and clothe us: Gal. iii. 21 (Trench remarks  
that the Church, by joining the passage  
Gal. iii. 16–23 as Epistle, with this Parable as Gospel for the 13th Sunday after  
Trinity, has stamped this interpretation  
with her approval):—in the good Samaritan, Him of whom it was lately said,  
“Say we not well that *thou art a Samaritan*, and hast a devil?” (John viii. 48)—  
who came to *bind up the broken-hearted*,  
to give them the *oil of joy for mourning*  
(Isa. lxi. 1 ff.);—who *for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty  
might become rich*: who, though now gone  
from us, has left with us precious gifts, and  
charged His ministers to feed His lambs,  
promising them, when the chief Shepherd  
shall appear, a crown of glory that fadeth  
not away (1 Pet. v. 2, 4). Further perhaps  
it is well not to go;—or, if we do, only in  
our own private meditations, where, if we  
have the great clue to such interpretations,  
*knowledge of Christ for ourselves*, and  
a *sound mind* under the guidance of His  
Spirit,—we shall not go far wrong. But  
minutely to allegorize, is to bring the sound  
spiritual interpretation into disrepute, and  
throw stumbling-blocks in the way of  
many, who might otherwise arrive at it.

**38–42.**] ENTERTAINMENT OF OUR  
LORD AT THE HOUSE OF MARTHA AND  
MARY. It surely never could be doubted  
who this Martha and Mary were, nor  
where this took place,—but that the harmonizing spirit has so beclouded the sight  
of our critics. Bengel believes them *not  
to be the sisters of Lazarus*, but another  
Martha and Mary somewhere else;—and  
this in spite of the deep psychological  
identity of characters which meets us in  
John xi. xii.

Greswell, still more  
strangely, believes the *persons to be the  
same*, but that they had *another residence*  
in Galilee. I shall, as elsewhere, take the  
text in its most obvious and simple interpretation, and where nothing definite is inserted *in it*, throw light on it from what  
we know from other sources. And I  
believe most readers will agree with me  
in taking these for the sisters of Lazarus,  
and the village for Bethany.

**38.**] **as  
they went** need make no difficulty—the  
whole of the events related in this section  
of the Gospel are allotted, as in the widest  
sense they belonged to *the last journey of our Lord from Galilee*, which ended in the  
triumphal entry into Jerusalem;—see note  
on ch. ix. 51 ff. Jesus, as we know that  
He afterwards did, so now probably, when  
at Jerusalem (at the feast of Dedication),  
abode at Bethany. He ‘loved’—(only  
used in this sense by John with regard to  
*this family* and to *himself*)—Martha and  
Mary and Lazarus—and this word implies  
surely hospitality and intercourse.

**a certain woman**] It does not follow that  
Martha was a widow; the incident brings  
out the *two sisters*, and therefore no  
others are mentioned. She may have had  
a husband or a father living. At all  
events, it is a consistency belonging to  
real life, that we find the same person  
prominent in the family in John, as here.

**39.**] It does not appear that the  
meal *had begun*; far rather is it likely  
that Martha was busy about *preparing* it.  
Mary sat at the Lord’s feet, as His disciple,  
while He was discoursing.

**41, 42.**]  
{41} The repetition of her name indicates reproof.

**thou art careful** (it is the same  
word as that in Matt. vi. 25, &c., and there  
rendered “*to take anxious thought*”)  
expresses the inner anxiety:—**troubled**,  
the outer bustle and confusion.

**{42} one thing**] Perhaps we should not express the  
two words more definitely, for fear of  
narrowing the wide sense in which  
are spoken. I can hardly doubt that our  
Lord, in the *first and most obvious* meaning indicated that simpler preparation  
would have been all that was needful, but  
the **many** leads to the **one**, and that to the