *Luke; Timotheus; Tychicus; (John) Mark; Demas; Aristarchus; Epaphras; Onesimus; Jesus*, called Justus; and, for a short time, *Epaphroditus* (See on ~~5019~~ Colossians 4:7; ~~5019~~ Colossians 4:9-12; ~~5014~~ Colossians 4:14; ~~5023~~ Philemon 1:23,24; see Introduction to Ephesians, Introduction to Philippians, and Introduction to Philemon). That the apostle suffered martyrdom under Nero at Rome has never been doubted. But that the appeal which brought him to Rome issued in his liberation, that he was at large for some years thereafter and took some wide missionary circuits, and that he was again arrested, carried to Rome, and then executed — was the undisputed belief of the early Church, as expressed by CHRYSOSTOM, JEROME, and EUSEBIUS, in the fourth century, up to CLEMENT OF ROME, the “fellow laborer” of the apostle himself (~~5048~~ Philippians 4:3), in the first century. The strongest possible confirmation of this is found in the Pastoral Epistles, which bear marks throughout of a more advanced state of the Church, and more matured forms of error, than can well have existed at any period before the appeal which brought the apostle to Rome; which refer to movements of himself and Timothy that cannot without some straining (as we think) be made to fit into any prior period; and which are couched in a manifestly riper style than any of his other Epistles. (See Introduction to First Timothy, Introduction to Second Timothy Introduction to Titus and *Notes*). All this has been called in question by modern critics of great research and acuteness [PETAVIUS, LARDNER, DE WETTE, WIESELER, DAVIDSON, and others]. But those who maintain the ancient view are of equal authority and more numerous, while the weight of argument appears to us to be decidedly on their side.