The *serpent* and *scorpion* are the *positively  
mischievous*: the samples, ch. x. 19, of the  
“*power of the enemy:*”—the *stone*, that  
which is simply *unfit for food*. So that  
God’s answers to our prayers consist of  
neither useless nor mischievous things,  
but of His best gift—His Holy Spirit—in  
all the various and fitting manifestations  
of His guidance, and consolation, and  
teaching, in our lives. This is (because  
this takes of and imparts to us by leading  
us continually to Him who is) the “bread”  
of the parable;—the “*father of the family*”  
**is the Father from Heaven**, with whom  
however the night is as the day, who never  
slumbers nor sleeps. It has been noticed  
how by the hungry traveller coming to  
the man, may be imported, in the depth  
of the parable, the awakening in a man’s  
own soul (which is so precious to him)  
of that hunger which he has nothing to  
satisfy, and which none but God can  
satisfy. The reader may, as in the foregoing parable, follow out this clue for himself (provided it be done soberly) with  
much interest and profit.

Notice  
that when *we address* God (Matt. vi. 9),  
He is “*Our Father* (which is) in *heaven*”  
—when *He answers us,* He is *the Father*  
from *heaven*. In the former case, we go  
up into Him and His abode; in the latter  
He comes down to us.

**14—36.**] ACCUSATION OF CASTING OUT  
DEVILS BY BEELZEBUB, AND DEMAND OF  
A SIGN FROM HEAVEN, OUR LORD’S  
DISCOURSE THEREUPON. Matt. xii, 22—  
45. Mark iii. 23–30. The reasonings of Mr.  
Greswell to shew that St. Luke relates an  
entirely different incident from St. Matthew  
and St. Mark, able and well conducted as  
they are, fail to carry conviction to my mind.  
The marks of identity are too many and  
striking to be mistaken; and on the plan  
of discrimination which he has adopted,  
I am persuaded that we might prove four  
distinct Crucifixions and Resurrections to  
have happened just as easily. Besides, it  
is quite impossible to carry the hypothesis  
throughout this section of St. Luke’s  
Gospel: and when it has been once given  
up, a considerable difference is made in the  
way of regarding the various narrations.  
On the side of which Evangelist the strict  
accuracy lies, it is next to impossible for  
us now to decide. I am inclined to think  
that the section from ch. xi. 14–xii. 53 (or  
rather perhaps 59) is a connected whole,  
or, at all events, is intended to form such.  
But then the whole is introduced (ver.  
14) without any mark of connexion with  
the preceding, and terminated as abruptly.  
On the other band, the narrative in Matthew is introduced by his usual “*Then*”  
following upon a very general description of *a retirement* of our Lord, and  
His being pursued by multitudes, all of  
whom He healed; but whether the *multitudes* are the same, and the “*then*”  
meant to specify that this incident occurred *then and there*, is by no means  
certain. Nor is the close of the section  
(xii. 50) bound very closely to xiii. 1, which  
commences “*In that day*” (not as the  
A.V., see margin), and can hardly be said  
with certainty to define *the very same  
natural day*. We may observe that the  
attendant circumstances, as introduced and  
closed in Mark iii. 20; iv. 1, are equally  
indeterminate. I therefore leave the difficulty where I found it, and where I believe it will ever remain, during our present state of imperfection: only observing,  
that the important incident and discourse  
grounded on it are no way thereby invalidated in authority. It seems to have  
been a portion of the evangelic history,  
the position of which was not exactly and  
satisfactorily fixed; of which there have  
been already some instances (see ch. ix.  
57–62), and there are, as will be seen,  
yet more as we proceed

**14.**] **dumb**  
—*and blind*, Matthew, ver. 22, where see  
notes on all the common matter.

**15. some of them**] No inference can here