His good pleasure.’

12, 18.] See notes on Luke xv. 4—6, where the same parable is more expanded. Compare also Ezek. xxxiv. 6, 11, 12.

14.] This verse sets forth to us the *work of the Son as accomplishing the will of the Father ;*— for it is unquestionably the Son who is the Good Shepherd, searching for the lost, ver. 11. For similar declarations see Ezek. xviii. 28; xxxiii. 11: 2 Pet. iii. 9. The inference from this verse is—‘ then whoever despises or scandalizes one of these little ones, acts in opposition to the will of your Father in Heaven.’ Observe, when the dignity of the little ones was asserted, it was **my** *Father* ; now that a motive directly acting on the conscience of the Christian is urged, it is **your** Father.

15—20.] OF THE METHOD OF PROCEEDING WITH AN OFFENDING BROTHER: AND OF THE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY IN SUCH CASES.

15.] The connexion of this with the preceding is: Our Lord has been speaking of **offences** (**stumbling-blocks**), which subject is the ground-tone of the whole discourse. One kind is, when *thou sinnest against another,* vv. 7—14. A second kind, when *thy brother sins against thee.* The remedy for the former must be, in each individual being cautious in his own person,—that of the latter, in the exercise of brotherly love, and if that fail, the authority of the congregation, vv. 15—17. Then follows an exposition of what that authority is, vv. 18—20.

On this verse see Levit. Xix. 17,18. This direction is only in case of *personal offence* against ourselves, and then the *injured person* is to *seek private explanation,* and that by *going to his injurer,* not waiting till *he* comes to apologize.

**hast gained,** in the higher sense, **reclaimed,** gained for God, see reff.: and for thyself too: “for before, thou hadst lost him, having been broken off from thy society by the offence,” Euthymius.

16.] The *first* attempt of brotherly love is to heal the wound, to remove the offence, *in secrecy* ; to *cover* the sin: but if this cannot be done, the *next* step is, to take two or three, still, in case of an adjustment, *preventing publicity ;* but in the other event, *providing sufficient legal witness.* See reff. and Jobn viii. 17.

Compare St. Paul’s apparent reference to these words of our Lord, 2 Cor. xiii. 1.

17. **neglect to hear**] The original verb is a stronger word than this, implying something of *obduracy:* **refuse to hear.**

**the church** (literally **assembly**), by what follows, certainly not ‘the Jewish synagogue’ (for how could vv. 18—20 be said in any sense of it?), but **the congregation** of Christians ; i.e. in early times, such as in Acts iv. 82, the one congregation,—in after times, that congregation of which thou and he are members. That it cannot mean *the Church as represented by her rulers,* appears by vv. 19, 20,— where any collection of believers is gifted with the power of deciding in such cases. Nothing could be further from the spirit of our Lord’s command than proceedings in what are oddly enough called ‘ecclesiastical’ courts.

**let him be, &c.**] ‘let him no longer be accounted as a brother, but as one of those without,’ as the Jews accounted Gentiles and Publicans. Yet even then, *not with*