earthly relations so much as the welfare  
of those whom He came to teach and to  
save.

It is to be noticed that our  
Lord, though He introduces the additional  
term *sister* into his answer, does not (and  
indeed could not) introduce *father*, inasmuch  
as He never speaks of any earthly Father.  
See Luke ii. 49. All these characteristics  
of the mother of our Lord are deeply  
interesting, both in themselves, and as  
building up, when put together, the most  
decisive testimony against the fearful  
superstition which has assigned to her the  
place of a goddess in the Romish mythology. Great and inconceivable as the  
honour of that meek and holy woman  
was, we find her repeatedly (see John  
ii. 4) the object of rebuke from her divine  
Son, and hear Him here declaring, that  
the honour is one which the humblest  
believer in Him has in common with her.

Stier remarks (Reden Jesu, ii. 57 note),  
that the juxtaposition of *sister* and *mother*  
in the mouth of our Lord makes it probable that the *brethren* also were his actual  
brothers according to the flesh: see note

on ch. xiii. 55.

**CHAP. XIII. 1—52.**] THE SEVEN PARABLES. (The parallels, see under each.)

**1, 2.**] Mark iv. 1.

**1. In that  
day**] These words may mean literally, as  
rendered in the A.V., *the same day*. But  
it is not absolutely necessary. The words  
certainly do bear that meaning in Mark  
iv. 35, and important consequences follow  
(see note there); but in Acts viii. 1 they  
are as evidently indefinite. The instances  
of their occurrence in John (xiv. 20; xvi.  
23, 26) are not to the point, their use  
there being prophetical.

**3. in parables**] The senses of this word in the N.T.  
are various. My present concern with it  
is to explain its meaning as applied to the  
“*parables*” of our Lord. (1) The *Parable* is not a *Fable*, inasmuch as the Fable  
is concerned only with the maxims of  
worldly prudence, whereas the parable  
conveys spiritual truth. The *Fable* in its  
form rejects probability, and teaches  
through the *fancy*, introducing speaking  
ant or even inanimate things; whereas  
the *Parable* adheres to probability, and  
teaches through the *imagination*, introducing only things which may possible happen. “*A parable is a story of that which purports to have happened,–has not actually happened, but might have happened.*” (2) Nor is the Parable a  
*Myth*: inasmuch as in Mythology the  
course of the story is set before us *as the  
truth*, and simple minds receive it as the  
truth, only the reflective mind penetrating  
to the distinction between the vehicle an  
the thing conveyed; whereas in the Parable these two stand distinct from one  
another to all minds, so that none but the  
very simplest would ever believe in the  
Parable as fact. (3) Nor is the Parable a  
*Proverb*: though the Greek word (*parabolé*) is used for *both* in the N.T. (Luke  
iv. 23; v. 36: Matt. xv. 14, 15.) It is  
indeed more like a Proverb than either of  
the former; being an expanded Proverb,  
and a Proverb a concentrated parable, or  
fable, or result of human experience expressed without a figure. Hence it will be  
seen that the Proverb ranges far wider  
than the parable, which is an expansion  
of only one particular case of a proverb.  
Thus ‘*Physician heal thyself*’ would, if  
expanded, make a parable; “*dog eat dog,*”  
a fable; “*honesty is the best policy,*”  
neither of these. (4) Nor is the Parable  
an *Allegory*: inasmuch as in the Allegory  
the imaginary persons and actions are  
placed in the very places and footsteps of  
the real ones, and stand there instead of  
them, declaring all the time by their  
names or actions who and what they are.  
Thus the Allegory is self-interpreting, and  
the persons in it are invested with the  
attributes of those represented; whereas  
in the Parable the courses of action related and understood run indeed parallel,  
but the persons are strictly confined to  
their own natural places and actions, which  
are, in their relation and succession, typical  
of higher things. (5) It may well hence  
be surmised what a Parable *is*. It is a *serious narration, within the limits of  
probability, of a course of action pointing to some moral or spiritual Truth*;  
and derives its force from real analogies  
impressed by the Creator of all things on  
His creatures. The great Teacher by Parables therefore is He who needed not that