than Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine, seem to have missed the meaning of this miracle, by interpreting the payment as a *civil* one, which it certainly was not. Peter answered in the affirmative, probably because he had known it paid before.

**25, 26.**] {25} The whole force of this argument depends on the fact of the payment being a *divine one*. It rests on this: ‘If the *sons are free,* then on *Me,* being the *Son of God,* has this tax no claim.’

**tribute** is here the rendering of *census*, money’ taken according to the reckoning of the *census*,**—***a capitation tax.*

**strangers,** all who are not their children, those out of their family.

**27.**] In this, which has been pronounced the most difficult miracle in the Gospels, the deeper student of our Lord’s life and actions will find no difficulty. Our Lord’s words amount to this:**—**“that, notwithstanding this immunity, *we* (graciously including the Apostle in the earthly payment, and omitting the distinction between them, which was not now to be told to any), that we may not offend them, will pay what is required**—**and shall find it furnished by God’s special providence for us.” In the foreknowledge and power which this miracle implies, the Lord recalls Peter to that great confession (ch. xvi. 16), which his hasty answer to the collectors shews him to have again in part forgotten.

Of course the miracle is to be understood in its literal historic sense. The *rationalistic* interpretation, that the fish was to be sold for the money (and a wonderful price it would be for a fish caught with a hook), is refuted by the terms of the narrative,**—**and the *mythical* one, besides the utter inapplicability of all mythical interpretation to any part of the evangelic history,**—**by the absence of all possible occasion, and all possible significancy, of such a myth.

The stater = *four drachmas****—***the exact payment required for two persons.

for, literally, instead of, because the payment was a redemption paid for the person, Exod. xxx. 12. To this also refers the *“free”* above.

**me and thee—**not *us*;**—**as in John xx. 17 :—because the footing on which it was given was *different.*

CHAP. XVIII. 1—35.] DISCOURSE RESPECTING THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Mark ix. 38—50. Luke ix. 46—50.

1.] In Mark we learn that this discourse arose out of a dispute among the disciples *who should be the greatest.* It took place soon after the last incident. Peter had returned from his fishing: see ver. 21. The dispute had taken place before, on the way to Capernaum. It had probably been caused by the mention of the Kingdom of God as at hand in ch. xvi. 19, 28, and the preference given by the Lord to the Three. In Mark it is our Lord *who asks them what they were disputing about,* and they are silent.

**At that same time** need not necessarily refer to the incident last related. It may equally well be understood as indicating the presence in the mind of the querist of something that had Passed in the preceding dispute.

2.] From Mark ix. 36 it appears that our Lord first